



*Reluctant Press*

# Like Mother, Like Daughter

Katrina Susan Henderson



ILLUSTRATIONS BY BRIAN DUKEHART

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**A 'NEW WOMAN' NOVEL**

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# LIKE MOTHER, LIKE DAUGHTER

By Katrina Susan Henderson

## 1. A Letter From Home

It was nearing the end of my first semester away from home when the fateful letter came. I had just finished my morning classes in Calculus and Physics and went to the Student Union on campus to retrieve my mail. I picked up the letter from the mail slot and saw that it was from my mother. I stuck it in my student folder and hurried off to get lunch at the cafeteria. I got in line, got my lunch of a cheeseburger and fries, and went to sit down at a table on the patio.

It was a chilly day outside and I was left pretty much to myself, which was the way I preferred it.

So far, the engineering school I was attending didn't have much to recommend it. The classes were difficult and most of the students didn't like the same things I did. I never was much into getting drunk and being in trouble all the time with the authorities like most of the other boys did.

"Jan! What in the world do you think you're doing out here?" came a feminine voice from behind me.

I turned around and came face to face with Susan Morris. Susan was one of the few girls on campus, unique in the fact that there were ten boys for every girl there, and was an acquaintance of mine since I first got here. I'd never get anywhere romantically with her, as she had made that clear early on. At least I had her as a friend; besides, she'd never lack for a date on this campus.

"Just having lunch, Susan. I thought you'd be having lunch with Todd today," I replied.

"Not today. He's at a Basketball luncheon with the team. Why don't you come inside where it's warm and we can eat lunch together," she said with a smile.

"Won't Todd get angry or something?" I asked in surprise.

"No, he knows you're just a friend. He says you're safe for me to be with, almost like my having another girlfriend. Besides, none of my previous boyfriends ever objected to our friendship. Now, let's go in before we freeze to death," exclaimed Susan.

"Sure, Susan," I answered, picking up my folder and my lunch.

As we walked into the cafeteria, I wondered what she meant by her previous remark, but I was too busy holding onto my tray to ask her. As we came up to the door, one of the boys opened it for her. She gave a tight-lipped smile as she entered the building and nodded at the boy at the door. I expected the door to be let go and I braced to catch it on my heel, but there was no need as the boy held it for me with a mocking grin on his face. I felt myself flush a bit, but I quickly hurried inside.

"Be a dear and get that table in the corner for us. I'll be back with my lunch in a jiffy," suggested Susan with a smile.

"Sure, Susan," I replied heading over to it.

I sat my tray down and took the seat by the window. It was still chilly there by the window, but it was a lot better than it was outside. It only took a few minutes, and then Susan came over with her lunch along with her best friend and roommate, Margo.

"Hi, Margo. How are you?" I asked respectfully, beginning to rise.

"Sit back down, Jan. You're making a spectacle of yourself," replied Margo.

I gulped and sat back down. It was the only prudent thing to do.

Margo was built like one of those lady weight lifters and even though I was no weakling, she definitely overmatched me in sheer muscle.

Susan and Margo sat down opposite me. Susan crossed her legs under the table while Margo placed hers flat on the floor and slightly apart. Margo always made me feel smaller in her presence as she was as wide as I was, but was about 6' 2", as compared to my height of 5' 10". Margo only had a slice of cake on her plate and a glass of tea while Susan had two salads and a glass of milk.

"Sorry, Margo," I answered meekly.

"That's okay, Jan. Are you about to eat that?" questioned Margo severely.

"Eat what?!" I asked as I had just taken a bite of my cheeseburger.

"What do you think, Susan?" asked Margo.

"I think Jan has put on a few pounds since last month. Have you, Jan, dear?" replied Susan sweetly.

"Well, maybe a pound or two," I said uncertainly.

"That's what I thought. Here give me that," ordered Margo, grabbing my burger and fries.

"But Margo. . .," I began.

"Shush, Jan. Here, I bought an extra salad with low calorie and low fat dressing. Eat it and don't make a scene," said Susan setting one of the salads in front of me.

I looked at them. Margo was giving me a menacing look while Susan smiled at me in encouragement, and I looked back down. Well, I was hungry and I didn't feel like arguing with two of the few girls on campus, so I shut up and began to eat my salad.

"How are classes going, Jan?" asked Susan after a few minutes.

"Fine, I guess. Calculus is a drag and so is Physics, but I'll muddle through them," I replied.

"Don't talk with your mouth full, Jan. Yes, I'm sure you will muddle through. Really, you should be in a different school. For instance, take that paper you wrote in Liberal Arts class. It was really good," answered Susan.

"Uh, thanks. I did a reasonable job on it," I said, a little embarrassed.

"More than reasonable. I saw you pitch it in the trash and I retrieved it," smiled Susan pulling it from her flowered folder.

"Let me see," commanded Margo holding out her hand.

"It's really not that good, Margo," I interrupted, reaching for it.

Susan pulled it out of my reach with a laugh and handed it to Margo. Margo took the paper, read it, and burst out laughing.

"Please, Margo. It's not funny!" I exclaimed angrily.

After she settled down a bit, she said, "Actually, it is quite silly and pretty. What was the assignment anyway?"

I looked down, embarrassed, while Susan explained, "It was an exercise in pretending. The assignment was to write about how you would feel if you had been born the opposite sex. Definitely a mind-stretching exercise for me."

"How did you do, Susan?" questioned Margo, handing the paper back to me.

"Lousy. I failed. Jan, on the other hand, writes skillfully and has a very good imagination. I even think that Jan could write full time if he felt like it. Some of the writing in that assignment reminds me of some of the romance novels I've read. Ever read any, Jan?" asked Susan, unexpectedly.

I turned a bright red and stammered, "Never in my life!"

"Well, all the same, you write beautifully and with lots of feeling," complimented Susan.

"I remember that assignment myself," said Margo with a wistful expression.

"How did you do on it?" I asked.

"I did rather well on it. Not as well as you, Jan, but not bad either," replied Margo, eating my cheeseburger.

We finished lunch and as I was about to leave, Susan asked, "You doing anything tomorrow night?"

I looked a bit startled and answered, "No, nothing. Why?"

"Well, Susan is having a little party tomorrow night. It's just going to be her and a few friends. Why don't you go over about five," suggested Margo.

"Are you sure it would be all right, I mean with Todd?" I asked.

"Of course it is. Now we've got to get to Aerobics class and then off to Computer Science. See you tomorrow night. I'll call you at four tomorrow with all the details," said Susan.

"All right, I'll come then. Where is it going to be held?" I replied.

"Good. I'll talk to you about it tomorrow, Jan," answered Susan as she and Margo left the table.

I got up slowly from the table, picked up my folder and hurried to my next class, Statistical Equations. After several hours in class, we were at last dismissed and I made my way to the hovel I called home.

I had a small apartment off-campus and while it was not much, it kept me from having to have a roommate like most of the other boys on campus. That suited me just fine as I had never really thought of myself as one of the guys.

I fixed myself a dinner of Ramen noodles and garlic bread (which was about the only kind of food I could afford), settled down in front of my tiny portable television and had a beer. There wasn't much on, so I picked up my school books and started my homework. After five torturous hours, I completed my assignments and retired to bed. I turned on the radio and lay down. Suddenly, I remember my mother's letter in my folder. I got it out of the folder and took it with me into bed.

The envelope was vibrant pink and had flowers imprinted on it. My address was done on a rose flowered label and my name was written in graceful curves. I turned a shade of red when I noticed that my mother had typed my name wrong, again.

Again, it read: Ms. Jane Donaldson!

I put the letter on my lap and reflected on the matter. My mother had done this more than once, since I'd left home. She often wrote to me as she would a daughter. Even some of the care packages she had sent seemed to be more oriented to a daughter than to a son. I bet some of the folks who delivered the mail for the school thought I had a twin sister who shared my mail slot.

I picked up the envelope and deftly opened it with my fingernails. As I did, I smirked at the memory of Susan saying that she had been embarrassed because my fingernails were longer than hers! Inside the envelope, I found the letter and pulled it out along with a one-way airline ticket to Oklahoma City. The letter smelled of my mother's perfume, Eternity, and was as pink and delicate as the envelope it had arrived in. I opened the letter and began to read:

Dearest Jane,

I hope you are feeling well and doing well in school. I'm sorry to be writing you rather than phoning, but what I have to say isn't easy and I can't trust myself not to cry. It is about your father and your two younger brothers.

There was a terrible accident Monday on the bridge outside of town involving them and a fuel truck. They were turning onto the interstate, entering via the underpass, when the truck, loaded with gasoline, broke through the guardrail and plummeted on top of them, erupting into flames.

Thankfully, the police and medical people believe that they died quickly and without pain. I pray to God that is so. I'm sorry I can't talk to you more, but I'm so upset that I can't concentrate. The funeral will be next week.

I realize that you will miss your finals and will be unable to complete this semester, but I'll make it up to you. I need you here with me more than ever. Without you, I'm all alone.

See you soon,

With all my love, Mom

I put the letter down. Tears filled my eyes, and I began to cry. Of all the rotten things to have happened to me, this took the cake. My father and my two brothers were dead, my mother was in hysteria and all she could think to say is that she would be sorry that I'd miss my finals.

While my relationship with my parents was rocky, Dad being a workaholic and Mom being the smothering type, I loved them very much, even though I knew that my Mom was cheating on Dad. He knew it as well and took great pains, as she did also, to conceal it from us kids. They did a good job with my two younger brothers, David and Frank, but I saw right through it. I didn't know who Mom was with when she went out late Friday nights while Dad was at work, but I wound up baby-sitting my brothers all the time and doing all her work around the house. My brothers often teased me about being more like their sister than their brother. Mom would often laugh when they said this, but wouldn't tell them to stop.

Whenever Dad was home, he would go out and play ball with David and Frank. I was often drafted into this until my mother would call me in to help her get supper ready or get the place presentable for guests. That continued for most of my life.

In high school, I never got to date. The girls just wanted to be friends and that was all. Most of the time, I felt more like one of their girlfriends rather than a young man trying to find love. Every night found me helping my Mom around the house or out in the yard.

At last, in college, I had gained some measure of independence and moved away from home. I still kept in contact with my family, and Mom even sent along a care package now and then. Now, most of my family was dead and I cried in remorse. I lay awake in bed for hours and only fell asleep just before dawn.

The skies were cloudy the next day and heavy snow showers covered the campus as I hurried to my Physical Fitness class. I had already missed my first two classes, from over-sleeping. While I didn't particularly feel like attending this one, I didn't want to stay in my room and mope all day. I didn't know what I was going to tell Susan and Margo, but in my current condition I knew that I would ruin their party.

I went into the main lobby of the gymnasium and to the main doors to the gym. I was soaked to the skin by that time and miserable. There, on a sign hung on the handles were the words: Class in Session. Do not Enter!

"Damn!" I muttered in anger.

"What's wrong, Jan?" asked a voice from behind me.

I turned around startled and saw Susan and Todd standing behind me having just come from the Physical Education classroom next to the gymnasium.

"I missed my class," I said sadly.

"What's wrong, Jan?" questioned Susan.

"Well, I don't want to talk about it now," I answered in a low voice.

"Well, I'm done for the day, and so are you. Mrs. Frederick's sick and Liberal Arts has been canceled. Todd, I'll see you on Saturday night. I think Jan needs me right now," said Susan.

"Sure, doll. You go ahead and take care of your girlfriend. See you Sunday at the game, then," replied Todd, kissing Susan.

After he left, Susan turned to me and said, "All right, Jan. Come with me. I want to find out what's wrong and I won't take no for an answer."

"All right, Susan," I replied, puzzled at Todd's remarks.

We left the gymnasium, with Susan wrapping her scarf about her face and me using my Liberal Arts book and folder to shield my face from the icy wind. It was only a short distance across the campus to the Women's hall and Susan lead me to the back door. Once we got under the lee of the building she came over to me.

"We'll go inside now," she said loudly.

"I'm not allowed in there, Susan. You know the rules as well as I do," I replied.

"No problem. Mrs. Gulliver is almost always asleep and besides, I'll wrap my scarf about your head in a feminine manner and we'll pass right by her. I often had to sneak Todd in this way," replied Susan, whipping off her scarf.

Before I could protest more, she draped her scarf over my head and effectively muzzled me with it. She then grabbed my left hand and led me through the door. I was a little afraid to enter those forbidden portals, but Susan would have none of it.

Once inside the front door, we entered the foyer. Sitting there blissfully asleep was the matronly Mrs. Gulliver. Softly, Susan and I crept past her to the staircase. It was a good thing I was nearly gagged by the scarf because I heard a loud yawn behind us.

Susan looked back sheepishly and said, "Hello, Mrs. Gulliver."

"Hello yourself, young lady. And who might this be with you?" asked Mrs. Gulliver.

"Oh, this is Jane. She's a friend of mine from back home," replied Susan sheepishly.

"That's fine, Susan. Jane will have to sign the register though," answered Mrs. Gulliver gruffly.

"Yes, ma'am. Is it all right if she spends the night?" asked Susan.

I would have gasped if I could. What, me spend the night here? I agreed to go to a party, but not this! I was just about to shake my head 'no' and make for the door, when Susan took my right arm securely in hers.

"That will be fine, Ms. Morris, as long as she signs the register and you countersign it," muttered a sleepy Mrs. Gulliver.

"Of course, Mrs. Gulliver. It's over here next to the door, Jane," said Susan steering me into the main hall.

We walked down to a table near the front door with Mrs. Gulliver watching us all the way. The hall was deeply carpeted and was decorated with feminine-inspired artwork. In general, it was quite nice. On the mahogany table was the guest register.

Susan pressed a pen in my hand and whispered, "Sign it. She's watching us and if she suspects anything, we'll both be in trouble."

I knew that she was right. I'd be sent to jail and she'd be suspended from school. I carefully took up the pen and, facing away from Mrs. Gulliver, signed the register: Jane Lynn Donaldson. Susan signed her name and handed me the pen. As I put away the pen, and turned to follow Susan up the stairs, Mrs. Gulliver nodded in satisfaction and was soon fast asleep again.

Susan's and Margo's apartment was on the third floor and soon we arrived there. Susan opened her coat, took out her purse and fished out the keys. She opened the door and beckoned me inside.

Her apartment was an odd mixture of styles. Part of it was ultra- feminine, obviously hers, and part was almost tomboyish in make-up. I set down my book and folder and began to undo the scarf about me. It was, like the rest of me, soaked to the bone by the falling, wet snow.

"God, I'm soaked. I'll just change out of these wet things and come right back," said Susan, leaving me in the living room.

I took off my coat and hung it on the rack along with her fur coat, a pink winter coat and one Levi-style coat with the name Margo on the back in large letters. I toyed with the idea of sitting down, but I didn't want to get the furniture wet, so I stood. My shoulder-length brown hair was wet and I felt the drops go down the back of my shirt. I started to rub my hands to stay warm.

After a few minutes, Susan came out of her bedroom wearing a robe and threw me a large pink towel, saying, "Why don't you go in and dry off? I've set out some clothes, and you should get out of those wet things before you catch your death."

"Sure, Susan," I said, taking the towel and headed into her bedroom.

Her bedroom came as no real shock to me. It was like I had imagined a girl's bedroom would be. It had a large four-poster canopy bed with a rose comforter. The walls were a floral garden and the rug was a rich pink. The furniture was of cherry including her wardrobe, dresser and vanity. I saw some clothes on the bed, but rushed into the bathroom as I started to drip on her rug.

I entered the bathroom, shut the door, and began to take off my clothes. Her's were already there, hanging from the shower curtain bar. My clothes soon joined them and I luxuriated in the toweling of my body. I borrowed her hair blower and dried my hair. *God, it felt good to get dry again.* After I was done, I wrapped the towel around myself and went out into her bedroom. Getting to the bed, I finally saw the clothes for the first time. It was a pair of white panties, a woman's pink leotard with white tights, a pair of pink leg warmers, a pink head band and a pair of white ballet slippers.

"Uh, Susan?" I called out.

"Yes, what is it?" asked Susan from the other side of the door.

"Uh, these clothes," I stammered.

"Oh, don't they fit?" questioned Susan innocently.

"But, they're girl clothes," I sputtered out.

"Of course they are. What do I look like? A boy? Don't worry, you silly goose, no one will see you. Now hurry up and get dressed. Can't have you standing around here in your birthday suit all night," she replied, then started to hum and move away from the door.

Well, I had two choices—to stay naked until my clothes dried or put on the clothes she had laid out for me. A cold draft on my backside quickly convinced me what to do; besides, it was just the two of us here.

I took off the towel and picked up the panties. Now, I'd seen women's clothes before, having helped Mom with the laundry all those years, but, I had never put on any until now.

I sat on the edge of the bed and pulled the panties on. They were of the softest cotton blended with a satin spandex and slid up my lightly-haired legs. I put them in position about my waist and was astonished at how much more comfortable they were than my masculine underwear. Still I was a bit surprised to note how smooth my groin area had become because of the panty's firm fit. Next, I put on the tights which clung tightly to my legs; then on went the pink leotard. It felt a bit strange at first, but was not uncomfortable. I put on the pink leg warmers, my legs feeling warmer the moment I put them on. Then I put on the pink head band to keep my hair out of my eyes. I slid my feet into the soft, stretchable slippers. I was amazed. Apart from the emptiness of the breast pockets on the front of the leotard, the clothes fit me like a glove. Once dressed, I ventured out into the living room.

"You look just fine, Jane. Come over here," ordered Susan.

"Susan, it's Jan," I replied walking over to her.

"Not tonight. Tonight, you're my girlfriend Jane from out of town," she replied as she stuffed a set of falsies down the front of the leotard. "You really should wear a sports bra."

"I don't understand," I answered in bewilderment.

"No need to, Hon. Just go with the flow. Gee, now sit down here with me on the couch and tell me what's wrong, girl," she said, setting down on the couch and crossing her legs.

I sat down and replied, "It's just that I got some bad news yesterday. A letter from my mom."

"Can I see it?" she asked.

"Sure, it's in my folder over on the table," I answered.

"Okay, I'll get it."

She got up gracefully and went to the table. She reached in my folder and brought back the pink envelope. She sat down again, crossing her legs, and glared at me meaningfully.

I followed her gaze to my legs, and following her example, crossed them as well.

She took the letter out of the envelope, smiling a bit at its feminine appearance, and began to read it. After she had read it, she sat silent for a long moment.

"That is some awful news, Jane. I know what you need."

"Yeah? And what's that?" I questioned.

"It's two o'clock. Time for Aerobics," she said taking off her robe revealing her own exercise outfit.

"But how will that help, Susan?" I asked in bewilderment.

"Take your mind off things," she replied, turning on her entertainment center.

The television came on revealing an older woman in tights and a room full of women in exercise outfits. She demonstrated the exercises and Susan and I followed her directions. I must admit, this aerobic stuff was more strenuous than it looked. Soon, I was panting and listening to our instructor praising us as we worked out. In general, it was a lot of fun and I didn't mind the female orientation of the program.

After the program was over, Susan looked at me and questioned, "Is that better?"

"Well," I replied. "It did take my mind off it for a while."

"Good. We'll try to keep it off all night then. I have a confession to make, Jane," said Susan hanging her head low.

"What, Susan?" I asked in puzzlement.

"Well, originally Margo and I were going to pull a prank and humiliate you," she replied.

"Why on Earth would you want to do that? What did I ever do to you?" I questioned.

"It's Margo. She doesn't like you. Never has. I'm afraid that I just went along with her. I'm not very strong and I tend to let her lead me around," she answered.

"Why doesn't Margo like me?"

"You remind her of her older sister," she replied.

"How's that?" I questioned.

"Well, it's hard to explain. You see, her sister lived as a boy most of the time on their farm in rural Iowa. For the longest time, she wanted to be a boy and eventually, through surgery, became one. Well, your manner and your personality remind her of her sister, the one she lost after she became a man," said Susan.

"That's not my fault. But isn't she sort of a tomboy herself?" I replied.

"No, not really. She's actually a lesbian. Fortunately, I'm not her type so we don't have any problems. Be quiet and I'll call her and tell her it's all off for tonight," answered Susan, picking up her pink Princess phone.

She quickly dialed, then said, "Hello. Is Margo there?"

From the sounds from the receiver, I could hear loud rock music in the background.

After a bit, she continued, "Margo. Hi, this is Susan. It's off for tonight. Yeah, he chickened out when he found it was going to be here."

She paused for a moment listening and then said, "Sure, Margo. Right, I'm still going to have my friends over. You going to stay overnight with Marsha? All weekend? Right, see you Sunday evening. Bye."

She hung up the phone, looked at me carefully and said, "Well, Margo is staying the weekend with a girl she met at the party and won't be home until Sunday evening. I'm having a few friends over for the evening for a slumber party like I used to have when I was a little girl. Why don't you stay the night like I told Mrs. Gulliver?"

I sat there in shock, then replied carefully, "That's nice of you, Susan, but I'm a boy. It would make the rest of your friends uncomfortable if I were here."

"True, unless you looked more like a girl," she answered with a smile.

"Yes, but that's impossible," I said with a shake of my head.

"Unfortunately, we don't have much time, but since the girls were expecting a boy in drag to crash our party by coming out of my bedroom, let's surprise them by making you look more like a woman than a man. Without Margo to spread malicious rumors about you, the other girls will just play along. Don't be surprised if they tease you a bit," she replied.

"Well. . .," I began.

"Please, Jane. Please stay the night. I'd be happy and it would take your mind off your problems for a little while. I know you'll start to grieve again as soon as you head home. Say you'll stay," she pleaded.

I sat there for a long moment and thought. My clothes were still wet and likely to stay that way for a few hours more. Also, I was in the women's hall and they locked the doors at five and controlled entrance and exit carefully. If I chose to leave after five, less than an hour away, I'd have no sleeping Mrs. Gulliver to contend with, but a wide awake security guard. I didn't have much choice.

"Okay, Susan. I don't have to go right away. I'll be leaving Saturday afternoon on a flight," I replied.

"Excellent. Let's take a shower and get ready. They'll be over at six and we have to get some food ready. You do cook, don't you?" asked Susan, leading me into her bedroom.

"Yeah. I cook, clean and sew. My Mother never did much of it herself," I answered as I followed her.

"Good. I could use some help. Now, let's see. Go inside and shave your face. You'll find a razor and some shaving gel in the medicine cabinet. Then come back out here, but make sure that you shave good and close," she instructed.

"Yes, Ma'am," I replied going into the bathroom.

I found her feminine razor and moisturizing shaving gel and shaved my face with very hot water as close as I could. After I was done, it was so smooth you would have sworn that I'd never had a hair on my face. When I was done, I exited the bathroom and came face to face with a freshly-showered Susan who had just finished showering in Margo's bathroom.

“Good job,” she observed. “Now, be a dear and face the bed. I'm going to get dressed, and you need to strip and get ready for your shower.”

“But, out here, Susan?” I wailed.

“Sure, we're all girls here and besides, I had a younger brother so I know what you're packing. Don't be silly. Just do it,” she ordered.

I turned away from her and sighed in resignation. After all, I had agreed to the charade. I took off the slippers and leg warmers. The head band followed next and then the tights. Last to go was the leotard and I stood facing the wall away from her.

“Good. Stay right there,” she said from behind me.

I heard her opening something and then cold touched my back. As she worked it over my back, buttocks and legs, it felt like suntan lotion, but was stinging as it dried.

“Good, now turn around,” she ordered bluntly.

I did so, and she started to rub it on my legs. As she worked her way up, she ignored my manhood, which barely twitched as she worked the stuff around my groin surrounding an inverted triangle of hair. She smiled up at me and then worked on my stomach and chest.

“Hold out your arms,” she commanded.

I did so, and soon found my arms covered. I noticed that she paid close attention to my feet and hands. She then put some on my newly-shaven face. It really stung!

“Now hold still for a bit,” she ordered as she put a robe over the very lacy, semi-transparent teddy she was wearing.

After I stood there for fifteen minutes, she said, “Good enough. Now go in and take a shower. Make sure to use shampoo on your hair and use the Loofa on your body with the shower gel.”

“Okay, Susan,” I replied, glad to be away from her penetrating gaze.

I quickly went into the bathroom, started the shower, and jumped in. As soon as the water hit me, I was in seventh heaven. I wet my hair and reached for the shampoo. It was a conditioning and body- building shampoo with a lovely floral scent. I washed my hair and then I took up the Loofa and applied some of her shower gel to it.

I began to scrub my body vigorously. After I finished, I noticed that there was a lot of hair at the bottom of the shower and on the Loofa. I realized with a start that she had used a depilatory cream on me and had effectively removed my body hair!

I stepped out of the shower and patted myself dry with one of her towels. After I was done, I used the towel to clean off a full- length mirror and observed my hairless self. Wow! Being without body hair sure makes you look a lot more feminine, especially with my rounded, soft facial features. I wrapped the towel around me, like a girl would, and exited the bathroom.

“Excellent,” said Susan upon inspecting me. “I laid some clothes out for you. I hope you like a nice baby doll.” she said handing me some feminine evening clothes.

I blushed heavily, but managed to get them on without any trouble. The clothing was incredibly luxurious against my hairless body and it gave me a thrill just putting it on. The baby doll panty and top were of light pink silk and the top was built to hold the falsies, so I looked like I actually had some cleavage! Next, I put on the feminine pink house shoes she had for me as well as a lacy white robe.

“Good. Now, sit here at the vanity and I'll finish making you up,” she said with a smile.

I followed her instructions and was soon seated at her vanity with my legs daintily crossed. The first thing she did was get out some curlers and set them in my hair.

“I really wish we had time to give you a permanent,” she commented. “But these will give you enough curl with the help of a little hair spray.”

She sprayed my hair down and then started with the make-up. She explained as she went and I found out more about female cosmetics than I had ever wanted to know. It was miraculous, all the work women put into their make-up and how few men notice.

As she applied the eye shadow and lipstick, she said, “One thing you must realize, Jane. Make-up is more than just dressing up to get noticed by the men. It is also important for a woman's position among her own sex. Women judge themselves on their appearance and mannerisms.”

Soon, she was finished putting polish on my nails and let me look in the mirror. I gasped in astonishment. While I did not look like the prettiest girl around, I definitely looked like one. My eyebrows were thin arcs, my face painted and my body free of hair for the first time in my life.

Susan smiled and said, “You look lovely, Hon. Now it's a quarter till five, so it's off to the kitchen we go.”

“Okay, Susan,” I replied, following her to the kitchen.

Once there, we prepared snacks for the slumber party. It was a lot of fun and I found Susan to be a delight to be around. I felt closer to her than I had ever felt to my own siblings. I banished that thought quickly before I got melancholy. We had just finished setting up the snack trays when the door rang.

“I'll get it,” said Susan.

I gulped as this was my moment of truth. Susan opened the door. In the doorway were three girls from my Liberal Arts class! I remembered them as the trio that had heartily applauded my romantic paper in class.

“Hi, Ellen, Sharon and Lisa. Welcome. Come in,” said Susan happily.

“Hi, Susan,” replied Ellen, the willowy blonde. “Is that who I think it is?”

“Yes it is. Come on in ladies. You remember Jane Donaldson, don't you?” asked Susan in reply.

“Of course we do. Hi, Jane,” gushed the dark-haired Lisa.

“Hi, Lisa. Nice to see you,” I replied as she gave me peck on the cheek and a hug, which I returned.

The others greeted me in the same fashion as they greeted Susan. Sharon, the red head, had brought along some videos from the local video store, so we settled down to watch a romantic movie after the girls changed into their evening apparel. Ellen wore a full-length evening gown of the prettiest green I had ever seen. Sharon wore a set of white silk pajamas while Lisa wore a blue baby doll almost like the one I was wearing. I was surprised to find myself so wrapped up in the movie that I forgot all about my sorrows. We snacked and watched a couple more films.

After the third movie, Lisa said, "Let's take a break, girls. I'm tired of video."

"What do you suggest we do, Lisa?" asked Susan, mischievously pulling a hand through her long blonde hair.

"Let's read a passage from our favorite romance novels. The one with the hottest passage wins," suggested Lisa.

"Sure, let's do it," said Ellen and Sharon eagerly.

"What's wrong, Jane?" asked Susan, noting my doubting face.

"You know I don't have any with me," I replied sourly.

"No problem. Just get one out of the closet in my bedroom. I'm sure you'll find one you've read," said Susan with a smile.

I left amidst their giggling and whispering and went into the bedroom. One whole side of her closet was a bookshelf loaded with romance novels. Modern, historical, and much more. I never realized that so much had been written and in such variety.

"Hurry up, Jane!" shouted Ellen.

I looked over the selection quickly and settled on one with a knight and a lady in a billowing dress on the cover. With my prize, I hurried back to the girls who all had books in their laps and were leafing through them. I quickly followed suit. Fortunately for me, I stumbled upon what seemed like a sexual encounter halfway through the book. Well, it would just have to do.

"Who first?" asked Susan.

"You're the host. You go first, Susan," decided Lisa, the obvious leader of the other three girls.

"Sure. Well, here goes," began Susan.

After Susan, we went around the circle clockwise which left me as the last one to go. I never realized that ladies' fiction was so graphic! Not only was the romance played to the hilt, but the relations between the heroine and her man were positively pornographic! It was with considerable embarrassment that I read mine. I didn't realize that I had read it with such feeling until I looked up from the book and into the startled faces of the girls.

"Wow! I think that Jane gets the prize!" exclaimed Susan with a flushed face.

"Yes. You win, Jane," said the other girls gleefully.

"Thank you," I replied meekly.

“Well, we have time for just one more video, girls, then we need to be getting some sleep. Jane can sleep in my room with me. Two of you can sleep in Margo's bed and the other on the couch,” said Susan.

“Right. I have just the thing to really do this party up right. Now, pay attention, girls. We have to vote on our favorite. Here, Susan, put it in,” said Ellen as we arranged ourselves on the living room floor, folding our legs underneath us.

Susan put the tape in the player and soon it came on. It was the Chippendale's All Male Review. At first I was mortified with embarrassment, but as we watched it, I listened to the comments of the girls. Often, they would ask my opinion of a particular man's anatomy and I would sputter out an answer. They took a lot of delight in torturing me, but after a time, they let up and talked to me as they did to each other. At the end of the video, Susan passed out slips of paper as the video showed the dancers one last time.

“Okay,” said Lisa pausing the video. “Time to vote, girls. Which is the man of your dreams? Vote now,”

The others quickly scribbled a number down and all looked at me. I looked over the pictures thoughtfully and chose a handsome, but otherwise average-size man.

“Good. Now who did you pick and why? You first, Susan,” said Lisa.

Susan had chosen a man a lot like Todd. Ellen chose a muscular weight-lifter type. Lisa chose a bad boy motorcyclist while Sharon chose a farm boy.

“Who did you pick, Jane?” asked Lisa as I had deliberately been left for last.

“I chose number 10. The businessman,” I replied.

“Good eye, Jane. Perfect material to raise a family with,” commented Susan with a smile.

“True. Perfect, especially if you're a virgin. Are you still a virgin, Jane?” asked Lisa, sweetly.

I felt my throat go dry, but managed to croak, “Yes.”

Lisa laughed and replied, “Don't sweat it, honey. A sweet thing like you will soon have a man hot and heavy into you. Trust me, once you've had cock, you'll be back for more.”

I looked down in embarrassment as the other girls giggled. Susan rewound the tape and gave them to Ellen.

“Well, it's time to get some sleep. Good night, Ellen, Lisa, Sharon,” said Susan.

“Good night, Susan. Good night, Jane,” said the girls with a smile.

“Come with me, Jane,” ordered Susan.

I followed her into the bedroom. We took off our robes and hopped into bed. Soon, Susan was fast asleep and I drifted off thinking about how I was in bed with a girl and didn't feel the least bit interested in sex. I figured it must be my grief and settled down to sleep.

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The next day, I helped Susan get the girls up and out. Then, I helped her with the dishes, after having breakfast with her, and got the place straightened up. After that, she had me shave, straighten up my make-up and dressed me in one of her pantsuits, her pink winter coat, a pair of her pumps and the scarf I had worn yesterday. She packed my male clothes in a trash bag and took me home in her car. Once back at my hovel, she helped me remove the make-up and I changed into my male clothes. Then, she helped me pack and even took me to the airport so that I didn't have to catch a cab.

On the way to the airport, Susan asked, "Will you be back for next semester, Jane?"

She still was calling me that, but I replied, "I don't know, Susan. It depends on my mother."

"I understand. A girl should be with her mother during such a time. If something like that happened, I know I would be home with her," replied Susan.

"Yeah," I muttered.

We pulled into the airport and I had my ticket checked and my meager belongings were taken aboard the aircraft. I noticed that some people were looking at me strangely, but I was too deep in conversation with Susan to give it more than a passing thought. We sat together in the airport and exchanged addresses and phone numbers.

"Flight 435 leaving for Oklahoma City. Passengers board at Gate 11," sounded a woman's voice over the loud speaker.

"Well, that's my flight," I said, getting up.

"That it is. You take care and let me know what happens," said Susan, giving me a hug and a kiss.

"I will. Take care, Susan," I answered as I parted from her.

Moments later, I was in the air and on my way home to Oklahoma City and the grief-stricken homecoming awaiting me. Glancing down at my hands in my lap, I finally noticed why people had been staring at me so strangely. Susan and I had both forgotten about the polish she had put on my fingernails. I took out a pair of gloves and put them on to cover the pretty pink, polished fingernails I was wearing.

## **2. A Strange Homecoming**

The plane took off with no problems and after a four-hour flight arrived at the airport in Oklahoma City. I had my carry-on bag with me, and went down to the baggage check. Once there, I retrieved my luggage and went to the main lobby. I went over to the pay phones and set my luggage under one of them. I got my wallet and took out my phone card. Following the directions given me by the automated female voice on the phone, I dialed my Mother's phone number.

After a few rings, my Mother's voice came over the line, "Hello?"

Her voice sounded rather ragged so I quickly answered, "Hello, Mom. It's Jan. I'm at the airport. Do you want to pick me up or should I call a cab?"

"Oh, Jan. It's so good to hear your voice. I'll be right down to pick you up. I'll be about fifteen minutes so wait for me at the passenger pickup area. See you soon, dear," replied Mother, quickly hanging up the phone.

*Wow! I thought. She must really be broken up. She didn't sound like herself at all. I hope that she's all right.*

I picked up my bags again and headed for the passenger pickup area. I knew that when Mom said that she'd be here in fifteen minutes, it would be exactly fifteen minutes. Mom had never been late for anything in her life, at least as long as I can remember. With that in mind, I hustled to the pickup area. I had just arrived, when I saw Mom's 1976 Ford Station wagon pull up at the curb right in front of me.

"Hi, Mom," I said as I came up to the car.

"Hi, Jan. Put your stuff in back and climb in up front with me," she ordered cheerily.

Thinking of how much better she sounded now compared to when I had spoken to her on the phone, I put my luggage in the back of the station wagon along with my carry-on baggage. After that, I climbed into the seat next to her and as soon as I buckled in, we left the airport.

After we had been driving for five minutes, my Mother asked, "How were your classes, dear?"

I thought for a moment then replied, "Not too bad, Mother. They were a little tougher than I anticipated. I never had so much math in my life. Sometimes, I wish I had taken an easier subject even with the prospect of having a lower income."

"Is that such a problem, Jan?" questioned Mother with concern.

"It is if I'm ever to amount to anything. A man has to be a provider, even if his heart, like mine is not entirely in it. Without money, no woman would have me. A man who can't provide for her and any children they might have, is not a man," I answered frankly.

"I see, Jan. So, being a man means you must be a provider. The converse would be that a woman must be a dependent. With all the women working today providing for themselves, why do you still have to be a provider for them?" asked my mother.

"I don't know, Mom. I once asked Susan about it, but she didn't have a good answer. I think it has something to do with romantic tradition or something. All I know, is that it's true," I said in reply.

My mother was silent for a moment, then questioned, "And who is this Susan?"

"Oh," I stuttered. "She's just a friend I have at school."

"A girlfriend?" she asked forcefully.

"No Mom," I answered a little sheepishly. "Just a good friend. Nothing romantic about our relationship at all. With her, I often feel like one of her girlfriends rather than a boy who is a friend. Just like back in high school."