



Reluctant Press

Jesse And Jessica

Laurel Galen



ILLUSTRATIONS BY BRIAN DUKEHART

A 'HER TV' NOVEL

Copyright © 2002, Friendly Applications, Inc. - All Rights Reserved

Reluctant Press TG Publishers

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

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

Protect Professional Fiction on the Internet!

We need *your* help! We want to keep providing our readers with low cost, professional quality fiction on the Internet. We spend thousands of dollars to edit, illustrate and typeset *each story*. It is important, therefore, that everyone works to help keep professional fiction alive on the Net.

This story is protected by US and International copyright law, and is owned exclusively by Friendly Applications, Inc, DBA Reluctant Press, which retains exclusive rights to publish these materials. The civil penalties for copyright infringement can be severe, including substantial monetary damages, injunctive relief, and liability for attorneys' fees incurred in prosecuting a case. If a court determines that the infringement was committed willfully, statutory damages of up to \$100,000 for each copyright infringed can be awarded. Even if not found to be acting willfully, a defendant can still be held liable for statutory damages of \$500 to \$20,000 for each copyright infringed. **These penalties apply even if money was not charged.** In addition, criminal penalties may be imposed if someone willfully infringes a copyrighted work for commercial advantage or private financial gain. This crime is punishable by up to five years imprisonment, up to \$250,000 in fines, or both. State civil damages and criminal penalties vary from state to state and country to country, but are always severe.

The best way to keep professional illustrated fiction available on the Internet is to do YOUR part to protect the author's and publisher's copyright. *You can be part of the solution.* Encourage others to purchase our stories. Never share the access rights you've purchased. **You** make the continued availability of TG fiction on the Internet possible. Thank you for your cooperation!

JESSE AND JESSICA

By Laurel Galen

Jesse Harding was whistling contentedly as he walked home the few blocks between Lincoln High and his home. He felt that he had every reason to be happy; he had done very well on the first quarter exams, and he had all expectations that he would do equally well on the midterms and finals, which would clinch his expected scholarship to Mid-state University across town.

Furthermore, tomorrow was his eighteenth birthday, which would bring with it the car his mother had promised him. Although she had worked many years as a cosmetologist, they were not very affluent, and he hadn't expected any golden chariot. They had gone to the Automart earlier in the week and selected a good, serviceable vehicle which had some nice lines, and didn't have too much mileage on the odometer. Best of all, his euphoric mood was bolstered by the fact that he had a date for Saturday night with Alicia Hudson, the prettiest girl in his class.

As he approached his home, a modest house on a suburban street in a middle-class neighborhood, he continued his carefree whistling until he reached the driveway which paralleled the side of the house. The garage at the end of the driveway contained his mother's car. Ordinarily, when she came home early, it was a sign that she was not feeling well, since she was subject to occasional migraine headaches, and she would go to bed in her darkened bedroom until she felt better.

Worriedly, Jesse stopped whistling, climbed the front porch steps, opened the screen door, and unlocked the front door, which he quietly closed behind him. He immediately became aware of a muffled crying sound from the kitchen area. Crossing the living room, he opened the kitchen door and stood there frozen.

His mother was seated at the table with her head buried in her arms, crying heartbreakingly! Jesse stood there for a brief moment, then quickly went over to her.

“Mother!,” he cried, “What's wrong?”

Startled, she raised her head, and Jesse was overcome with the distress he felt as he saw that her face was wet with tears. Apparently she had been weeping steadily for some time before his arrival.

“Mother!,” he repeated, “What happened?”

"Jesse! You startled me!" she said, and taking out a Kleenex from a box on the table, she began to wipe her eyes and face. As she raised her head, Jesse could see that her eyes were red and swollen, as if she had been crying lengthily and forcefully.

By this time, Jesse was becoming rather upset and said, "Mother! Will you please tell me what's the matter.... what happened! WHY WERE YOU CRYING?"

"It's not important, and besides, I don't think you'd really want to know!"

"How can you say that? I come in and find you crying your eyes out and you're trying to tell me that it's "not important?" You've got to tell me what's wrong.!"

Marcia Harding looked at her son for a long moment and finally spoke, "You really want to know, do you?"

"Of course," he replied.

By now Marcia had completely recovered from her recent weeping, and calmly said,

"All right.... you asked for it."

At these words, spoken in an unnaturally dead voice by his mother, Jesse unconsciously braced himself to hear that something terrible had happened. In all his life, he had never heard or seen his mother in such a state, except, possibly, when his father had died when Jesse had been six years old, so he made himself ready to hear something equally dreadful.

His mother looked at him levelly, as if she already knew how he would take her words, and spoke, "I was crying because your sister would have been eighteen tomorrow too."

Jesse turned white, and stuttered, "M-m-my sister! - What are you saying.... wh-wh-what sister?"

Marcia turned to him, and in a deadly calm voice said, "It's about time that you knew."

"Knew what?" Jesse asked.

"The night when you were born, another baby was born at the same time. She was your twin sister. She was born with a malformed heart, and lived only three days. If she had been born now, with the radical medical techniques available, she could have been saved, but she lingered and died."

"Your father and I were completely devastated, and afterward, we could never bring ourselves to talk about her. Although we tried, we were never able to have any more children. When Daddy passed away.... that was that!"

"Why haven't you ever told me about this before?" asked Jesse.

Marcia replied, "I couldn't bear to talk about it... ever! Even though hardly a day has gone by since then that I haven't thought about it, and wished that, like other mothers with daughters, I had had one to raise and be my friend, and watch blossom into womanhood... someone to go shopping with and talk "girl talk" with. I've tried to hide it, but there have been times when I've felt unbearably unhappy, just like I am now... and that's why you found me in such a miserable state. She would have been eighteen tomorrow, and we would have been able to celebrate your birthday together."

Jesse found himself wishing that there were something he could do or say that would help relieve his suffering mother, and, before he could stop himself, he blurted out, "Mother! I would do anything for you, if I could!"

Marcia raised her head and looked at him directly for the first time since he had come into the kitchen. "Do you really mean that," she said..... "seriously?"

"Of course I do!" Jesse replied. "You know I would."

"You're absolutely sure? You really mean it?"

"Mother! You're driving me crazy.... will you please- tell me what I can do to help?" Jesse beseeched her.

She fixed her gaze on him, and, calmly spoke, " You - could be my daughter."

CHAPTER 2

Jesse turned white. Visions of surgically-created women like Christine Jorgenson whirled through his mind, and he had to sit down.

His mother, realizing from his expression what he was thinking, reached over and took his hand. She smiled for the first time that afternoon, and said, "Honey, it's not what you think. I meant that you could be my daughter in action and appearance only."

Hearing these words, Jesse calmed down considerably, and said, "How could I do that? I don't know anything about anything like that."

She replied, "You're pretty bright. I can teach you everything you'd need to know in a short time."

Jesse said, "Maybe that's so, but when could I do anything like that? I'm in school every weekday, and I've always got something going on Saturdays with the guys...." He stopped abruptly, and continued hesitantly, " ...and I'm just starting to get somewhere with Alicia Hudson, and I expect to see a lot of her!"

"Well, that leaves us Sundays, doesn't it," Marcia said brightly, but Jesse could see the desperation in her expression, which told him how urgently she needed his agreement. Amidst his feelings of confusion there was one of amazement at himself that he had not refused out of hand, but, seeing how important it was to his mother, he gave himself an out. "I'll have to think about it." he told her. "Let me sleep on it, and we'll talk about it again tomorrow."

As important as it was to her, Marcia had to be content with that for the moment.

"Of course, dear," she told him. "I've waited eighteen years for a daughter, so I can wait another few hours."

Later, Jesse didn't have much appetite for his dinner. He picked at his food, and abruptly rose from the table. "I'm going up to my room. I've got a lot of homework," he said. "I've got to hand in a science paper tomorrow, and it's only half done."

He kissed his mother and left the kitchen.

Climbing the stairs slowly, his mind was not occupied with homework. It was a whirl with the content of his conversation with his mother. What was he going to do about it?

After entering his room, he sat at his desk and tapped at the typewriter in a desultory fashion for a while, until he forced his mind to concentrate on his paper. As he got into it, he finally found himself able to guide his thoughts along the proper channels until he finished the paper in a satisfactory, workmanlike manner.

Exhausted, he showered and climbed into bed and tried to sleep. He heard his mother's preparation for bed in her room down the hall, and a click as she turned off her light.

Even in the dark, he was unable to close his eyes and twisted and turned in his bed, but he was unable to exclude the subject from his mind. How was he going to handle it? What if he went along with her desires and was found out by his friends.... and, even worse, by Alicia?

He shuddered at the thought. On the other hand, he couldn't prevent himself from considering the matter from his mother's point of view. He knew how she had sacrificed herself for him over the years. It had not been easy, as a single parent, for her to maintain their home after his father passed away. She had put in long hours at her job at the travel agency, and, on occasion, had taken additional part-time work in order to provide them with a few luxuries. A perfect example, he knew, was the car he was to receive on the next day. They had had to do a lot of budgeting, including some help from his own after-school earnings, in order to be able to afford to purchase it.

It didn't help him get to sleep that he was also troubled by guilt..... guilt that he lived when his baby sister did not; guilt that his mother had sacrificed herself for him all his life, including the present. With these thoughts and feelings, he finally fell into a restless sleep.

The next morning, when he came downstairs for breakfast, he found his mother at the kitchen table, sipping her morning tea.

Tiredly, he fell into a chair at the table, and spoke, "Mother, I don't know how it's going to work out, but if it will help you, I'm willing to give it a try."

The expression of happiness which spread over her features went a long way toward making Jesse glad for his decision, and he continued, "I've already got this weekend planned; I've got a date with Alicia on Saturday and I'm playing in a baseball game with some guys on Sunday."

Marcia replied, "That's fine with me. It'll give me time to get a few things for you, and we can begin next Sunday."

Having made his decision, for better or for worse, Jesse felt as if a weight had been lifted from his shoulders. He finished his breakfast, gathered his books and papers, and was ready to leave for school, when his mother said, "You never looked in the garage yesterday, did you?"

With everything else that had been on his mind, Jesse had just about forgotten it was his birthday.... and what had been due to arrive with it! They went out together, and, opened the garage door. There it was! Standing beside Marcia's old sedan was Jesse's new car, gleaming like a jewel. The auto agency had done a beautiful job of polishing it up before it had been delivered, and it made Jesse's heart swell up with pride..... his own car!

“Happy birthday, dear!” his mother said, “Take good care of it.”

“You can just bet I will!” exclaimed Jesse. “Can I take it to school?”

“You can just bet you can... I mean 'may' ” she corrected him. “It's yours.”

As Jesse proudly drove his car the few blocks to school, he did so very slowly to make the ride last longer. Arriving at Lincoln High, he was fortunate to find a space directly in front of the main entrance. Very carefully, he pulled into the curb and parked. He got out, and dusted off an imaginary speck from the immaculate fender. Grabbing his books, he entered the building and arrived at his home room a few minutes before the bell. A moment later, Alicia entered with a couple of her girl friends and, after a few last-minute words with them, she slid into a seat at the desk next to his.

In the short interval before the teacher came in, they chatted with each other regarding their upcoming date for Saturday night.

They had planned to see “TOOTSIE” and Jesse said, “we'll see it at the Rexford.”

“But that's in Weldon!” she said, naming a town 15 miles from their home town of Belmont. “The film is playing here in town at the Bijou. By the time the show lets out in Weldon, we'll miss the last bus back to Belmont. How will we get home?”

“Aha!” he said smugly. “See me at the main entrance right after school, and I'll tell you all about it okay?”

Alicia was about to carry the matter further, but the teacher entered, and she had to contain herself. Since they were in different classes that day, she was unable to speak to him until the final bell rang, and she excitedly met him at the front entrance of the school.

“Now will you tell me what's all the mystery?” she exclaimed.

Without a word, he took her hand and guided her down the main staircase in front of the entrance and onto the sidewalk. Pointing to the automobile, he struck a pose and cried, “Ta-Da!”

“Your new car!” she cried. “It's beautiful!”

Jesse said, “Hop in! I'll drive you home.”

Unexpectedly, Alicia showed some reticence, which struck Jesse as somewhat strange, given her obvious enthusiasm and delight on his behalf.

“It's on the other side of town, and the school bus stops about a half of a block from my house,” she said.

Jesse said nothing, but the disappointed expression on his face spoke volumes, so after a moment, she said, “Sure... okay,” and climbed into the passenger seat.

She gave him directions, but as they drove toward her home, Jesse was torn with confusion, since her reluctance had been quite evident, but he couldn't bring himself to ask her why.

As they came closer to her neighborhood, the reason started to become evident. The homes were becoming larger and more elaborate the further they went, and when they finally arrived at the street number she gave him, he almost gasped. The home was an estate... a huge mansion with a high hedge along the front of it, with a semicircular driveway running in from the street. As he drove up the driveway, he noted an open 3-car garage with two cars in it, facing outward. One was a Rolls-Royce sedan and the other a late-model Mercedes.

Jesse's joy in his "new" used car shriveled. No wonder Alicia had been reluctant to accept his offer of the ride home! He was suffering the classic "poor boy/rich girl" syndrome.

How could he be of interest to this girl who seemingly had everything. She was beautiful, intelligent, and above all... rich! What could

she see in him, a poor boy from the other side of the (financial) tracks?

Alicia was quite sensitive to his change of mood, and immediately realized the cause of it, and that she had signaled something of the situation in advance when she had hesitated to accept his offer of a ride.

"Are... we still on for Saturday?" he asked her.

"Of course, silly!" she said. Giving him a quick kiss, she picked up her books and walked briskly over to the hose. As he started to drive off, he saw the front door open, and a maid let her into the house.

Light as it had been, her kiss burned on his lips, giving him much food for thought. "I guess she really likes me," he considered, "but how long will it last?"

Bright as he was, Jesse had never had much egotism, and he didn't quite realize that his good looks and sharp mind had been a matter of discussion and admiration by the Lincoln High girls for quite some time. He had never had any problems getting dates, but his innate decency had prevented him from taking advantage of any of the girls he had gone out with, although it had not been from any lack of inclination on the part of some of the girls!

Saturday arrived, and with it, a revival of the intense joy that Jesse had experienced when Alicia had first agreed to go out with him. He spent an inordinate amount of time getting dressed, and when he was finally ready to leave for Alicia's house, his mother inspected him at the front door.

Very proudly, she said, "You look wonderful. Alicia's a lucky girl!"

"I'm the lucky one," he countered. Alicia could go out with any guy in school that she wants to."

"It seems to me," his mother said sagaciously, "that if she has chosen "you-", it means she "really likes you!"

Warmed by his mother's words, he realized that they paralleled his thoughts, so he was feeling pretty good as he got into his car, and began driving across town. The closer he came to Alicia's home, the more his feeling of euphoria faded, until, as he drove up the driveway to the front door, his confidence had given way to nervousness.

He knew that he would be meeting his date's family, and had no idea how they would accept him, a poor boy from the other side of town. His nervousness was not helped any, when the door opened to his ring, and he was greeted by a maid, who ushered him into the library, where he was told, "Miss Alicia will be right down."

As he had feared, there were three people in the library, whom he knew to be Alicia's father, mother and twin brother.

He was immeasurably impressed, if not intimidated by the room. There were more books in the one room than in the entire branch library in his own neighborhood. Three of the walls were completely covered with shelves which groaned under the weight of the books they held, while the fourth wall contained the door through which he had entered as well as a glass tank in which he could see several varieties of tropical fish swimming about.

The father was the first to speak. "Hello, Jesse, I'm Alicia's father, Carl, and these are her mother, Alma and her brother, Alex." He offered his hand, which Jesse took gratefully, and Jesse then shook hands with the mother and brother.

He was amazed to note that none of them took on any of the expected airs he had feared because of the differences in their station from his, and he was gratified that they made a successful attempt to put him at his ease.

Mr. Hudson, in his forties, was of medium build, brown-haired, slightly balding, and wore a dark business suit. His wife was about the same age, slightly built, with her blonde hair done in a becoming pageboy. She wore what was an apparently expensive blue silk dress, with a simple pearl necklace and matching earrings. Alex looked startlingly like Alicia, except that he wore his hair quite short, and it was closer to his father's in color, while Alicia's was as light as her mother's.

His gaze was friendly, and after a few moments, he said, "I've seen you at school, and at a few of the team's baseball games. You sure can hit and run!"

Jesse was pleased at the praise, and deprecatingly said, "Well, I try my best."

Mrs. Hudson, who had been regarding him levelly the while, finally spoke. "I hear you've got a new car, and that you're driving over to Weldon. Wouldn't it be easier and closer to see the same program at the local movie house?"

Embarrassedly, Jesse replied, "I guess that I'm just getting a kick out of my new car, and I wanted to try it out a little."

Support came from an unexpected corner. "It's only 15 miles," said Mr. Hudson, "and it's a good road without much traffic. Let the boy enjoy his new car."

Mrs. Hudson relaxed, possibly remembering her first date with her husband, who had not always been the big businessman that he now was. "His—" first car had been a real jalopy, and he had been as proud of it as Jesse apparently was of his shiny new chariot.

At this juncture, Alicia entered the room, and Jesse nearly gasped at her beauty. Up to now, he had seen her only at school, and, as did most teen-agers, she came to school in outfits that were casual to the extreme.... jeans with shirts hanging out and her hair most often held back in a pony tail. Even so, she was always extremely pretty,. but now, dressed up, she was an absolute knockout!

She wore a simple white tailored blouse with a pleated black skirt. Her hair was in a full pageboy, almost identical with her mother's, with a flower clip over her right ear. She stood on a pair of heels which brought her up to almost his height, and she had on no jewelry except for a gold clip near the collar of her blouse. The ensemble was set off by a wide belt, which brought into prominence a waistline that Jesse ached to surround with his arms, and tightened the blouse to enhance a chest of which no young woman would be ashamed.

"I see you've met the family," she said. "I'm ready, let's go."

With a chorus of "Good-byes, have a nice evening, don't be too late, nice to meet you...." the young couple opened the front door and left.

As they got into the car, Jesse remarked, "I like your family; they seem to be really nice people."

Alicia's reply was fairly noncommittal, "I'm glad.." She knew that her father had used his influence to find out what he could about Jesse, and that his investigations had not only turned up nothing negative about him, but a number of positives, including his popularity with his peers, his athletic ability and his scholarship rating in the top five percentile of his class. He had also learned about Jesse's expected scholarship to Mid-State University, which he had considered to be quite impressive.

As Jesse drove along the highway to Weldon, he kept mentally pinching himself at his good fortune... here he was driving his own car on a date with his dream girl, Alicia, and the evening had begun well with a pleasant meeting with her family.

Arriving in Weldon after an uneventful drive, Jesse found a parking space near the theater, got on line, and bought the tickets. The auditorium level was already quite full, so, after stopping at the refreshment stand for some popcorn, they found seats together in the balcony just as the lights went down and the coming attractions started.

Each time their fingers touched as they reached into the popcorn container, Jesse had a thrill. He realized that he was deeply in love with the girl, and he had a feeling that, given time, this feeling might be reciprocated,

The feature, "TOOTSIE," began, and each was swiftly drawn into the story, but for different reasons. Alicia found the situations hilarious, and laughed gaily at the comedic twists in the plot. Jesse, however, could not help visualizing himself as going through some of the scenes himself, because of what he had promised his mother... to become her daughter.

He studied Dustin Hoffman's actions, and tried to see himself trying to pull off the difficult object of impersonating a female convincingly.

He knew that he didn't have Hoffman's acting talent, but he hoped that his mother would be able to make up for that lack by her love, desire and skill.

When the film was over, Jesse and Alicia went into a nearby cafe, where they had a late snack, before getting into the car and driving back to Belmont. As they drove, they discussed various scenes in the movie they had just seen, and how the various characters had reacted to Dustin Hoffman's persona as a woman. For obvious reasons, Jesse was anxious to know how Alicia felt about a man dressing up as a woman, so he asked her.

She replied, "I guess it depends on why he does it. If it's because he's gay, and does it to attract other men, that would be pretty disgusting, but in this case, the character did it because of necessity!" He couldn't get a job as an actor, so he dressed as a woman in order to survive!"

Jesse had to content himself with this answer, and he changed the subject. One thing he was certain of, as a result of what she had said, was that he was glad that whatever his mother had in mind for him would take place in the privacy of their home. He certainly was not going to take the slightest chance that she would ever see him dressed in women's clothing!

As they drove back to Belmont they talked about school, their friends, teachers and the baseball game scheduled for the next day. After a while they fell quiet, and, undoing her seat belt, she moved over closer to Jesse, and put her head on his shoulder. Although he continued to drive with both his hands on the wheel, he was in heaven, because her action clearly indicated that she cared more about him than as a casual date. About a block from Alicia's home, she asked him to pull over to the curb in a quiet section, and after he had stopped the car, and turned off the ignition and lights, she turned her face to his and, inevitably, he put his arms about her and kissed her. To his amazement and delight, her tongue found its way between his lips, and his joined hers as his head whirled in ecstasy. For the next ten minutes, their hands explored each other frantically until she broke away, and exclaimed, "No! I don't think we want it like this! There's something shabby about "playing around" in a car, and even though I love doing it with you, Jesse, and I guess that this is the only way we'll be able to do it for a while, I hope that we'll be able to do it "right" sometime soon!"

Breathless, Jesse had no choice but to agree with her. He started up the car and drove her to her home on the next block. Pulling up to the front door, he stopped, and they both got out. She took her key out of her purse, and before she inserted it into the lock, he asked her, "Are you coming to the game tomorrow?"

She turned to him and said, "I'll be rooting for you and the team!"

She kissed him warmly, opened the door, saying, "Good night, Jesse," and went in.

Jesse drove home slowly, not trusting himself to go any faster in his excitement in fear of an accident. She really cared for him; her kiss had proved it!

CHAPTER THREE

The next day, Sunday, dawned sunny but cool..... ideal baseball weather. Jesse attended to several chores around the house after breakfast. He mowed the lawn, repaired a small leak in a basement pipe, and trimmed some of the shrubs until lunch time. Early in the afternoon, Jesse showered and put on his uniform and he and Mar-

cia got into his car. He drove to the stadium at the school, for a rare Sunday game with one of Lincoln's principal athletic rivals, Wilson High; rare because an earlier midweek night game had been rained out, and this Sunday was a makeup game. They arrived about thirty minutes before game time, and found that a good-sized crowd was already in the stands. It was an important game, because the winning team would go on to play Severson High for the regional league championship.

Eagerly scanning the crowd, Jesse immediately found Alicia in the second tier, and brought his mother over to introduce them to each other. He was surprised to find her brother Alex sitting next to her.

"I didn't expect to see you here," he said to him.

"Are you kiddin'?" Alex retorted, "I love the game! We'll be rooting for you to knock Wilson into next week!"

Jesse repeated what he had said to Alex earlier at the latter's home, "We'll do our best!"

Marcia sat down in a vacant seat next to Alicia, and as Jesse walked toward the team's dugout, he was pleased to see that they had begun to chat with each other in a friendly fashion.

The game began shortly afterward, and, the teams, being fairly evenly matched, played scoreless ball until the fifth inning, when Wilson scored two runs in their half. The first Lincoln player at bat, Marv Ruffey, stroked a double into left field. The next man up, Ed Harris, hit a single to right, allowing Marv to reach third base. Jesse was next up, and he made the third straight hit for the team, another double, and Marv and Ed reached home, tying the score. The home crowd went wild, but the next three men were retired in order, leaving Jesse stranded on second, but with the score tied.

The next few innings were a pitchers' duel, with no further score through the top of the ninth inning. In Lincoln's half of the ninth, Jesse was the first up, and dumped a Texas League single over the head of the shortstop, making it easily to first base. With the pitcher's next pitch, Jesse was on the way to second, beating the catcher's throw for a stolen base. The next two batters flied out, with Jesse remaining on second. The next batter, Lincoln's pitcher, was replaced by Jackie Miles, a dependable pinch hitter, who promptly smacked a clean single into short left field. Jesse, who was on his way with the crack of the bat, rounded third and made for home, sliding head-first under the catcher's mitt and scoring the winning run!

The delirious home crowd ran onto the field, lifting Jesse and Jackie to their shoulders, and yelled themselves hoarse, since the win meant that Lincoln would meet Severson High for the league championship.

After a quick shower, Jesse changed into street clothes and ran out to the stands where he was awaited by his mother, Alicia and Alex. They went to a nearby coffee shop where they celebrated the win with ice cream sodas. As they sat in the booth, Jesse was pleased to see that Marcia and Alicia had established a very friendly rapport, and were chatting with each other about a variety of subjects, while Alex contented himself with gazing at Jesse with hero worship in his eyes.

Jesse, although basically quite modest, nevertheless basked happily in the congratulations he received from a number of his peers in the coffee shop, and afterwards, drove home with his mother in a warm glow.

During the following week, he spent as much time as possible with Alicia in home room, study hall and in the lunchroom, and the time went by quickly until Saturday, when he spent another wonderful date with Alicia.

Saturday night, he went to bed happier than he had ever been, avoiding any thought of the changes in his life which were to be coming, starting with the following day, Sunday.

CHAPTER 4

After a dreamless sleep, Jesse was awakened by the sun streaming through the Venetian blinds over his windows. He stretched and smiled, remembering the events of the previous day, until he was jolted by the remembrance of the fact that "this was the day!" He couldn't determine in his mind whether this was something to look forward to with dread, since the entire concept was alien to anything he had ever thought of before he had made the promise to his mother... or whether it was something to anticipate with pleasure as being a reward for his mother's sacrifices over the years, and an amelioration for the sorrow over having lost her baby daughter... his twin sister!

Throwing a robe over his pajamas, he went downstairs to the kitchen, where the aroma of fresh-brewed coffee mingled with that of sizzling bacon and hot cakes. He kissed Marcia, and said, "Good morning, Mother. When do we start whatever it is you have in mind?"

"Have your breakfast, dear," she replied. "We'll start after lunch. I have a few last-minute things to attend to first. Don't you have some homework to do between now and then?"

"As a matter of fact, I do have some math work to finish off," he replied, glad for the further respite. "It'll take me a couple of hours."

"Good!" she said. "I'll let you know when I'm ready. Don't bother getting dressed."

Jesse went back to his room, sat down at his desk, and began to work on his math homework, but his mind wasn't on his work. It took him much longer than usual, but he was done just before being called by Marcia for lunch.

She had prepared a light lunch, consisting of chicken salad and milk, and they finished quickly.

"Well!" she said, "It's time to start."

"What do you want me to do?" he asked.

"Take a shower, and wash your hair. Then come to my bedroom. I'll have things ready by then."

Jesse did everything he could think of to prolong the shower. He soaped and rinsed himself three times and shampooed and rinsed his hair twice. Not being able to stall any longer, he stepped out of the shower stall, and dried himself with the big bath

towel. When He was dry, he wrapped himself with a large towel and went into Marcia's bedroom. The first thing he saw was that his mother's bed had laid out on it two sets of clothing items. There were obvious undergarments as well as outer wear. He also noted that a sheet covered several objects on the top of her dresser.

His mother was not in the room itself, but he could see a light coming from under the door of her bathroom, so he called her.

“Mother... I'm here,” he said.

“I'll be right out!” she called back.

A moment later, she came out, and Jesse nearly went into shock. Except for a pair of briefs, she was nude! He averted his eyes, and stood in a trance.

“Jesse, dear,” she said, “don't worry. I'm only trying to make a point for now, and I won't do this again.. The point is that mothers and daughters should have the same relationship to each other in that it shouldn't be any different for mothers and daughters to see each other nude than for fathers and sons. So you can drop that towel. There's nothing you've got that I haven't seen before, and don't forget— I changed your diapers when you were a baby, and dressed you until just about the time you were ready to start school.”

Reluctantly, Jesse removed the towel and dropped it on a chair, but he turned away from Marcia until she said, “Turn around, dear, we're starting now.”

She pointed out that there were two separate piles of clothes, one on each side of the bed.

“Here's what we do, ” she said, “ as I put on one of these things, you do the same. You may need some help with some of them, until you get used to handling them, and until you do, I'll help you.”

She picked up a garment from her side of the bed. It had four garters dangling from the bottom.

“This is called a panty-girdle, and it'll 'hold you in',” she said, and stepping into it, she pulled it up to her waist.

Jesse found a similar item on his side of the bed, but, when he tried to emulate her, he found he couldn't keep his balance, and had to sit on the chair to put it on. When he tried to pull it up, slim as he was, it took a bit of effort to pull it over his hips, and when he finally had it all the way on, he found that the wide elastic section pulled in his waist. The feeling was somewhat strange, but not uncomfortable.

“Very good,” his mother said. “Now put on the bra.” Suiting her actions to her words, she put her arms through the straps, and with a few quick motions with her hands behind her back, snapped the hooks into the eyes.

When Jesse tried it, he had no problem putting his arms through the straps, but when he tried to set the hooks into the eyes behind his back, he struggled for a while, but couldn't manage it.

Marcia said, laughingly, “It does take a knack, dear, but with a little practice, you'll get the hang of it!”