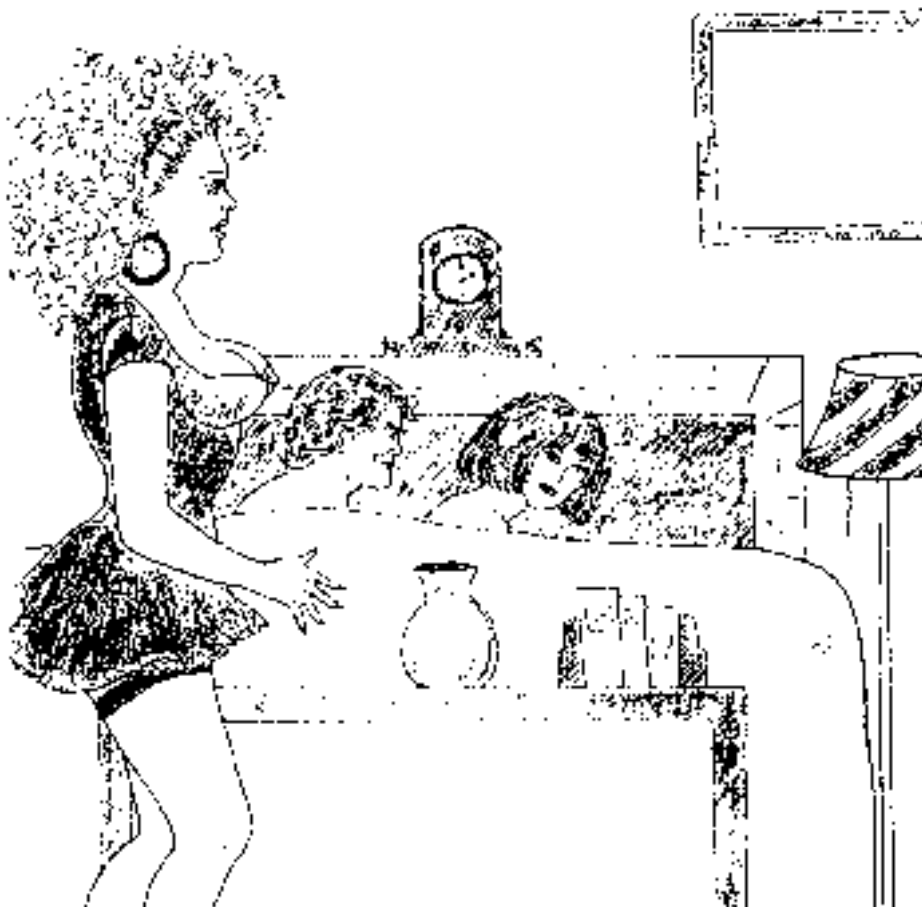


SARA'S RAGE

By Emma-Louise Ferguson



ILLUSTRATED BY BRIAN DUKEHART

A NEW WOMANNOVEL

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SARA'S RAGE

Based on a story by Emma-Louise Ferguson

“Heav'n has no rage, like love to hatred turn'd . . .”
William Congrieve 1670-1729

CHAPTER ONE

The relationships in their marriage had begun to deteriorate almost from the moment they had left the church. Chris, as the product of an “old-fashioned” family was apparently fated to pattern his marriage after that of his parents. He had brutalized his unsuspecting bride on their wedding night, sodomizing her and afterward, treating her as he would a whore whose only purpose was to fulfill his masculine needs. Although he became less cruel as time passed, Sara's rage at this treatment festered and grew. After one particularly vulgar bout of his so-called “love making”, she determined that the day would come when she would teach Chris what it **really** meant to be a whore. He would eventually discover that his behavior had not established him in “the little woman's” mind as her lord and master, but rather as a thing to be despised and eventually destroyed.

Eventually, Chris's failure to advance in the corporation for which he worked, and the simple economics of the times dictated that Sara would have to take on the role of housewife AND that of a second-income-earner. A certain degree of nepotism and the fact that she had been an executive trainee for the company before her marriage, landed Sara a low level management position in not only the same company in which Chris was employed, but by chance, even in the same department.

Unfortunately, Chris was unable to deal with Sara's early success in her work. He was irritated by the fact that his supervisor seemed to take a liking to Sara early on, and he set out to do every thing he could to sidetrack any recognition of competence on her part and to sabotage any promotions for her. He knew it was stupid and counterproductive for him to do this, but such was the measure of the man that his ego would not allow him to accept the fact that his wife might be more successful than he, in any endeavor. And so it was that when fate conspired to couple all his childish and destructive behavior with a chance friendship between Sara and a group of “liberated” women in the company, the personal growth she experienced with this group and the sense of independence they engendered in her, set the stage and provided the inspiration for Sara's ultimate liberation from him.

The fragility of his situation came fully into the open in less than three years after the wedding, when in the space of one week, he had been fired and she had been given a major promotion. It seemed to him that things could not get worse.

He was mistaken.

Fundamentally, the reason for Chris's dismissal had been on grounds of ongoing sexual misconduct. After years of overt sexual harassment of the women under him, he was accused of having bullied and harassed the women in his department into providing him sexual favors. When the charges were first brought, he contended to his supervisor, who privately agreed with him, that he had only done what every male in the company did and should therefore be only reprimanded. The Super had apparently gone to bat for him and the threats of termination were reduced to a public reprimand, but then he was told that in order to keep his position, he would be required to undergo counseling. A psychiatrist recommended by his supervisor, was engaged to "adjust" his behavior.

He had protested, but this time to no avail, and for nearly six months, he spent two hours of company time AND his lunch hour each day enduring the muttering's of the frigid-seeming woman doctor to whom he had been sent. Almost from the beginning of the first session, he observed that after five or ten minutes had passed, she seemed to become so involved in her boring lectures to him about his behavior, that she seemed to be almost oblivious to his presence. Further, most of the sessions soon devolved into nothing more than a few minutes with the doctor over tea, and then spending the rest of the time, stretched out on a comfortable sofa, listening to her boring tapes on self-improvement. He immediately decided to take advantage of her inattention and enjoyed a restful three hour nap during each session.

It was shortly after the counseling sessions had begun that Sara observed that; since his aggressive tendencies seemed to be diminishing, perhaps he might want to do a bit more to assist about the house.

Now, even as a boy, he had detested housework, regarding it, as did his father, as the sole province of women and that no real man would ever demean himself to don an apron and take on such unimportant and servile chores. But for some reason, he agreed to her suggestion, and in a matter of days, he became the one in the household doing the laundry, cleaning the toilets, changing the beds, and recently, preparing the evening meals and cleaning up after the two of them had finished their morning and evening meals.

He was surprised to find that the work, though every bit as demeaning as he had always thought, was not really difficult and of late had found himself actually looking forward to the mindless respite it gave him from the pressures that seemed to be building at work.

On one occasion, when he had spent a particularly difficult and physically demanding weekend at what his wife called "spring cleaning", he complained to his counselor that he believed his wife was taking advantage of the situation.

She had responded that he had brought this matter upon himself and that if he wished to keep his job, he should hold his peace and perform such domestic work as his wife directed him to do. She had even paraphrased The Bard, reminding him that, ". . . In truth, there's nothing so becomes a man as modest silence and humility."

He didn't like the idea, but had done as she directed and did not complain at home.

But he did manage to keep at least partial control of the situation. To prove how little influence the doctor had over him, he expanded his naps in their sessions, letting the voices on her tapes drone on as he slept.

Then, after more, than five months in therapy, he made a horrible blunder. For some reason, he literally followed one of the secretaries, a supervisor named Melanie Stewart into an elevator where he exposed himself to her, front and back, and made any number of lewd suggestions relating to renewing their one-time, torrid relationship. This was of course not the first time Melanie had seen Chris in the buff, but her behavior indicated that she felt he had exceeded the bounds of good taste in this situation. When the elevator doors had opened on the main lobby filled with people, and the mortified woman had fled, he completely lost control of himself and began masturbating while laughing mindlessly in the horrified faces of the onlookers. So stunned were the people, that before anyone moved to stop him, the elevator doors had closed. By the time the elevator had returned him to his floor, the irrational seizure had passed and he was once again in control of himself.

In control, or not, he had been fired immediately.

The secretary had been persuaded not to press charges if he was dismissed from the company AND if the program of counseling and therapy was stepped up to a minimum of four hours each day, for which the company agreed to continue to pay.

And that was that. He was suddenly out of work, undergoing intensive therapy and behavior modification treatment each day, and when not in therapy, found himself performing ALL of the housekeeping chores formerly handled by his wife.

Despite the clear evidence that his outrageous behavior could not be tolerated in the company, he found himself developing the belief, that he had been sacked mainly because his wife got on so well with Mike, his former Supervisor. Bluntly put, it appeared to him that they had carefully orchestrated the events leading to his firing simply to open his position for her. Mike had gone along with his dismissal, then in a humiliating reversal, had pushed for the elevation of Sara to his job. Not only was she given his position, but within a matter of days she was awarded the promotion and salary increase that he had been striving for the last two years.

And so it came to pass that their financial roles in the family were reversed; No, they were more than reversed. Only days ago, he had made far and away more money than she, but she had at least enjoyed a decent income. Now only she had an income and she took firm control of the family purse strings. Without her, Chris would be dependent on the dole. Somehow, he had not only lost control of their finances, but he had also lost the dominant role in their relationship and with it a good deal of his confidence.

It was natural that arguments would follow; and they were bitter, but at last they came to the agreement that he should take on the full-time role of "house husband", at least until he could find a proper job. It meant he would have to do ALL the mundane chores about the home, which annoyed him, but which were at least better than moping around doing nothing. She agreed to give him a small allowance each week to cover the cost of keeping the house and he soon settled into his new role. The major disadvantage to it was that as Sara became increasingly demanding and critical of his

“housekeeping”, there seemed to be no time left for job interviews and he soon found himself “out of the loop” as it were in his search for new employment. It was probably just as well, he remarked one day to his therapist, for the actions that had led to his firing seemed to be known to every prospective employer.

About three months into the new arrangement, Chris realized that Sara's attitude and her behavior toward him were gradually changing. It seemed that not only had their work roles been reversed, but now she seemed to be affecting many of the mannerisms toward him that he knew he had used with her before he had lost his job.

At first, Sara had seemed to become more and more withdrawn. Each evening when she returned from work she hardly spoke to him, choosing instead to take the evening paper into the den, catch up on the news and then turn on the television. Soon there were almost no words exchanged between them from the time she entered the house until he would call her to come to the dining room for supper. And even there, the conversations were sparse and stilted. She seemed bored with the things he had to say and often made short tempered and snide remarks about his observations on trivial matters involving the house work, his therapy or things he might have seen on daytime TV, to which he seemed to have become addicted.

She had also developed the annoying habit of calling him “Sweetie” in an irritatingly patronizing manner. The most painful development however, was that their once flourishing love life had ground to a complete and utter stand still. They had in fact drifted so completely apart that Sara had ordered him to sleep in a separate bedroom and had even gone so far as to move all his clothing there as well.

When he complained about her attitude and about the new sleeping arrangements, she was mildly apologetic but excused herself by saying that when she returned from the hectic atmosphere of the office she always hoped to hear something other than complaints about mindless soap-operas or how weary he was of his house-minding duties. She went so far as to suggest that perhaps he was always tired because his nutrition was not adequate since he was unaccustomed to planning and preparing meals. Over his protests she had determined to have him see a doctor friend of hers who she knew was very strong on nutrition and who could perhaps prescribe some vitamins or food supplements to perk him up.

Time passed but things did not improve. The truth of the matter is that things only grew worse . . . at least from Chris's point of view. The medications the doctor prescribed seemed to be of little help. For several weeks he suffered with almost continuous bouts of nausea. The feelings of fatigue increased and as the weeks dragged by he seemed to have more and more difficulty with handling the regular chores of keeping house, shopping and other household routines. He was glad to see the approach of Autumn, for it meant that for a time at least, he would be freed of the difficulties of tending to the lawn and flower beds which in the last weeks of summer had become a major chore.

One hot August day he realized that he had spent an hour and a half working at mowing the lawn, which was the time it normally took him to do the entire job, but that he was less than half done AND he was exhausted. By the end of the afternoon

he had finally managed to complete the mowing, but he was so weary that he had been unable to carry the bags of clippings to the streetside for the next day's trash pick-up.

Sara had refused to help him move the bags and later, following dinner, when he had done the dishes and cleaned the kitchen, he had to go out, reopen the carefully tied bags of lawn clippings and divide them into smaller loads that he could drag to the curb. Sara watched the process for a while and when he had finished, mocked him in an unkindly way, suggesting that perhaps he should double-up on his vitamins to get his strength up for the winter. He had put the incident out of his mind but when the same thing happened again and again in the last weeks of the growing season, he began to wonder if perhaps he should do something about his flagging strength and so, actually did "double-up" on the vitamins.

At the same time this was going on, the company began sending Sara on business trips which would take her away for days at a time. After a few such trips, she began to present him with little gifts at her return from each trip . . . telling him that she did it just to let him know she was thinking of him. At first the gifts were mostly things like the little bottles of liquor from her airline flights but they gradually became more the sort of things he had once brought to her; chocolates, exotic pajamas or underwear of silk or satin and eventually, bottles of cologne which carried masculine sounding names, but seemed to be identical in scent to Sara's very feminine perfumes. When he would question the appropriateness of the gifts, she would explain them away by saying that her work colleagues all bought similar gifts for their mates.

He was alone more and more and though he almost begged her to spend more time at home when she was not traveling, she would often work late or go out evenings and on weekends with her new friends and female colleagues from the office or with business contacts. He seemed to be increasingly tied to the house, with his only regular contact with the outside world being trips to the market or running errands related to the housekeeping. The isolation of being the keeper of the house began to tell in his style of dress. He seldom wore a suit and tie now, because a shirt and slacks seemed less bother for working about the house. Then, on the few occasions when they did go out together, he found that his business suits and sports jackets had become somehow ill-fitting and uncomfortable. The jackets seemed to hang on his body, as though he had lost weight, which he had, but not in any amount to make the clothes seem sizes too large for him. At the same time, all his dress slacks and suit pants had become equally uncomfortable, being now too loose about the waist and uncomfortably tight around the hips and thighs. The fact that Sara always criticized his appearance in a coat and tie did not help his discomfort and he gradually began to shy away from any sort of outings with her.

Later, almost six months after their change of work roles, the first obvious incident had taken place; an incident that had set off alarm bells in his mind, but which he had some reason chosen to ignore.

It was on a Friday night, the day before Halloween, when Sara staggered drunkenly in after one of her evenings-out, that another major deterioration of the quality of Chris's life took place.

Chris had held the meal until nearly ten o'clock before admitting to himself that Sara had probably gone off to dinner with her friends once again, leaving him to eat, clean up and spend the evening alone. He had watched television until after midnight; finally turning off the set and going to sleep at nearly one in the morning. The crash of the bedroom door banging open and the bright flare of the overhead light being switched on jerked him from a troubled sleep.

"Where the Hell is my dinner?" Sara snarled from the doorway.

Chris sat up, his mind befuddled by sleep and stared blankly at her. She threw the shoes she had carried in her hand across the room and advanced on the bed to rip the covers back and glare angrily at him.

"Answer me, you lazy sack of shit!" She barked at him. "Where the Hell is my Dinner?"

"You're drunk." Chris stated flatly.

"And you're a mouthy, little Prick!" Sara snarled back. He never saw her hand move but the next thing he knew, he was laying half out of the bed, his right ear ringing loudly and stars dancing before his eyes. Before he could move, Sara grabbed the collar of his pajamas and dragged him bodily from the bed and toward the door. The blow she had delivered had momentarily cost him his balance and he could do little more than scramble along on all fours as she dragged him from the room and down the hall toward the kitchen.

Finally, at about the time they were passing the door to the master bedroom . . . the room into which Chris was now allowed only to clean or to put away Sara's laundered clothing . . . he managed to get to his feet and jerk away from her grasp. The buttons on the pajama top gave way and he fell back against the wall as she literally jerked the shirt off his torso. They stood there a moment, glaring at one another.

"You're drunk." Chris repeated, boldly, watching this time to be ready for another onslaught from his wife.

"Where do you get off telling me I'm drunk you little wimp?" she exploded. "For that matter, where do you get off telling me anything at all? I'm in charge around here . . . not you! I'm the breadwinner and you're . . . you're . . . you're nothing but a little Goddamned . . . Goddamned. . . uh-hmm . . .?"

She stopped and stared at him, taking in his naked torso and the defensive posture he had assumed. A look of pure wickedness came across her face and she stepped toward him as she continued.

"Come to think of it . . . I dunno just exactly WHAT you are anymore. C'mere! Let's have a look at you. Let's see just exactly what you are."

Her hand snaked out and she grabbed the waistband of his pajama trousers. Before he could stop her she had jerked at them, popping the snaps at the waist and ripping the crotch halfway down one leg. He dropped his guard to grab at the fabric and pull it out of her grasp, but another slap on the side of the head banged him against the wall and another jerk on the trousers pulled his feet from under him and he found himself once again on the floor.

Distantly he felt Sara jerk the trousers from his legs and as his head cleared, saw her fling them off down the hall as she stood over him. Without thinking, he moved to get to his feet to go after the pants. The side of Sara's foot smashed into his face, flattening his nose, bringing the return of the stars, and sending him crashing back against the wall which brought even more stars as his head banged against the hard plaster surface.

"You just stay right there, you little dink! I intend to get things straight around here." There was a pause. "Are you listening to me, asshole?"

Chris nodded his head, hoping to drive away the dizziness brought on by her blows and cupped his hands against his battered nose. Something warm and wet dripped on his chest and he looked down to see that his hands were covered with blood. Apparently the kick in the face had bloodied his nose.

"Jeshush Christ! You're getting blood all over everything!" Sara snapped at him, drunkenly. "Get the Hell up and go take care of that in the bathroom."

Chris managed to get to his feet and still pinching his nostrils together, staggered into the bath where he plunged his face into a stream of cold water from the tap. By the time he had managed to staunch the flow of blood by plugging his nostrils with facial tissue, Sara was standing in the doorway watching him. She was still wearing her mannish business suit, but she had a pink negligee draped over her folded arms. He dried himself off and turned to face her, the towel held up before him defensively.

"What a wimpy little nothing you are," she slurred; the derision strong in her voice. "But you're all I've got. Here I am, out working all day and half the night, and I come home to find you tucked in bed like some sort of Sleeping Beauty. Well, if you're going to be a sleeping beauty, you ought to at least dress like one. Here, put this on, then get out to the kitchen and fix me something to eat." And with that, she had tossed the negligee at him and he had instinctively reached out and caught it.

"I, I can't wear this . . . this is . . ."

A snarl from her lips cut him off.

"Don't tell me what it is, you little . . . you little . . . pussy! I KNOW what it is. When I was the wife around here, it was my nightgown . . . well, now, you're the wife, or at least the closest thing to one we've got. So from now on, it's YOUR nightgown. In fact, I've got a whole closet and dresser full of stuff in there that you can start wearing tomorrow. They'll be just fine for you now that you're no longer the "man of the house". Now, put that damned thing on and get into the kitchen."

Fearful that she might be about to strike him again, Chris managed to pull the gown over his head, noting that the cool crispness of the fabric in the built-in sleep bra cups, tickled his nipples and brought them to a surprising stiffness. What was equally surprising was that the flesh of his pectorals seemed to fill the cups of the bra sufficiently to push them out slightly and define them as being more feminine than masculine in shape. By the time the gown was in place, Sara had bounced off the walls, down the hall and back into her bedroom, leaving him standing there, uncertain as to what to do next.

"I don't smell anything cooking, Christine." her voice came to him from the bedroom and galvanized him into action. In a few minutes, he was back in the kitchen, resurrecting the dinner, tossing a fresh salad, and setting a place at the table. In a matter of ten minutes or so, an appealing and appetizing meal was set for Sara and he sipped a glass of wine, holding a couple of ice cubes in a wet washcloth to his throbbing nose, while he waited for Sara to come to the table.

Finally, after another ten minutes, he tiptoed down the hall and fearfully peeked around the doorjamb. Sara wearing a set of lounging pajamas, had fallen back on the bed and was snoring loudly in a drunken sleep. For a few moments, Chris was uncertain as to what he should do, but at last entered the room, managed to lift his wife's legs onto the bed, and gently covered her up; praying that she would not awaken. His prayers were answered, and in a moment more, the lights in the bedroom were out, and he was back in the kitchen, almost sobbing with relief that she had not roused again.

He began to put the uneaten food away, but his head and nose ached horribly and he felt exhausted, so turning out the lights, he returned to his bedroom, took a couple of painkillers left from a long-ago visit to the dentist, and crawled back into his own bed.

* * * * *

The arrival of morning did not bring any happier circumstances for Chris. He had slept fitfully, the throbbing pain in his nose preventing any decent sleep and so he had risen early, peeled out of Sara's nightgown and dressed in his usual slacks, shirt, sweater and sneakers to begin his household chores for the day. His reflection in the mirror when he shaved had startled him with its image of the great blue-black discoloration over his nose and around both eyes, each of which was nearly swollen shut. There was a livid bruise across the side of his face and one ear from Sara's first blow and he discovered another bruise across his shoulders, apparently caused when he had crashed against the door jamb after being kicked in the face. He looked, and felt, as if he had lost a major barroom brawl. He wanted nothing more than to go back to sleep, but he knew Sara would be really angry if she found him still in bed when she finally awoke so he took three more of the pain pills, made the bed and then headed for the kitchen

The kitchen was cleaned and the laundry half finished when Sara ambled out of the bedroom, the stale odor of all the liquor she had put away the night before still wafting about her, and demanded that he prepare breakfast.

Thirty minutes later, they were seated at the table in the breakfast nook; Sara fighting her hangover with coffee, eggs, bacon and toast while Chris sat watching her warily and nursing a cup of coffee. Sara had said nothing to him since sitting at the table, but now as she finished the last of her toast by mopping up a bit of egg and bacon with it and popping it into her mouth, she looked at him closely and snickered.

"That's quite a pair of shiners you have there, Sweetie. Are you going to tell people you ran into a door, or will you tell them the truth . . . that your wife beat up on you?"

Chris looked down at his coffee. The events of the night before had thoroughly shaken him. He knew from his experiences with working in the yard and with trying to move furniture and carry things about in the house, that for some unknown reason he had been losing strength and stamina since being forced into the role of house-keeper. What he had not realized was just how weak he had become. Sara's late-night assault had demonstrated to both of them just how far his physical decline had gone. For the first time since he was a child and had been forced to deal with the usual neighborhood bully, he was actually afraid of another person. The worst of it was that the "other person" happened to be his wife! He looked up at her through the narrow slits his eyes had become during the night.

"I . . . I don't know. I guess I'll just say I bumped into something," he stammered, hoping that this was the correct answer.

Sara snorted derisively.

"You sure as Hell did." She said and then laughed. "You must have zigged when you should have zagged."

"Don't you even remember what happened?" Chris asked timidly. "You kicked me in the face."

"Of course I remember. What the Hell, do you think I was totally blitzed? If you had just stayed still it wouldn't have happened."

"I was just trying to get my . . ."

"I don't even care what you were trying. What I want to know is what are you doing, dressed like that?"

Chris looked down at himself. "What do you mean? This is what I always . . ."

"What I mean is: What are you doing wearing those clothes? Didn't you hear me last night when I told you what you were going to wear starting today?"

"Well, uh, yes. But I thought you were just . . ."

"I wasn't. Now get this mess cleaned up and then come into my bedroom. I'm going to get you properly dressed for the day."

And with that, Sara had pushed away from the table and walked out of the room.

Chris sat there for a full minute, pondering his choices, then with a sigh, decided he didn't have the will to argue with her this morning. He decided to just go along for now and hope that she would back off from whatever it was she had in mind. With another sigh, he rose and went about the work of cleaning up the mess from breakfast. By the time he finished, his head was throbbing even more painfully, and without thinking, he took two more of the pain tablets before reporting to his wife.

When he walked into the bedroom, Sara was just finishing her own toilette and was far more presentable, and less odoriferous, than she had been at the breakfast table. For a moment, Chris felt desire for her stirring in his loins . . . something that seemed to rarely happen of late, but it died aborning as she turned and frowned angrily at him.

"Well?" She said impatiently.

“Uhhhh, well, uh, what?” Chris asked timidly. His mind was so fogged with the painkillers, that he was not thinking too clearly.

“WELL, are you just going to stand there all day? Get those clothes off. I have to go to the office today, even if it is Saturday, and I can't be farting around with you all morning.”

“But . . .”

“Do you want me to rip those things off you too?” Sara snarled, raising her hand and stepping toward him. Chris reacted quickly.

“Uh, no. No, I'll get them off. Just give me a second.” He had begun to work the sweater up his body and was just ready to pull it off over his head. He was trying to be careful not to bump his nose as he had done when he had pulled the sweater on. The pressure had brought tears to his eyes and renewed the throbbing for almost an hour. He didn't want that again.

And then, Sara snorted impatiently, reached out and grabbed the shoulders of his sweater and jerked it up roughly over his head.

The collar caught the tip of his nose, lifting and seeming to jam it back against his forehead. He almost screamed at the pain as the sweater cleared his head and left him with his arms still tangled in the sleeves.

“Oh Jesus, now what?” Sara snapped as she watched her husband's hands clap defensively over his face. Then as the blood again began to gush between his fingers, she grabbed one of his arms and half-dragged him into the bathroom where once again, his head was almost plunged into a torrent of cold water from the faucet.

By this time there was blood on the sweater, blood on his shirt and trousers and blood splattered all over the sink. The flow took longer to stop this time and even when Chris's nostrils were packed with tissues, he still thought he could taste the blood at the back of his throat and wondered if he was still bleeding and swallowing it all.

Before returning to the bedroom, Sara stripped his bloodstained clothes from him and wrapped him in her satin-quilted robe.

Once again, the ice pack was applied, this time by Sara, who actually seemed to be concerned for his welfare, and Chris was left alone in his bedroom to lie on the bed and hold the cold compress against his battered nose. He had lain there for fifteen or twenty minutes when Sara returned to the room. She lifted the ice pack and looked closely at his face.

“Well, I think it's stopped. Let's get some clothes on you now and go get that thing fixed.”

“Fixed?”

“Yeah. I called Doctor Beechner and she says you probably broke your nose, big-time, in that little run in with my foot last night. She said to take you to the emergency room at Saint Joseph's and they'll repair it for now. She thinks you'll probably have to have it rebuilt. She can't get to it today but she said to bring you around to the clinic on Monday and they'll look at it then. You're just lucky that I have a friend like her who is willing to help you out on such short notice. Most of the male doctors

we know would have you taking two hundred aspirin and calling them Monday morning. Now, come on. Get off that bed and let's get you dressed. I still have to go to the office, especially since you're running up medical bills." And with that, she led Chris back to her room, where the clothes were still laid out on the bed.

Chris looked blankly at her, hesitating as she held out the panties she had put out for him.

"Put these on, you little sissy, or I'll bloody your damned nose again." She threatened, raising her hand as if to strike him. He immediately opened the robe, took the panties and stepped into them, pulling the silken fabric up over his hips. He was so mortified at this development that he failed to notice how snugly the panties fit his plump bottom.

Then before he could react, Sara had reached around from behind him, stripped the robe from his shoulders and fastened one of her bras around his waist.

He looked down at it, then up at her in wonderment and surprise.

"Pull the damned thing up, Sweetie. It's your nose that's broken, not your brain . . . or do I have to start thinking for you too?"

"B . . . But, Sara . . . a bra? Why do I have to wear . . ." And again, her voice snapped off his groggy, slurring protest.

"You have to wear a bra because you're just a little housewife around here . . . and housewives wear bras, or hadn't you noticed? Besides, the way you have let yourself go, you need the damned thing almost as much as I do." She had tired of watching him fumble with the shoulder straps and had hooked her hands in the bandeau of the bra, snatching it up under his chubby pectorals, then nearly broke the straps as she jerked them over his shoulders.

Chris looked down in embarrassment, watching the result of her hands dipping into the cups of the bra and pulling the soft flesh into them. Suddenly, he had breasts! Oh, there was not quite enough to completely fill the cups as Sara's breasts did, but they obviously were restraining breast flesh!

His vague, drug-dulled ruminations on that were cut off as Sara told him to raise his arms. When he did she dropped a lace frothed tricot slip over his head and pulled it into place around his body. Surprisingly, she seemed to make an effort to avoid touching his aching nose. The slip was followed by one of her casual shirtwaist dresses which she ordered him to button up while she began to brush out his hair.

By now, all the pain pills Chris had taken since rising were running full speed through his system and everything that was going on had taken on a surreal, dream-like quality for him. When Sara finished fussing with his hair and applying make-up to his face before she led him to the bed where he only stared blankly down at his femininely clad form as she knelt to slip a pair of her sandals on his bare feet. They were very tight, but did go on at last.

Sara left the room for a moment. Then she returned wearing her windbreaker and carrying her pink vinyl storm coat into which she helped Chris put on after getting

him to his feet. In another two minutes, they were out the door and in the BMW on the way to the emergency room.

As he rode along, looking idly at the purse laying in his lap,

Chris found himself wishing that Sara had not dressed him in her clothes. This promised to be totally humiliating, for the doctors and nurses would instantly realize that he was a man dressed in a woman's clothing. He wanted to reason with her, but his mind was so clouded with the painkillers that he instead rode silently and stared at the purse.

At the emergency room, Chris was put in a wheelchair and rushed off to one of the treatment rooms as Sara disappeared. He supposed she had gone off to register him and take care of the paper work. By the time his temperature, blood pressure, pulse and so on had been taken, a young doctor, clipboard in hand, entered the room and walked over to the gurney on which Chris had been placed.

“Well, Mrs. Alderson, he did quite a job on you, didn't he? I tried to convince your friend that you should press charges, but she said you didn't want to. I honestly believe you are making a serious mistake, but I guess it's your choice.” Then, the man smiled pleasantly down at Chris and before Chris could tell him that he was MR. Alderson, and that it was a she, not a he who had broken his nose, the young doctor began to remove the tissue packing Chris had used to staunch the flow of blood.

It was two hours before Chris was wheeled out of the treatment room and into the hallway where Sara was waiting. Prior to the cauterization and the work the doctor had done on his nose cartilage, he had been given a local anesthetic and so was now totally zoned out on the mixture of drugs coursing through his system. He heard almost none of the conversation but did catch some references to the mysterious man who the doctor thought had beaten up on him and wondered why the doctor was telling Sara that she should call the police to report a wife battering that had taken place, but it was all too vague and too removed from his present fuzzy reality to worry about, so he didn't.

He spent the rest of that day and most of the next in bed, and felt so wretched that he never once protested the fact that Sara put him back in the negligee when they returned from the hospital. The pills the doctors had prescribed to dull the pain also dulled his mind to the point that he simply accepted all of Sara's ministrations.

Later, he could only vaguely recall feebly protesting about the creamy paste Sara insisted on spreading over his entire body when she made him leave his bed on Sunday to bathe and freshen up. But then the bath had proved so relaxing that, in his semi-stuporous state, he finally just accepted her gentle attentions, even letting her dust him with powder after carefully patting him dry when he left the tub. His compliance carried over to wearing a fresh negligee, matching peignoir and a pair of her mid-heeled slippers while eating the light lunch Sara prepared for him before allowing him to return to his bed and the oblivion of sleep.

CHAPTER TWO

By Monday morning, he was feeling considerably more comfortable, but under Sara's direction was taking the pain pills every two hours and so was still like one of the walking dead. He found it very comforting that Sara was finally seeming to be concerned and contrite for what she had done to him. She helped him to the tub where she had drawn a bath . . . never mind that it is scented, he thought, she probably did it from force of habit. In addition to assisting him into the tub, she even volunteered to wash his back, which led to other assistance, and then to shave him. He luxuriated in the attention, and decided that perhaps she was going to relent in her bullying and in the business of forcing him to wear her clothing.

But after he left the tub and she had dried and again dusted him with her floral scented bath-powder, the moment of truth came and once again he found himself faced with being dressed from the skin out in her things. He decided to attempt a reasoned and soft approach to the problem.

"Sara, please, don't make me do this. I still feel pretty rocky and I just don't want to do it." He said quietly. She turned and frowned at him from the dresser mirror across the room where she had been putting on her makeup, clad only in a pair of panties.

"Don't start with me again, Sweetie. You've been lounging around like a lady of leisure for two days now. I don't see any reason why you shouldn't go to your appointment with Ellen in the same sort of role."

"But . . ."

"But Nothing!" She almost growled, "You're going to wear what I tell you to and that's it."

"But Sara, I'm a man and all this makes me feel so . . . so."

"Makes you feel so much like a woman? Maybe you need to take a closer look at yourself. You sure don't look much like a man. Now, shut your pretty little mouth and put those panties on, Sweetie, before I lose patience with you."

The tone of her voice sent a chill through him and without thinking he slipped the panties on and stood to pull them up over his hips. It was then that he realized for the first time that his arms, legs and body were completely denuded of hair! The faint memory of the events at his bath yesterday stirred in his mind and something in him shrugged mentally, seeming to say, "Never mind, it's done, just get on with things before Sara gets mad."

He stared down at himself, dimly appalled at the pale flabbiness he saw and wondered how he could have failed to notice how his body had become so weak and soft appearing.

He sneaked a look over at Sara to be sure she wasn't making any threatening moves and his glance caught the reflection of the two, panty-clad figures in the mirror. His heart sank as he realized Sara was right. He DIDN'T look much like a man . . . especially without any hair on his body and with her panties on! There was an almost feminine looseness about his pectorals and the tone and color of his skin seemed to al-

out over his hips, accenting the plumpness there, and a sheer, nylon blouse, through which he saw the straps of the bra and slip he wore were clearly visible when he glanced in the mirror.

Sara finished with the back buttons of the blouse, then led him to her vanity stool and ordered him to sit while she brushed and arranged his longish hair in a fluffy, disordered sort of bouffant-do. When she was finished, she seized his chin in her hand, causing him to wince at the pain this caused in his nose and before he could react, applied a coating of deep red lipstick to his lips, then blotted off the surplus. Leaving him with a very feminine and innocent pout when he looked into the mirror. He was gazing helplessly at his feminized reflection when he realized that Sara had taken one of her bottles of perfume and was generously dabbing it behind his ears and at the base of his throat in the neckline of the blouse.

He wanted to protest this last insult, but was so fearful that she would brutalize him again, that he kept quiet. In another five minutes she was dressed and led him to the front hall where she held out her tan vicuna coat with the fur collar for him to put on. At this point, he knew he had lost any hope of preventing her from carrying out

this bizarre masquerade. He let her help him into the coat and in another few minutes found himself once again in the car, dressed completely as a woman, a purse in his lap, and on his way to yet another doctor.

As Sara wheeled the car through the morning traffic, he wondered about what she had planned for him. He knew that Ellen Beechner, one of Sara's old college room-mates was a skilled surgeon and was even head of the Beechner Clinic, which was becoming nationally known for some of the pioneering medical work done there. It was a good clinic but his problem with it was that it was a WOMAN'S clinic and he just didn't feel comfortable with the idea of going there for treatment . . . even dressed as he was. But what was done, was done, he reminded himself. So, he sat quietly, holding the purse in his lap and stared at the passing landscape, his mind dancing to the tune called by the endless supply of pain medication in his bloodstream.

At the clinic, as at the hospital, Chris was hurried off to an examination room while Sara disappeared, again. And again, he assumed she had gone to fill out all the necessary papers for his admission and treatment. For Chris the examinations seemed interminable, with much unnecessary prodding and poking and taking of history. A number of doctors came and went, most of them women, and because he had never met Ellen Beechner, he had no idea if she might have been among them. He was not made to disrobe, not at first, so when the doctors and nurses kept calling him MRS. Alderson, or Sara, he decided not to correct them. If they hadn't realized yet that he was a man, he was not about to tell them.

Eventually, he was wheeled to a private room, told to disrobe and get into the bed and was left alone. He probably should have been more resistant, but he was still full of the pain killing drugs and so was far more compliant and trusting than he might ordinarily have been. In a matter of a few minutes, he had managed to divest himself of his skirt, blouse, panties, bra, garter belt and hose; had put on the floor length gown laid out for him and had crawled gratefully into the bed. The quiet of the room, the comfort of the bed, AND the medication he had been taking, proved too much for him, and he dozed off into a deep sleep fairly quickly.

He never did fully awaken when the nurse entered to give him an injection, and by the time the gurney was brought and he was wheeled off to the surgery, he was completely unconscious.

* * * * *

When he awoke, hours, days, years later, he found that his whole face was bandaged, but there didn't seem to be so much pain as when he had checked into the clinic. For that he was grateful.

He looked to the windows, decided by the quality of the light that it appeared to be late in the afternoon and then looked around the rest of the room. The clothes he had worn into the clinic were hanging in the open closet and the bathroom door was closed. As he looked for a call button for a nurse, he heard the toilet flush and then watched Sara come out of the toilet.