

JOYCE'S GIRLS

By Joyce



ILLUSTRATED BY BRIAN DUKEHART

A 'HER TV' NOVEL

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PINK BOOTIES

By Joyce

Aunt Florence met me at the station on platform four.

There are 101 things I could say about Auntie, but few would be remotely relevant. The fact that she had had a hysterectomy five years previously, for instance, is more or less irrelevant.

What does count is: -

- 1). She adores me (There's egocentricity for you - it's No 1 on my list!)
- 2). She's a spinster.
- 3). She was present at my birth.

4). She's extremely affluent - and who do you think is the chief beneficiary in her will? Mind you, she is the only relative whom I genuinely do not wish to expire, pass on, meet her Maker, be an ex-Auntie in the sky, or to resemble in any way Monty Python's dead parrot.

5). She is a pretty woman in a late-middle-aged way. I'd say she was in her mid-fifties.

6). She has a penchant for very sheer black stockings, a feature about her I always find a bit of a turn-on.

7). She likes her evening tittle and generally has three scotches in a row - sometimes four when the mood takes her.

I was going to come to light with a round Ten Facts about Auntie, but 8 is enough. The eighth is that she is a complete bloody nut, for which I absolutely adore her.

I have peculiarities of my own, for heaven's sake, but Auntie, seems tuned in with a sensitivity that only the Deity will ever understand. But all will be revealed presently.

"My poor darling baby," she gushed, flouncing towards me as the train ground to a halt.

The 'poor darling' bit was a reference to my recent hernia operation. Generally speaking, hernias are an old man's complaint, but about 8% of hernias are surgically corrected in males under 20 and I had one done only 8 days previously and was still walking around slightly gingerly and slightly stooped.

They had, of course, shaved me 'down there' as clean as a whistle, visual evidence of a return to 'innocence' if ever there was. I had liked that aspect of the operation and had made up my mind to keep myself that way. The nurse who did it was about my

age and devastatingly pretty. It was all I could do not to allow the shaving experience to become an embarrassingly erotic interlude, but higher cortical control prevailed, combined no doubt with my nurse's professionalism and my own extreme nervousness at my appointment with ether, scalpel and sutures at dawn the following morning.

All sorts of horrid things traditionally take place at dawn - like hangings, appointments with firing squads and colonic lavages (enemas to the uninitiated), ordeals to be embraced on roughly the same emotional level.

But back to platform four and a flouncing, happily excited Auntie Florence; we hugged and kissed each other in mutual joy.

"Ooh, am I going to adore looking after you," trilled Auntie. "We'll get you out of these horrid, restricting clothes and into something really soft and practical."

On a previous holiday at Auntie Flo's, when I was a lot younger, she had persuaded me to dress up as a baby for a children's fancy dress party at the village hall and I had won first prize. I think it was then that the idea of a complete regression to babyhood caught on and filled my mind with pleasure and excitement.

It is difficult to put one's finger on quite why the prospect of being treated completely as an infant again had such a powerful appeal - it involved a whole orchestra of emotions and now part of the furniture of the mind, or syndrome, if you are severely clinical. The hair shirt of responsibility is lifted off, to be replaced with softness, cuddliness, doting affection - an exhilarating feeling of complete and utter freedom. But it doesn't do to try to be too cerebral about it all - just lie back and enjoy it...

"We'll want a porter," said Auntie importantly, looking about her in a Lady Bracknellish kind of way.

"Excuse me, my good man!" she called.

I winced with embarrassment at her patronizing Victorianism.

The porter seemed not to take umbrage but merely hefted my cases and followed us out to the car park.

Aunt Florence lived in a decidedly up scale residential area called Pemberton Heights. The house was an Edwardian masterpiece of good design.

It's interesting how a piece of good design never seems to date, regardless of its era: take the Parthenon! Anyway, the place had won some sort of architectural award back in 1908 and was called SAXE-COBURG - I ask you!

"Oh Auntie!" I enthused, "your place is as lovely as ever. Age hasn't withered it nor custom staled it," misquoting Anthony and Cleopatra but still loaded with 'culture'.

"Just wait until you see your old nursery, because that's where you are going to sleep, darling. I've had it all freshened up with pretty new lace curtains and a fleecy white wool flokati carpet. I think you are going to love it".

I hurried into the house, but not before first peering through the colored glass panes in the front door as I had always done to see first a yellow hallway, then blue, then red, then green.

“And you had better take your shoes off first, before walking on your lovely white wool carpet. I've got something else to cover those little toesies of yours, my love.”

I looked back at her and grinned delightedly. Flinging my shoes off on the verandah, I rushed upstairs. The sun was streaming into the room just as it always had done.

That's one thing about being happy in a place - the sun always seemed to shine, even when it was raining.

The room was still very much a child's nursery. The cot was a large one but it had sides to it as do all cots, with little panels with hand-painted teddy bears and golliwogs (oops, sorry, no longer a politically correct in-word these days), elves and fairies, all in some sort of transport of delight. The quilt was pink and the pillow fringed with lace. Snicked up on the quilt slept Claude de Pussy, her cat. On a low chair was old Teddy, but in a new velvet jacket with big white buttons and a red Swiss hat with feather.

“The hat's new,” I said with a broad grin as Auntie appeared in the doorway behind me.

“Yes, I thought you'd like it,” she said cheerfully. “Now, my love, I've put those cases of yours under the stairs where they can stay for the 'duration'. You won't be needing a thing out of them - everything you're going to need is right here in this very room. Now, I want you to take off those horrid restricting things, get into a nice warm bath and have a good soak. And while you are doing that I shall go and make a nice cup of tea. And I'm going to bring you some milk; you've lost a bit of weight you know, but Auntie is going to take you over completely! I have some lovely things for you to wear and I am sure you are going to love them too.”

“Yes, Auntie,” I said obediently as I pressed my stockinged feet into the luxury of the new white carpet.

“Have you seen what's on the dressing-table,” she said with a mischievous smile.

The dressing-table was a girl's with a little pink frill around the kidney shaped top. The mirror was oval, old fashioned and delightful. As well as a pink brush and comb set with hand-mirror, was a large box with a picture of a little girl making herself up. It was, of course, THE LITTLE LADY'S BEAUTY BOX.

“Oh my,” I exclaimed.

“When I saw that I just couldn't resist it. We can have a lot of fun with that when you and I are all alone together,” she said with a broad grin.

“Gosh, there are all sorts of things in here - lipstick, powder, blusher, eye shadow, nail varnish, earrings, bangles... it seems to have everything.”

“You and I are going to have such fun while you are here. Now go on, you can start by taking all your things off - everything, do you hear, then into a nice warm bath with you.”

I started to undress. I felt so free with Auntie standing there watching me disrobe. It was just like old times.

She picked up my shirt, pants and socks. “Underpants too, dear!”

I proceeded to remove them.

“Oh, my dear, I see they have shaved you in hospital - and that is just how you ought to look, you little darling. I'm going to bring you a bottle of my Nair. It will be so much nicer for you to be completely soft and smooth all over. Will you do that for me?”

I could just feel myself sliding into an exquisite babyhood.

“Yeth,” I lisped as I put my finger into my mouth.

“Oh, you little honey. Well, I'm off to get my tea and your milk and if you are good and do just as you are told I will bring you one of your favorite shortbread fingers,” she said, picking up my underpants.

She was back again in two minutes with a bottle of her Nair in her hand

“You can be as liberal as you like with this, dear - legs from ankles to thighs and don't forget those underarms. I'm so glad you don't have any horrid hair on your chest - you're just not that kind of a person, half man and half ape!”

She eyed my nudity approvingly.

“Leave it on for about 5 or 7 minutes then you can shower it off before getting into your bath.”

By now, the reader will have discerned that the nursery had its own 'en suite' bathroom.

In ten minutes, I was wallowing in the bath - pinker, softer and smoother than I have ever been. Fortunately, I only have to shave about once every ten days or so. There are lots of eighteen year olds like that, who don't have massive doses of testosterone coursing their pipes, tubes and ducts.

Twenty minutes later I was toweling myself down on a nice fluffy pink towel that had FOR BABY woven into it.

The bathroom door opened.

“Let Auntie do that for you, my love. It's been a long time since I have dried you and cuddled you.” She pulled me toward her and gave me a kiss and a little hug.

“And how does my little baby boy feel after its nice bath then? Ooh, isn't it a nice, warm, clean, cuddly little chum,” she said, losing herself in an ecstasy of baby talk.

She was quite mad, of course, but then again, so was I. It was almost a miracle of complementary personalities.

“Am I going to be your little baby boy all the time that I am here?” I queried.

“No dear, not all the time. Sometimes I shall want a little baby GIRL to dress up and play with and to hug. Girls' things are so pretty and cute and I would love to have a little girl sometimes. Now, won't that be fun?”

The way Auntie was sitting, her skirt had ridden up and the dark welts of her stocking tops showed.

“A dressing-up holiday from start to finish and we are going to both indulge ourselves very thoroughly indeed. Would you like that?”

“Yes,” I said shyly, but blissfully happy.

“Of course you would. Oh my darling, I'm so glad you're you and not somebody different,” she said sighing happily as she reached for the tin of Johnson's.

“Come and lie over here. I'm going to powder your little botty, and that cute little tail at the front,” she said archly.

I lay down on the cot to be attended to.

“And what have they done to my little pretty?” she cooed as she inspected my scar closely and properly for the first time. She stooped down and planted a kiss on the reddened, slightly swollen area. I had had the stitches out the previous day so there was no longer a covering plaster. “There, doesn't that smell lovely?” as the powder was liberally applied.

“Yeth,” I lisped.

She gave my John a playful little squeeze, a bit naive of her, considering, but she had done it hundreds of times before and there was I, looking just like a very small boy again and playing up to it.

“Now you just wait and see what I have got in those drawers for you.” She went to the dressing-table and returned with a soft, ribbed vest, a pink romper with white piping around the collar, a diaper and a pair of fluffy pink booties, size five.

“One never knows what might happen after the sort of operation you have just had,” she rationalized as she proceeded to put the diaper on me, “and it's better to be safe than sorry, isn't it lovikins?”

As I made no reply - I was wallowing in bliss - she went on firmly, “Of course it is. Auntie knows what's best,” securing the nappy tightly with its built-in sticky tapes.

“And now, the vest!” She guided my arms into the sleeve holes. Finally came the romper, which was buttoned up between my legs - and the booties, of course.

“I think that looks lovely and cute on you,” said Auntie, eyeing her handiwork with satisfaction. She went to the dressing-table and returned with a dummy.

“I found cigarettes in your jacket pocket!” She could hardly have said it with more severe horror.

I wanted to giggle at my scatological analogy but merely grinned sheepishly.

“I'm trying to give it up, ” I said weakly.

“You are certainly going to give it up,” she said in a voice that brooked no shilly-shallying with the eschewing of the weed. “My psychiatrist friend, Mildred Palmer, she's a doctor you know, avers that this is a wonderful aid to giving it up.”

So saying, she dipped the dummy into a bottle of sweet syrup she had in her other hand and popped it into my mouth.

“Now, I'm just going downstairs and will be back in three minutes with our el-evenses.”

She reappeared at the stroke of eleven with a tea tray in her hands. Her own tea had already been poured and Candardled (a sweetner).

"This place is like a little bit of heaven, Auntie," I crooned.

"And you are the sunshine of my life," she responded fondly. "I am going to do so many things with you in this next fortnight - things to you, things with you, things together. Let me show you some of the stuff I have bought.

She made her way to the now magical dressing-table and returned with two more rompers, both in a bright floral. But what made my heart miss a beat were two of the cutest little pinafore frocks you have ever seen. She held them up for my inspection and I could feel myself beginning to throb.

"Darling, you may think me quite mad to have bought these, but like with the beauty box of tricks, I found them quite irresistible, and dressing up little girls in pretty things is so dear to most women's hearts and YOU are my dearest dear... and so... I thought..."

Her voice trailed away as she stood looking at me with her head slightly to one side.

"You are going to let me indulge myself, aren't you? And they come with these frilly little knickers, socks and button-over shoes."

In the meantime, I was just about swooning with ecstasy. It was just as well I was lying down with the quilt over me.

"Why, lovie, I do believe you are trembling. Do you find what I have said all that upsetting?"

"No, Auntie, I find all of it that exciting. It makes me go all weak at the knees," I gasped with complete and utter honesty.

"Then we ARE in clover then," she chirruped gleefully.

"And can I have a session with the beauty box too?" I asked breathlessly - and needlessly.

"Darling, that was the whole idea! Why do you think I bought it, you silly little goose?"

"Oh Auntie," I sighed.

"I think it's time for a nice little nap before lunch, dear. You have to get your strength back."

Excited as I was, the bottle had had a soporific effect on me. I remember, as I drowsed off, wondering if there hadn't been some sort of narcotic in the milk.

MAYBE, maybe, maybe...

I awoke to Auntie feeling to see if the diaper was wet. It wasn't, of course. I felt I could hardly have indulged her fantasy to that extent, but even had I crapped into the nappy I am quite sure she would have handled it with unblinking aplomb and even satisfaction. But alas, an eighteen year old's stools are not the same as infant faecal puree.

Her own fantasies - and, for heaven's sake, we were also heavily encumbered with our own! - were indulged to the extent that I was given some sort of infant puree for lunch, of very dubious color, which she fed to me with a spoon. She, between my own mouthfuls, got stuck into a crumbed pork chop.

Strong as Auntie is, I protested.

"Auntie, dear, I can eat normal food, you know," I expostulated plaintively.

"Oh no, you can't, not after that big operation you have just had. I am here to look after you; you need things that are easily digestible, my little love."

In spite of the endearment, there was an unmistakable Lady Brackneil edge to her voice, so I merely mentally consoled myself with the other advantages I was enjoying. However, it takes a revolting mass of infant puree to satisfy a reasonably healthy appetite, especially when one is watching a disappearing crumbed pork cutlet and one is essentially a red meat and gravy sort of person.

I cheered up when Auntie Flo said, "Dear, I am going to try one of those little frocks on you this afternoon and then I shall take a photo of you out in the garden".

I brightened at the prospect. Fortunately, Saxe-Coburg is surrounded by a high, privacy-giving private hedge and we were cut off from the possibly derisive stares of the wider world. At the bottom of the garden was a folly, an ideal place for photographs.

The lunch things were cleared and the pretties tricked out again, this time for putting on.

"The nappy is going to have to come off darling because you will be wearing these frilly little knickers. Aren't they just too adorable?"

There were several tiers of lace across the ever so slightly padded bum. I kept the vest on as Auntie slipped the frock over my head and did the buttons up at the back. It had puffed sleeves that came halfway down my upper arms. The frock was powder blue with a flared skirt, and the pinafore white with dark blue edging. "Now the socks and shoes," giggled Auntie excitedly as the shodding proceeded afoot.

Claude de Pussy watched the goings on in silent amazement.

"I want you sitting down in the chair while I comb your hair right back, dear, in preparation for the cherry on the top," she said archly.

The 'cherry on the top' turned out to be a gorgeous, curly, shoulder length blonde wig which she fetched from her bedroom. She fitted it on and fluffed it out with brush and comb. "I think that looks absolutely lovely on you. And now for the ribbon." The latter was the same blue as the pinafore piping and 2" wide.

All this time, of course, I had a partial erection. It was just as well that the recent operation prevented a rock hard, priapismic condition. Also, the panties were fairly firm and the skirt concealingly flared.

"Now, stand up and let's have a look at you. That, darling, looks soo, sooo lovely on you. Now let's go down to the folly and we will take some snaps. And bring Teddy with you; there must be a bit more color."

The photographing took over 30 minutes before Auntie was satisfied with all the shots. We also put the camera on the automatic exposure and had several of us taken together and one with me holding Claude.

“Now dear, what shall we do next?”

“Can I go and play with my box of tricks?”

“I was hoping you were going to say that. Off you go then and come and show me what you have done to yourself when you are finished. I am going to sit out here in the garden and read my novel.”

I hurried upstairs and sat down at the dressing-table and opened my beauty box.

“Oh my, oh my,” I said for a second time as I surveyed the goodies inside. I creamed my face with a light flesh colored cream called 'The Base', followed by a little blusher and some eye shadow - not too much; I jolly well wasn't going to end up looking like a clown! A touch of face powder to give it a nice matte finish, to be followed by the cherry red lipstick.

I cocked my head to one side as I appraised my handiwork in the mirror; I liked what I saw. I tried on the necklace, bangles and matching earrings, the same color blue as my ribbon.

Putting on nail varnish wasn't quite as easy as I thought - I had to do a few of my nails several times before I got it right, but in the end it was a most acceptable manicure.

I stood up and surveyed myself in the mirror. It, nay, I, looked awfully nice. I hurried to Auntie's room to see what I looked like in her full length mirror and smiled a happy smile - a girlish smile. I knew where Auntie kept her handbags and gloves and opened her cupboard door to rummage for the last two items of my ensemble.

Suitably attired, I sallied forth, but before going outside into the garden for Auntie to see me, I put on her record, *'Sailing Down the River on a Sunday Afternoon'* and turned it up.

Auntie looked up and positively squeaked with surprise and glee when she saw me.

“My darling little girl, you look too, too divine. Have you ever practiced at being a lady before? You have done your make-up so, so, well. I am going to call you Miriam as you remind me of a woman friend of mine with that name. I must take another photo of you just as you are. Stand over there,” she said, reaching for the camera.

And so we had another snapshot session.

“You know, in spite of that little girl's dress you have on you really look quite grown-up and sophisticated as you are. Go and try one of my frocks on. I'd love to see what my little niece Miriam is going to look like when she is a grown-up lady. I'll come up with you to my room and get out some things for you to put on, then you can come out here and we will have a grown-up ladies' tea party together.”

She led the way up to her bedroom and made for her lingerie drawers. “Now, where are those falsies I used to wear years ago? Ah yes, here they are; you'll need these, of course, and one of my bras and a nice pair of sneer nylons. I'm sure you will get into

my high heels quite easily. Here, give me a kiss you lovely darling,” which I proceeded to do.

“Now then, what else will you need? You are going to have to put on a lady's girdle, of course, to keep those stockings of yours up. This is a lovely one - nice and firm,” she said, holding up a black, well made girdle, high waisted with six suspenders and side zip.

“There are a few odd bits of foam rubber in this bottom drawer here that you might like to use to give yourself a bit of a derriere and some hips. Ladies do develop a bit of a figure as they get older, you know.

She also took out a pair of her panties and a black petticoat.

“There,” she said finally, “I think I should leave you with a bit of your own initiative and you can choose one of my frocks to put an all by yourself. Let that be at least one little surprise I will get when you come out and show yourself to me”.

Planting another peck on my cheek, she left me to my devices.

It took me a whole hour to get dressed and I enjoyed every minute of it. Auntie only wore the loveliest of undies and they felt heavenly. I selected a blue jersey silk floral frock and with hat, gloves and handbag I was all ready. I had kept my little girl's jewelry on. I crept down the stairs, went out the back way, made my way round the outside of the house, entered by the front gate, and approached Auntie where she sat from behind.

“Florence, my dear”, I trilled. “I should have phoned before dropping in on you like this but I was passing and I felt I just had to drop in.”

Auntie Florence looked up from her reading thoroughly startled.

“Oh Miriam, you did give me a start. I think I recognized my own clothes before I recognized you. Let's have a good look at you. That looks lovely on you, It really does. You are a complete woman and make a wonderful female impersonator. I can't get over you. More photographs,” she said brightly.

“You know what? I think we can both go down to the Del Monico for tea this afternoon instead of having it here. It will be a lovely little adventure and you are quite unrecognizable as a young man anymore. I do love you the way you are - but you will be my little baby tonight again, won't you?”

“I would go through the seven ages of woman for you in constant rotation,” I said, laughing.

“That will be lovely,” said Auntie with a joyful laugh.

Well, that first day was a microcosm of the whole holiday.

There is one more thing to be told. Was it terribly naughty? Perhaps it was - but to complete the chronicle, I must tell it.

I had made my way down to the fridge one night at 1:30 and the house was in darkness. I had on a little girl's nightie and the nappy that Auntie always insisted I wear to bed — “Just In case, dear.” I was after a cold pork chop that I knew was in the Fridge.

As I stood there munching it with the fridge door open, Auntie called out, "Is that you, darling?"

I got quite a start. "Yes, Auntie, I had a bad dream."

"Then come and crawl in with me, you poor baby. Come on love."

I made my way to her room, my heart thumping a bit. She had switched her bedside light on and held her arms out towards me. "Come and let Auntie cuddle you, my angel."

I made my way toward her bed, got in beside her and nuzzled down in her wonderful loving arms.

She leaned across, switched off the light and cuddled me close to her.

"You know, I so wish I had a little baby of my own. I so desperately wanted that all my life. Do you think I will ever have that joy before I die?" she whispered.

"Auntie, darling," (I'd never called her that before) "I'm your little baby aren't I?"

"Of course you are my little lovikins."

“DOCTOR PAULA K.”

By Joyce

I'm not going to disclose Dr. Paula's full name for a thousand and one reasons. Mainly, of course, she hasn't given me permission. Paula is a dermatologist, although not a doctor in the conventionally accepted medical sense. She could not, for instance, write drug prescriptions, nor would she be allowed to take part in a surgery team's removal of anything as simple as a mole on the chin. She has a Ph.D. in physiology, hence the doctor label; her research project was on skin problems and skin rejuvenation.

There is, I confess, a faint smack of mumbo-jumbo about 'skin rejuvenation'. It seems to belong in the annals of alchemy and the poking around of the Iatro chemists in their search for the 'Elixir of Life' in medieval times - superseded now by modern cosmetology.

My own knowledge of the subject is limited to the application of Royal Jelly from a queen bee, but I believe that is now a bit passe'.

Paula is disconcertingly bright and I find anybody disconcertingly bright a bit of a handful (I am very ordinary), so this is not a case of MCP-ism rampant. In fact, if she comes through in this narrative as nothing more than mediocre, those are my limitations, not hers!

The good doctor lived in the flat next door to me.

We had been on nodding terms for several months and our exchanges had by this time progressed to remarks about the weather.

I eventually decided it was time to invite her over for a drink. I practised the words - it had to sound nonchalantly 'throw away', and I was mildly surprised, and delighted, that she accepted with some alacrity.

She could have been a bit lonely, although I had zilch to offer by way of high powered conversation on the Isles of Langerhans, kidney stones or even enlarged pores!

My own skin, dear reader, is greasy, fairly coarse and with pores like craters on the moon around the nose. But I did not intend to discuss them. Luckily, I am old enough to know that you don't discuss 'O' level maths (or 'A' for that matter) with professional actuaries, or try to expound ridiculous sci-fi theories about entropy and enthalpy with professional civil engineers.

The fact that she duly arrived in a cocktail frock, stockinged, made up (she never entered the lift that way) and with 3" heeled court shoes, I found flattering. All I had to offer was the usual range of spirits, crinkly chips, pecan nuts and roll-mops at four quid a jar - and enlarged pores!

“Ah, Dr. K,” I said brightly, “come in, come in!”

“For God's sake, call me Paula,” was her opening remark. “I'm Dr. K.'ed up hill and down dale all day in the lab. Even, my mother, once, introduced me as Dr. K, and in my presence, at one of her hatted-and-gloved ladies' tea parties; I could have killed her. But she, poor dear, quit school in Form 4 and has an unholy respect for any academic 'adventuring' beyond 'C' level! You're Doug, aren't you?”

I had already had two large scotches before she arrived and was equal to the exchange.

“I think I'd have enjoyed your mother. I left school in the 3rd form.” It wasn't meant to be a put dow but it may have sounded like one.

“Yes, I know,” returned Paula coolly. “You teach senior English, so if we can go by the spelling of some of my GCE assistants, that figures! I have a dossier on you, you know,” she added archly.

If I was flattered before, I was flattened now.

“Do you now?” I replied weakly.

“Well, it's not a dossier in the conventional sense. I just type your name into my computer and press ENTER and a fascinating life-story swims before my eyes.”

I wasn't too sure how seriously to take her.

She could see I was a bit non-plussed, if not to say, ruffled; my poise has a high center of gravity and is easily toppled.

Laughing, she continued: “Oh yes, I should also mention, that Gladys, the maid who 'does' for me three times a week, also 'does' for you on the other two days. All I do is ply the good Gladys with questions.”

I made a mental note of the fact that she was interested enough to do just that.

The good doctor continued to eye me with good humored amusement and I found myself wondering how much she did, in fact, know about me.

Although I keep my female gear locked up, total security 100% of the time, is, in two words, 'im possible'.

Gladys did say to me, once, several months back, “Where the madam?”

“Gone away,” I replied tersely and in a voice that invited no further discussion.

If Gladys had seen things in the ‘Blue Room’ which I had rather she hadn't, at least she didn't help herself to my liquor and disguise the shortfall with added water as my previous maid had done. So Gladys stayed and we both continued our modus vivendi of silence on the matter of the female duds.

I think I would like to have said to her, “And so, Gladys, what do you make of all this? You'll find the word, ‘transvestitism’ mentioned in most works on anthropology, so what is your experience of the phenomenon?”

She would have stared at me uncomprehendingly, of course, so I wisely desisted
But back to the scene in my living room.

By this time Paula was seated and had ordered a LARGE scotch and ice. She stabbed at one of the pickled herrings.

I have a 'maggot' about sheer black stockings - I have six pairs of my own: she crossed her legs and I stared like a voyeuristic bloody fool.

She 'took me in' at a glance.

"Let's take your mind off things. Tell me about literature and belles-lettres and stuff. I'm a 'barbarian', you know. Give me a reading list."

"Albert Einstein, Isaac Asimov and Fred Hoyle," I replied with a grin.

You're teasing me, you know, and that isn't fair. Einstein didn't write fiction - at least I don't think he did."

Somewhat abashed, I tried to make amends.

"Austen, Bronte and Eliot might be a good beginning," I ventured.

"Do you prefer woman writers?" she asked, looking at me closely.

"Not necessarily, they are just three that sprung to mind."

"Ah, so." What she said sounded like 'Arse hole' which I probably deserved.

We talked about cabbages and kings for about twenty minutes.

Then she homed in on what could have possibly been her reason for coming in the first place. "Can I invite you to be my guinea-pig? I can guarantee that in 14 days you'll have a skin as smooth as a baby's bum." (Clearly, she wasn't used to a large scotch!)

"Two questions, please. One, shouldn't you be doing this sort of thing on rhesus apes first? And two, what makes you think I WANT a skin as smooth as a baby's bum?"

"All right — two answers; rhesus apes are all nasty and hairy and the cream is only designed for the species homo sapiens-sapiens."

"Why do you have to say 'sapiens' twice? I thought we were all just homo sapiens."

"That's because we are extra special," she said, grinning broadly.

"Ah, so," said I, grinning back.

"You know, I have a sneaky feeling that you and I are going to get on pretty well. And if you are allowed to stare at my legs, then I can stare at your nose - in a clinical kind of way, of course." She proceeded to appraise my conk 'clinically'.

I leered at her legs in return, a bit more openly this time.

"If you are worried about the cream being carcinogenic, you don't have to, Doug, it is really quite safe, you know."

"Well, you're the doctor. To be brutally frank, my coarse skin does worry me a bit. I give you carte blanche to wave your magic wand."

"Spoken like a ... woe-man," she said, after a moment's thought, but smiling broadly all the same. She rummaged in her bag and came to light with a jet black bot-

tle about the size of a Pond's Cream jar. The music I had put on was Moussorgsky's "*Night on a Bare Mountain*".

The whole scene seemed to hang together - black bottles, mumbo-jumbo, weird music and an unattainable and devastatingly attractive woman in masterful control. Aargh!!!

"I want you to apply this, not too liberally, each night before you go to bed. A little goes a long way but remember, by using twice as much it won't make you twice as beautiful; it doesn't work that way."

"Then it must be just like shoe polish," I said mischievously. It had a faint smell of Innoxia and the appearance of iridescent marge.

"If it helps your skin it will help anyone's. The sales pitch will be aimed at women but there is no earthly reason why men shouldn't use it as well. One of the directors even suggested calling it 'Androgyny.' I think I rather approve of that," said Paula after a moment's reflection.

"Well, I am not going to bed for several hours yet but I will try an application right now."

"Yes, do," said Paula approvingly

I applied the new unguent delicately while she helped herself to another scotch at my invitation. "There. any change yet?"

"Don't be daft, lad"

It was a delightful evening and at 8 o'clock I suggested we go out to dinner, which is exactly what we did.

I suppose I saw Dr. Paula almost every other day after that. Our relationship had graduated to a regular Saturday morning squash date, and giving her a playful wallop across the bum with a squash racquet now and then was accepted with arch equanimity. I would have preferred to have done it by hand, of course, but I am a slow mover.

Several weeks after our first date we were descending in the lift together to the car park.

"That cream has done wonders for your complexion, you know," said Paula, eyeing me with clinical approval.

Men, of course, don't have 'complexions' in the accepted sense of the term but that was the word she used. I, of course, was thrilled with the effects that Androgyny was having. The pores at the side of my nose were almost completely closed up. My skin was a lot less greasy and looking much more like a woman's facial epidermis.

Even Mildred, the school secretary, said to me, "You had a face-lift or something, love?"

"What on earth do you mean?"

“Nothing, only you seem to be looking much younger these days - like Dorian Gray must have looked.”

I accepted the compliment with a mysterious smile.

Then a 'wicked' thought occurred to me. What if I invited Paula to lunch on Saturday after squash and dressed up for the occasion. I somehow divined that she would not be horribly thrown - the contrary possibly!

I had once fantasized that I had a pair of magic glasses and when worn, people would appear in shades of blue. The light blues were inimical and hostile towards TVism but the lush dark blues were accepting and embraced the sight of a TV with joyful glee. As one gets older, one acquires this skill anyway, or to a degree at least. I suspected that Paula would be a deep and lush, plush blue, like Gainshorough's BLUE BOY's knickerbockers.

The lunch date was duly arranged for after squash the following day. We always retired to our respective flats for a shower and change; had I had the nerve I would have suggested we shower together but for all her friendliness, she exuded a faint aura of 'touch-me-not,' buster.

I generally read in bed for an hour or so but that Friday night I found concentration pretty well impossible.

“You must be stark raving bloody mad, I muttered to myself as I applied the 'marge' for the sixteenth time I had never indulged in a caper of this sort in my life before. I could always change my mind at the last minute of course, if I got cold feet.

Saturday dawned wet and cool, the sort of weather that always turned me on a bit. Still undecided, I went through the motions of a typical pre-dressing-up bath - Nair (legs and underarms), a ten minute fiddling around with eyebrows, to be followed by a long, happy, sybaritic soak. I always shaved while sitting in the bath and always used a new blade. I emerged 30 minutes later soft and pink and sweet smelling - I had applied a scented talcum powder fairly liberally.

Donning on a very unisex track suit and tennis shoes I went shopping for the lunch to come. I returned to the flat with plenty of time to do my nails which meant shaping them and applying an undercoat. I had done my spade work. Our squash date was at 11 a.m. and we always played for one hour.

On this fateful day, Paula thrashed me three nil. She played with aggression and panache although I generally managed to take one game in three.

“I adore beating MEN,” she trilled as we came off the court and gave me a playful whollop across my bum.

“Okay, love,” I answered cheerfully, “you 'dood' it fair and square. Let's go on to the showers and to luncheon; note, I didn't say 'lunch'. Lunches are bread and jam but I have rustled up summat fairly classy so take care to call it 'Luncheon'”

“Then I shall dress for the occasion.”

“I will leave the flat door open and when you are ready just barge in. I belong to the venerable order of shower soakers and take a longish time to look decent again. And be a dear, put on those gorgeous black stockings you wear sometimes.”

“I was going to anyway.”

We made our way back to our flats in our own cars but I raced ahead and got back four minutes before she did. I had everything laid out on the bed but I felt I had to hurry and not pause to think of what I was getting up to.

Hurling my sweaty squash togs into the laundry basket I hastily showered, retailed, and entered the bedroom starkers. First I put on a waist nipper to be followed by a special pair of elastic panties with built-in hip pads and derriere. This was now overlaid with a front fastening black corselette with six suspenders. All this gives one a marvelous figure. I did up a pair of ultra sheer black stockings, very tight, and slipped into my 3" black high heels.

I surveyed myself in the full length mirror. Thank the Lord my legs are GOOD and looked plump and extremely feminine; I nearly swooned at the sight of them.

Until then, I was dressing a bit mechanically, but suddenly Dorothy took me over; Dorothy is my femme name. I started by having another go at my eyebrows and ended up with a pair of very thin arches.

“Ooh, la, la!” I murmured girlishly as I surveyed the shapely remnants. Slipping on black lace panties and petticoat, I began to have a go at my face. I say it myself, but the new 'unguent' had worked wonders. My skin was flawless and soft looking and extremely feminine.

Base, rouge, shadow, eye liner and face powder followed as hastily as I dared. I slipped the black narrow skirted cocktail frock on before doing my lips in a bright pillarbox red. Then the long, curly, auburn wig, pearl necklace and pearl earrings and a woman's watch. I sat down to do my nails a matching pillarbox red and waved them around frantically to dry the varnish.

“My God, Doug, you take as long as a girl to dress,” called out Paula from the lounge. “What are you up to in that bedroom of yours?” she called.

I hadn't heard her come in.

“Shan't be a minute,” I called back. “You can pour yourself a drink and pour me a large scotch at the same time.”

I reached for the scent spray and sprayed on far too much. It was a short sleeved frock and was worn with a pair of long black nylon gloves. I picked up the handbag and regarded myself in the mirror. I think I was shaking a bit but there was no way of backtracking and finking it now.

I made my way casually into the sitting room.

“Now, where is that drink you were supposed to pour me?” I asked, as if what I were doing was the most natural thing in the world.

I doubt if a lightning bolt could have had more effect on Paula as I entered the room. Her jaw literally dropped open like a cartoon figure with an exclamation mark above the head.

“Dougie,” she positively squeaked out. She had never used the diminutive form of 'Doug' or 'Douglas' before, “and to think that I thought you were a bit of a nerd.”