



*Reluctant Press*

# Sasha

Roberta Angela Dee



*ILLUSTRATIONS BY BRIAN DUKEHART*

**A 'HER TV' NOVEL**

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## *Reluctant Press TG Publishers*

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# SASHA

**By Roberta Angela Dee**

## CHAPTER ONE

I had been living as a woman for more than 10 years when I started receiving letters from an English cross-dresser who identified himself as Sasha. Prior to that time I had also received written invitations to be wined and dined by an Intelligence officer named Karl. I had no reason to suspect any association between Sasha and Karl.

The decision for a pre-operative transsexual to live as a woman is not easy. It is perhaps the most difficult challenge an individual can face. Psychologists will often insist that a preoperative trans-sexual cross-live as a woman for a year before permission is given for the individual's surgery. It is as barbaric a practice as a Salem witch hunt. In both cases, individuals insist on a trial by fire. And in both cases, people are either persecuted or coerced into a trial by fire, before they are allowed to live the way they wish to live and love.

Like the alleged witch, the transsexual is asked to make a convincing presentation of sincerity and commitment. The test is regarded as a necessary precaution. And although the psychologist works within established guidelines, their judgment is easily influenced by personal, professional and community prejudices. These prejudices might work for or against the transsexual.

The letters used in this novella will provide a great deal of insight into the mind of an individual who professes to be a male-to-female transsexual. The information I provide to this individual will, hopefully, be helpful to those of us who either cross-dress or anticipate gender reassignment surgery.

Sasha's letter of August 16, 1993

Dearest Roberta,

I do hope that you are well and happy. I apologize for the delay in getting back to you, but I've been visiting my mother's home in London for the past week and a half.

Today is Monday morning. I am wide awake with the anticipation of starting my new position. I am filled with hope, fear, and much more.

So, lovely Roberta, in your previous letter you suggest that my obtaining full-time employment as a woman has twisted your lovely titties. That's an interesting notion! How I wish I could kiss them and make them better.

I have assumed little and know next to nothing about your life. I think of you as being a beautiful and intelligent woman. You are a woman I can admire and think about as a very good and special friend.

I assume that you are a woman and that you are held in high regard by most men. Your lack of interest in women does not surprise me at all. Again you are more developed in your life than I am, as is my friend, Marliz. Both you and she have strong desires for men.

One difference between my relationship with Marliz and my relationship with you is that Marliz and I have been intimate friends for a long time. I doubt, however, that we would be intimate if we were to meet today.

The only assumption I have made about you, Roberta, is that you are a woman and my friend. Other than that I know nothing about your life or "status" as you put it. And I have no intention of "twisting" anything by asking questions.

My mother has very high praise for you. We talk at great length about how very valuable you are in your council to me. Many of the things you mention in your letters are the same things that my Mum suggests.

For some time she has been trying to get me to develop a sexual preference in my life. She understands my love for Marliz, but she feels that as a woman I should determine what my preference should be.

I know that you both are correct and I have considered the necessity of making a decision for quite some time. I know that I need to do this now as a part of defining the woman I want to become.

I have, however, put off making a decision because I am not sure which gender I truly desire. How does one decide such a thing anyway? I enjoy being with men, but the question of "do they want me as a woman or because I offer something different" always run through me when I am with them. You just never know if what they say is honest. This also applies to women. You just never know if what they say is honest.

How does someone decide?

Both genders offer different physical pleasures. And, I need both!

I agree that penetration is not a requirement and there have been many times when I have enjoyed myself without it. But I do love having a man or a woman through use of a toy inside me. I do enjoy being penetrated. If I had to select a preference this very moment, it would be for a woman, simply because I am more comfortable with women. I can relate to other women on a personal and intellectual level. That is far more important to me than sexual ability. I would even have to say that this is a principal reason why I am so attracted to you, Roberta. Your physical sensuality is secondary to your intellectual sensuality. So, I guess all of this means that I am a developing as a lesbian as well. I guess we shall see.

I still contend that establishing myself as a true woman in this silly world is more important right now than deciding a sexual preference. I agree that it is an important part of the identity, but to me being accepted as a woman means much more.

In time, as I make my way through my new life, my preference will emerge.

My Mum, and perhaps you as well, disagree with me. You both believe I should be making that decision now.

Marliz thinks you are quite lovely and said she would ravish you the very second she saw you.

Yes, my degree would have been a problem for my previous employer if they had seen it. However, I went through an agency. The agency verified the documentation with the university. It took over a month, but they were very discreet.

For this latest position, I provided the documents myself. I only used the agency as a reference. It was a bit awkward, but less difficult than it was the very first time. It is all part of my getting established. Hopefully, the next time will be easier.

Back to my thoughts of you: If I ever have the chance to be intimate with you, I would very much be a lesbian. That is the nature of my fantasies.

I have never regarded such a union as being one of two preoperative transsexual women, but simply as a union between two women, an adventure, a romantic encounter between two women. However, unless I was convinced that you shared my desire, I could find no pleasure in performing the act.

Would penetration be required? Certainly not! If it were provided as a means of foreplay, perhaps with a small dildo, then I would have no objection to it.

Women have so many different ways of obtaining sexual pleasure. We are far more capable than men.

If your very first letter had suggested that you were a cross-dresser or a preoperative transsexual seeking the same, I would not have the same positive feelings for you.

How do I categorize myself? I categorize myself as being a woman, because of the way I feel inside.

I started my new position today and took a large step forward. A great deal of freedom comes with this: No more pony tails, nor dressing as someone opposite to my true feelings.

Today, I begin a life as a legitimate woman living in America. Once I am comfortable in this position, I will begin hormonal therapy. I look forward to it.

I admire your accomplishments, Roberta, and see many similarities between us: Educated, attractive (how vain!), goal oriented and determined not to mention the things we have had to endure. When I arrived at work, I wore a beige blouse, knee-length light gray skirt, black 3-inch pumps, and a little make-up and jewelry. The jewelry consisted of a gold necklace, matching earrings, and a Lady Timex. I took your advice and went for a makeover. It was a waste of money. I have gotten quite professional at making myself up. It was, however, a good deal of fun.

Stay sweet and write very soon. As always, I shall look forward to hearing from you.

Lovingly,  
Your Sasha

## CHAPTER TWO

The following letter was delivered only 2 or 3 days after Sasha's letter dated August 16, 1993. I was a bit surprised that she would take the time to write so soon.

That first day should have been an intense experience that encompassed her total being, leaving little time for anything else. In any event, I dismissed my suspicions and merely assumed that Sasha had a genuine desire to share this precious experience with me while the experience was still fresh in her mind.

Sasha's letter of August 18, 1993

Dearest Roberta,

An interesting first day, Roberta. I have not yet digested the events, nor have I drawn any conclusions. There was little for me to do, as I expected. I was simply shown around and several projects were explained to me.

Most of my task is simple lab work.

I did a few blood work-ups that afternoon. None of it was challenging or new.

It was difficult discerning any reaction from my co-workers. Fortunately, my lab work-station was not located at the rear of the lab, and the two female lab workers within my proximity were friendly. I had lunch with them.

They asked those typical questions: Where are you from? Who was my previous employer? Where did I go to school?

The toughest question came from a girl right out of college. Her name is Lori. She asked, "Are you gay?"

The others sat quietly waiting for my answer. I responded politely, saying, "A bit of a personal question for not knowing me. "

She apologized and the subject changed to the possibility of getting together for an after work cocktail.

The men were nice but kept their distance. I could have sworn that one of them kept an erection the entire day. Perhaps it was just my imagination.

I noticed no whispering or especially startled stares.

I delivered blood test results to one of the doctors. He responded in a very friendly manner, saying, "You must be new. Well, such an attractive thing like you is welcomed around here. "

I thanked him for the compliment and left. Later, I got a nasty run in my hose from the edge of the lab chair. Fortunately, I always carry an extra pair.

I was surprised that I received no strange looks when I went into the lady's room to put the new hose on.

Thinking back, I believe that everyone was too polite. I hope any pretenses wear off quickly.

Marliz has promised to work on sketches of you after she completes an assignment for which she has been commissioned. She commented that your preference for something in the style of Vargas is understandable, but that his style would be difficult for her to imitate.

She is going to be operated on in September. I know her doctor and believe that she is in good hands.

I guess this is enough for now. I hope I have answered all your questions. I will read both of your letters again before I go to bed. I might possibly provide more definite answers tomorrow night during my normal letter writing session.

Stay sweet, lady of my dreams, desires, and affections.

Lovingly,  
Your Sasha



## CHAPTER THREE

Roberta's reply of August 19, 1993

(Responses to Sasha's letters dated August 16 and 18. )

Dearest Sasha,

I received your two letters on the same day.

Sasha, I believe that your mother and coworkers are far more perceptive than you realize. And I believe that you should re-examine the experiences surrounding your first day at your new position.

Mum, as you refer to her, is your most precise and intimate ally during this important transitional phase. Listen to her. Even if you believe no one else, listen to Mum. She is aware of the subtle points you might miss. This is clear to me even in these first letters following your new employment. I'll go into more detail later.

First, I'll make a few comments about what appears to be your sexual preference and what the future is likely to hold for you. Again, I must refer to some of the statements your mother has made:

At present, you continue to have a libido that is operational as a result of your current testosterone level. Have you ever examined your own blood work-up for its level of that male hormone? The result might prove interesting.

In any event, it seems quite obvious that you are equally, if not more, attracted to women than you are to men. I feel, therefore, that it is safe to conclude you are bisexual.

In this country, gender reassignment is typically preceded by a thorough psychological examination; and, most psychologists exercise their examination with the deeply rooted belief that normal women are attracted to men. When a psychologist is confronted with a bisexual individual, and especially a bisexual transsexual, the first diagnosis is one typically referred to as gender dysfunction. In layman's terminology, it means that the individual is not a true transsexual but is someone who is simply confused as to the identity of their gender. This is an individual who does not know if he or she should be male or female. I tend to believe that such individuals are rarely approved for gender reassignment surgery, because the feeling is that their problem is more psychological than physiological; and, therefore, the best treatment is psychotherapy, not surgery.

Let us assume, however, that all the medical experts are wrong; and, I'm somewhat confident that you've already reached that conclusion. Let us also assume that you are already undergoing a psychological evaluation and are ready to begin hormonal therapy.

Initially, at least for the first 3 months, your reaction to hormonal therapy is quite positive. You begin to develop the small buds that will become your breasts. Later, you might notice a slight decrease in muscular tone and a slight improvement in your complexion.

However, as your testosterone level decreases, you will begin to lose your libido. It will seem that you are suddenly without any sex drive at all. What happens then?

For the true transsexual, this is not a problem, Sasha. Their libido tends to be more driven through the addition of female hormones (estrogen and progesterone), rather than eliminated as a result of their being ingested.

In your case, it is difficult to predict what will happen. You might wish to continue taking female hormones (an indication that your desire to be a woman is stronger than your desire to be sexually active. This would make your psychologist very happy, because she or he would recognize that you are quite likely a true transsexual. If, however, the indication is that having an erection is more important to you than continuing to develop as a woman, then your psychologist might reask: Is this person best suited to be a boy or girl?

I believe this is what your Mum is indicating through her suggestion that you first identify yourself as a normal woman. Even gay women recognize the enormous burden society places on them to be normal.

Our entire social and cultural ideology is rooted in majority rule. We tend to feel that what works for the majority works for everyone. Consequently, bisexuality, homosexuality and transsexuality are deemed abnormal or at least apart from what is considered normal. This is neither logical, nor fair; but, it is the reality.

As a transsexual, you have enormous socially-motivated problems. Do you really want to confuse the issue with an indication that you might also be a lesbian? Trust me, Sasha. People have a difficult enough time with the idea that any man would want to be a woman. They are overwhelmed with the idea that a man might want to be a woman simply to be with other women.

It does not matter that this desire is perfectly normal for the individual, nor that it is totally logical. People (and psychologists are included in this population), simply have a difficult time separating the issues of gender preference and sexual preference. So, my dear Sasha, whether you are homosexual, heterosexual, or bisexual, you need to recognize the importance of conducting the business of the day as a typical heterosexual woman. That's the bottom line. Remember this part of your letter:

“For some time, she [Mum] has been trying to get me to develop a sexual preference in my life. She understands my love for Marliz, but she feels that as a woman I should determine what my preference should be.”

Your mother is a smart woman, Sasha.

You ask for an answer to the question of how men will accept you. All I can suggest is that you learn to recognize that people have their prejudices, and that there are many who will never accept you as a woman, no matter how many cosmetic changes you make. This is a fact of life, my dear, and you can do nothing about it. Others will accept you on the basis of the way you present yourself. Your concern must be the latter.

Regarding your lady coworkers, they have already identified you as a man who likes to come to work in a dress. The older women prefer to keep this observation to themselves. The recent college graduate simply asks, “Are you gay?”

Your response to the question as being too personal was quite appropriate, Sasha, but I believe you missed the more subtle point: What are you doing that prevents these female coworkers from accepting you as a woman in need of surgical correction, as opposed to accepting you as a man who likes to wear dresses?

I can hear these ladies at home after work, saying, "A man showed up for work today wearing make-up and a dress. He was quite pretty, but I could still tell it was a man. "

You must divorce yourself from any identification, real or imaginary, about being a transsexual or a lesbian. Learn to conduct business like a typical, heterosexual natural-born woman.

Are you gay? Was the question directed to you as a man or a woman? It was directed to you as a man! Had you been accepted as a woman, the young coworker would never have raised the question. Had she accepted you as a gay woman, she would not have asked the question. She would simply have avoided you, unless gay women were her own preference.

Men will keep their distance, Sasha, preferring to have no doubts cast on their own sexual preference through too frequent associations with you. The more convincingly you project yourself as the average woman, the more accepting they will become of you.

Simply because you are wearing a dress, women might permit you to approach the perimeter of their social circle. They will not, however, allow you to enter until you have convinced them that all of your concerns are no different from their own.

As closely as they have been examining you, you need to examine them and to learn the rules of their social order(a heterosexual woman's social order. There are unwritten rules regarding friendship with other women that each woman must learn for herself, Sasha.

There is, for example, a professional dress code and one that the women will acknowledge between themselves. Do you know what they are? If you don't know, you should ask one of the older women. Ask if you are regarded as being too dressed or too formal. Ask the most influential woman because you will need an ally to convey to the others the woman you truly are, Sasha.

I am happy to learn of Marliz's decision to have her surgery. However, I am somewhat surprised that she has never written, nor shared a photograph with me. I am curious about her, Sasha.

Stay sweet.

Affectionately yours,  
Roberta Angela Dee

## CHAPTER FOUR

Sasha's letter of August 20, 1993

(Sasha has not yet received Roberta's responses to her previous letters)

Dearest Friend,

Another Tuesday night, Roberta.

So, how are you, Love?

My first exposure to you was through your writings as published in The Transvestian. I was, and still am, impressed with you. Your intelligence was reflected in the very first article.

A few months later, I saw your personal advertisement in another magazine. It was typical of the ads placed by people who want to meet others for sexual reasons.

The ad aroused my curiosity. Who was the real Roberta? Was she the Writer or the lovely hot African-American princess depicted in the ad?

After writing to you, I was pleased to discover that it was the Writer who responded. I knew you were not pretentious and were by all meaningful definitions a real woman.

You mention a man by the name of Barry in your last letter. May I ask if he is your husband, lover, or significant other?

Sitting in my bedroom, alone, I've just read the part of your letter that suggests your mild interest in me. I assume that interest is sexual. You indicate that you are not certain for what reason you are drawn to me but will not pursue it. I find that odd. Are you yourself not the least bit curious?

Discovery does not necessarily mean that one has to act anything out. Having Karl as a roommate does not mean that I have to sleep with him.

My point is that assumptions are a poor basis for solid thoughts or perceptions. My knowledge of you is limited. That, however, does not mean that my admiration must also be limited. With each letter from you, my admiration grows.

I trust you have always been honest with me. The important thing is that I have such a wonderful friend. Whatever you decide to tell me about your situation or about your sexual desires is up to you. Even if you decide to tell me nothing, we can still be the best of friends.

My second day of work was not very different from my first. Again, I was invited to go out as one of the girls.

I have my suspicions as to whether or not I am really being invited to a female shark party.

The girl who had recently graduated from college informed me that ladies from the other departments would also attend. Meow spoke the cat.

I love a good fight as do most Brits and Russians. However, I will decline their invitation.

I also believe that the bloody chair that loves to attack my hose is a setup. It was delivered from another department on the day I arrived. I fixed the problem in a proper manner: I went to a furniture store during my lunch hour and bought a more comfortable chair. It was posh looking but not too much so.

An office porter helped me bring it to the office. I really did not need his help, but it seemed the proper lady-in-distress thing to do.

There were some negative reactions when I walked in with the new item. Too bad, so sad. I am comfortable with it and have my hose protected!

Their reaction put me in the mood to stir things up a smidgen: During a break, I commented on one of the girl's make-up. Her blush was too much and the wrong color for her eye shadow. I suggested that she try a light peach color instead of the deep red she had used. I also suggested a better matched eye shadow. My suggestions were coolly received.

For the men, I showed off my education: One of the guys was working on genetics and seemed to be stuck on a particular problem. He was younger and had limited experience.

I know a great deal about this area and gave him some assistance. Again, my suggestions were coolly received.

Afterwards, I returned to doing my own lab work. Roberta, the work is no challenge for me. I think I will go mad if this is all I have to do here.

That second day of work, I wore a light blue dress with matching heels. The dress was a purchase from J. C. Penney. It wasn't too fancy. I also wore the necklace with the Isis pendant that Marliz had given me for my birthday, and wore gold posts on my ears.

I have been trying to figure out how I could brighten up my work area. The other employees have pictures of a spouse or their children, or boy friend. The men have family pictures.

I think I will bring in a picture of Mum and Marliz for my lab desk. If I had a picture of you, Roberta I would bring it in as well. Each photograph would serve as a voice. Each would remind me to behave myself. Then again, I might create a cultural problem and find myself tagged a lesbian.

Oh, screw them! I only have to see them 5 days a week for half a day. If they care to believe that I am a foreign drag queen, then so be it. I have skills, talents, and an education that will make it possible for me to survive a good deal more than this.

My days of performing fellatio for a few quid are behind me. Tomorrow I will sally forth and be the best Bio-tech I can be. I'll wear my snappy white dress and red pumps; and I'll see how they respond to a bit of zest!

Today, the most significant event came as a result of a conversation with a male coworker about the same age as me. The coworker felt compelled to tell me that I should meet a certain orderly working on the 6th floor ward. I questioned him as to why he

felt I should meet the orderly. His response was to tell me that the man was gay. He quickly added that he was “pretty sure” that one of the nurses was a lesbian.

I doubt that his intentions were to upset me, although that was certainly the result. He was only trying to be kind and direct me towards people with whom he thought I might feel comfortable. Good intentions from an ignorant source: I thanked him as best I could but told him that I was not interested in pursuing either of his suggestions.

The second event involved my boss. He was out of the office and called from where he was to let me know that he would not be back. He commented on my voice, saying, “You know, if I did not know your situation, I would swear that you were a real woman.” He also told me that I sounded sexy.

I thanked him.

My voice is the result of Mum's efforts. Through her coaching sessions, I now possess a rich, honey-like, sensuous voice. A past lover used to enjoy having erotic telephone calls with me. He said that I could give his ear an erection!

I watched the boss leave with a stenographer from the Personnel Department. I wondered if he was having a tryst with her. I was just pondering, musing.

I returned home feeling a bit wicked. I ate a little ice cream and scanned through a chapter from a good book. I also reviewed some documents about my father. It appears that my father led a far more interesting life than Mum ever cared to share with me.

He seems to have been involved in some type of Russian intelligence work. How delightful it would be to discover that he was a KGB spy! Too exotic for my father, I'm sure.

I'll write again on Friday to tell you about the rest of my week at the lab. I hope I'm not boring you. A Bio-tech is not a dazzling profession.

This weekend I'll see if I can still play piano. Having small hands, it has always been difficult for me. If there is a God, I really believe that He or She intended for me to be a woman. Perhaps a slight sneeze caused this mix-up.

With Much Love and Respect,

Sasha

This was the first letter from Sasha to actually leave me disturbed and suspicious. In some instances, she was very specific, while for others she was quite vague.

I also felt that she was alienating the group, and that she was failing to be sensitive enough to her real situation (that of a preoperative transsexual working as a woman in a homophobic arena and without the sanction or support of a creditable psychologist).

## CHAPTER FIVE

Roberta's reply of August 25, 1993

(Response to Sasha's letters dated August 20)

Dearest Sasha,

After reading your most recent letter, I realize that most of our communications has focused on our personal philosophies towards several issues. We exchange some very personal information but reveal very few details about our pasts, and have not discussed how we come to be where we are today.

During the course of this letter, I'll make specific comments regarding your activities at work but will also give you a bit of my autobiography.

I appreciate your comments about my articles and stories for Tania Volen, and that you believe them to be intelligently written. All I can say is that I make every effort to be a good Writer.

Regarding your question as to who is the real Roberta, that's quite a difficult question to answer. Am I the Writer, or the African-American, barely clothed princess depicted in the cross-dressed magazines and swinger publications around the world?

Roberta is actually many shades of several personalities. She is first and foremost a Writer, but she is also a model, wife, photographer, feminist, social commentator, and civil rights activists. She is a devout Catholic and yet in some respect an individual who believes in human reason more so than so-called Christian revelations. As an adolescent, she was a member of Women's Alternative Community Center, on Long Island. It was a woman's organization consisting mostly of lesbian feminists. I also wrote for their newsletter. Her first article was titled, "How Do We Measure A Woman?" Her argument was that a woman should be defined by her feminine spirit and her allegiance to feminist ideals. She should not be defined merely by the fact that she has, or does not have, a vagina.

The article received much support back in the early 70s. However, as time progressed and as American society reverted back to more conservative ideals, the organization reverted back to defining a woman on the basis of physiology rather than psychology.

Today, I argue that we need to provide a moral and peaceful environment for our young people. I argue that we consciously need to eradicate the environment of promiscuousness spurred on by the argument that choice is more important than conscience. I argue that we need to return to some old-fashioned ideals and provide our young people with the attributes of character and integrity that build a strong people and a strong nation. And, yet I write and pose for "girlie" magazines.

So, who is Roberta?

I am a strong-willed, intelligent, modern woman tempered by that part of me that remains a vulnerable little girl. I am passionate about our human right to freely exchange ideas and alternative expression; yet, I am equally adamant about our need to

respect the human rights of other people and to respect the way they define themselves. Consequently, I am a woman who at first glance appears to be a somewhat confused individual. Yet, upon closer examination, I hope there are many who can see that I am also a woman with clearly focused ideals and a belief-system based on liberty, justice and moral accountability.

Yes, there was a time when I used to sell my photographs. How terrible is that when so many powerful and admired Americans sell weapons of mass destruction to Third World countries? Then, as soon as these countries make use of the weapons sold to them, we send American or United Nations' troops to test our superior weapons at the expense of not only the military population but also innocent and defenseless civilians? Is it not somewhat bizarre that we admonish women for selling photographs while we reward men for mass murders?

Regarding your questions about my interest in you, I am not prepared to provide you with a complete answer. Suffice it to say that you have yet to learn some of the more subtle attributes of femininity, particularly those related to making explicit sexual overtures to a woman who has indicated no sexual attraction to other women.

Regarding your purchase of a new chair and the reaction of your coworkers, let me say this: It has been my experience that coworkers look for the ability of a new employee to accept the status quo. In time, they grow more willing to accept changes introduced by the virgin maverick. Initially, however, they prefer that the new employee be willing to accept the conditions they have probably worked under for years.

The wise woman seeks to make alliances within the herd, before she urges them into taking a new direction. The purchase of a new chair did not strike you as being particularly significant; however, if I am judging their reaction correctly, they are probably asking themselves why they are being subjected to the antics of a gay man who comes to work in make-up and heels?

My dear, Sasha, women are generally far more tolerant and often wait for a gallant young man or for a female ally to correct a disagreeable condition. There is a certain art to the cause of helplessness that is quite becoming to a woman. The wise woman makes use of it.

Regarding your making suggestions as to your coworkers use of make-up, you barely know the girl. You certainly did not know her well enough to ask her questions about her sexual preference, nor to suggest that she change her appearance.

When you were living as a man, did you suggest what other men should wear, how they should style their hair, or suggest which shoe went best with a particular pair of trousers? Of course not. Hopefully, you'll learn that women have similar sensibilities. Frankly, I'm not surprised that your suggestions were "coolly received."

Women do not try to impress men with their intelligence, Sasha. Women are much smarter. Men don't like us for our brains. They like us for what we can offer them physically and socially. The husband shows off his wife, his girl friend, or his mistress because of her physical attributes. I've yet to meet the man who escorts a woman while passing out certificates that confirm her Intelligence Quotient (IQ). Again, I am not surprised that your suggestions were "coolly received".



There are still many elements of masculinity that lay within your perception of what it means to be a woman. We are far more subtle than you might ever have imagined.

Here is my autobiography:

I realized that I should have been born a girl at the age of 4 years old. It was not a sexual revelation. It was simply a realization that I had developed a personality that was far more feminine than masculine.

As often as I could, or as often as my parents would allow, I would play with other little girls. If the girls and I were pretending to be adults, then I would always insist upon being the mother, the nurse, or the lady teacher. I would never accept male roles. Of course, the little girls protested my right to play the woman's role since I was a boy. Still, I was persistent and occasionally won.

My parents encouraged me to play with boys. They attempted to shame me and warned that I would be called a sissy if I continued playing with little girls.

Their intent, of course, was to discourage my feminine behavior. Still, my desire to be a girl persisted. It was permanently fixed in my mind. Occasionally, I played with boys, but only to please my parents or avoid public ridicule.

As my female friends grew older, they started to fantasize about being the spouses of Hollywood stars or the dates of teenage idols. I shared their desires to be with these men, but never confessed it openly.

As they began reaching puberty, I found a wall erected between my former friends and myself. As they became young women, they felt a greater need to exclude me from their world. This made for a very lonely time in my life. I felt that I was trapped in a world without friends.

I remember sneaking out of the house late at night carrying women's clothes. Most often the clothes belonged to my mother. I 'borrowed' them from the laundry basket.

Later, I acquired a collection of my own. They were women's clothes and undergarments removed from several clotheslines during my nighttime adventures.

I stalked the neighborhood late at night, and when I spotted something that suited my taste, I would run up the driveway, snatch it, and return home.

As I grew into adolescence, I thought at first that I was gay. After all, I very much liked boys. But even the gay men knew that I was different. A few of them would wear female clothing on special occasions, but not a single one of them really wanted to become a woman. I was the only one who wanted to actually become female!

Furthermore, I had no desire for a homosexual relationship. As far as I was concerned, I was a 'normal' girl and wanted a relationship with a normal boy.

It was when I heard of Christine Jorgenson, the first American to go to Denmark for a sex change operation, that I realized I was transsexual. All the uncertainty in my perception of myself became clear when the former Mr. Jorgenson said that for her entire life she had felt “. . . like a woman trapped in a man's body!”

With this realization, my whole world changed! I understood, almost immediately, how different I really was, and how I would eventually be forced to alienate everyone I

had ever loved or who had ever loved me just to be myself. What a terrible predicament! To be myself, I would be forced to alienate everyone I had ever loved, and everyone who had ever loved me!

I dated other girls from time to time, but I never had sex with them. The dates were mostly an excuse to get close to them and learn what perfume they wore, what brand of cosmetic they preferred, and where they shopped for their clothes. I remained a virgin until the age of 25 years, not because I did not have a healthy interest in sex, but simply because of the shame I felt for the male part of my anatomy. That horrible appendage was nothing more than a mistake that God had made while making me. It was a curse She had allowed to happen.

At 24 years, I graduated from a state college in upstate New York with a baccalaureate in Journalism. At 25 years, I met Charles, a bisexual man who literally swept me off my feet. He was a real charmer who promised to marry me and pay for my sex change operation. It was quite unfortunate that I believed him.

Then, the complete operation cost about \$12,000. I raised every penny of it by turning 'dates' for Charles. The dates were with his gay and bisexual friends.

He arranged for me to sleep with them for \$30. 00 a session. It was the most repulsive year of my life. I sucked dicks that any decent girl would refuse to even look at. I can only thank God that this chapter in my life occurred long before the AIDS crisis, and that I never contracted any sexually transmitted disease. But to sleep with some of the garbage that wanted to be with me, I drank, smoked, and nearly became an alcoholic. My only motivation was the belief that one day I could finally become a woman and stroll down a church aisle wearing a beautiful white wedding gown.

I imagined the church, the altar, the pure wax candles, and all of my bridesmaids. This dream, this fantasy made it possible for me to endure the degradation and humiliation of being little more than a prostitute.

Prostitution is a guilt I have never been able to shed. It is an act a woman endures because she feels she has no other choice, no other alternative. Yet, the same society that allows the condition, persecutes her for acting out her inalienable will to survive or to simply find some small measure of happiness.

At the end of the year when I asked Charles for the saving's passbook, he confessed that he had spent all the money buying himself a Triumph and gifts for other women. I do not think I need to explain how I felt. To this day, I am still embarrassed and hurt by the whole mess. I find it difficult to let anyone know what a fool I was and how stupid.

People always ask the ridiculous question, "Why didn't she simply get out of that situation?" The answer is quite simply because at the time she sees no way out, and in many instances feels that unless she fulfills some ill-defined responsibility that she has as a woman, that she does not deserve to get out. It's a Catch-22 situation.

Shortly after my affair with Charles, I met Nadia Angela Mendez, a Hispanic woman from Fiajaro, Puerto Rico. She directed me towards becoming a woman in the fullest meaning of the word not just with wearing women's clothes and make-up. She helped me develop a real sense of self-worth and self-esteem.

Nadia found a doctor willing to prescribe female hormones for me: Premarin and Provera. I was excited with the thought of having something undeniably feminine develop inside me something that would be visible for all the world to see. Each morning, for the first 3 months after I had started taking the small purple tablets, I would race to the dresser mirror to see if there had been any growth during the night. It made me most depressed to see that nothing had happened. After the second month, however, my nipples began to swell and the areola the small dark area that encircled my nipples began to grow larger and darken. Within another month there was a dense core of tissue beneath my chest that forced small bumps to appear. I nicknamed them "the twins". They would, within another 10 months, become my badges of femininity.

Nadia also helped me to find my first job as a woman. It was only a factory job, but it placed me in a situation where I was forced to be a woman, socially and not just sexually. I learned a lot from her, and adopted her middle name as one way of always remembering the enormous influence she had had on my life.

My only friend returned to Fiajaro when her mother became ill. We communicated for several years, but have since fallen out of touch. I have lived as a woman ever since.

The first year, after Nadia left the United States to return to Fiajaro, was especially difficult. Although she did much to restore the confidence I had lost after my disastrous relationship with Charles, there was still a great deal I would need to learn about men.

Men were a different species. They did not love quite the same way as I did, nor did they have the same requirements.

The men I dated were chosen because I felt they had something warm to share with me. I, on the other hand, was simply the image of an attractive woman, a sexual curiosity, or in many cases, just a piece of meat. They were nice enough and gentlemanly at first, but eventually most of them became orally and even physically abusive. I was the perfect victim and target for their abuse. Their real attraction was rooted in the fact that they were all seeking pleasure, and somehow knew that I was determined to please because I thought that pleasing was all a woman could do to be a woman and to feel fulfilled.

I have learned differently since that time. But even today I am essentially the person who seeks to please and who feels guilty if I cannot please the target of my affections.

Like most transsexuals, I continued taking female hormones on a daily basis to acquire a more feminine physique especially breast development. That was my focus. But along with the breasts and hips came an emotional cycle that was not very different from the one most women regard as their Post Menstrual Syndrome (PMS). I started to respond to events emotionally in a way I had never responded to things before. Sometimes, for an entire week, my emotions would sway up and down, then back and forth from one extreme to another, for no apparent reason. Then, after 3 or 4 days, I would return to normal.

Just before my cycle starts, these wonderful breasts become painfully sensitive. And for whatever reason, it also seems to be the time that most men want to be roughest with them.

The hormones also affected that way I reached decisions. I had always been less 'logical' than most men claim to be, but now I was becoming increasingly intuitive. I relied less on logic and more on how I felt about an issue. I also grew physically weaker as my muscularity began to diminish to almost nothing. I was 6 feet tall, but I no longer had the strength of a 6 foot man, and so when a man grabbed my arm or wanted to push me around, I was no longer able to defend myself. The female hormones had quite literally forced me into another world. I began to understand the abusiveness of rape and the psychological abusiveness of a man's dominance over a woman. I began understanding why so many women were saying, "It's a man's world. "

In time, I learned to be assertive in different ways, but they could hardly be regarded as masculine. I was a woman not only in a physical appearance, but also emotionally and psychologically. The main difference, however, continued to plague my life: I had a male appendage. I can not explain how hard, nor how desperately I tried to be the woman men wanted me to be. But my male appendage provided men with all the justification they needed to treat me as if I was less than a human being, as if I was some kind of freak. In some ways, I accepted their justification. After all, how many other women had a penis? Even today, even now, I am still trying to be that perfect woman. Not only for my husband, but for everyone I care about. When I met Barry, it was after several years and a countless number of relationships with men who cared no more about me than they would care about a whore. Barry offered me some desperately needed kindness. He offered to make a commitment of building a life together. Barry obviously has his flaws, but he provides me with a real sense of being a woman and provides me with companionship and a relationship with a man that is really not any worse than those of many of my girl friends. In some ways, it's actually better.

I earn my living as a professional Writer. Barry and I have had our first home built about 2 years ago, and we are respected as being an upright married couple in our community.

Barry does not swing, and that is why I have not been promiscuous and have always been safe and discreet.

I am tested every 4 months not because I have multiple partners, but because I believe that AIDS can be transmitted in more ways than is publicly acknowledged. It's also the reason that I am so selective and cautious. I have absolutely no interest in being masculine. I have enjoyed the company of women who like to make use of a vibrator or a strap-on cock. On more than one occasion I have really gotten into it, although it did not result in my reaching an orgasm. I do not know how it is for you or for most other women. I really do not discuss sexual activities with many people. However, above all, I enjoy foreplay. Because, it's generally during foreplay that I reach an orgasm.