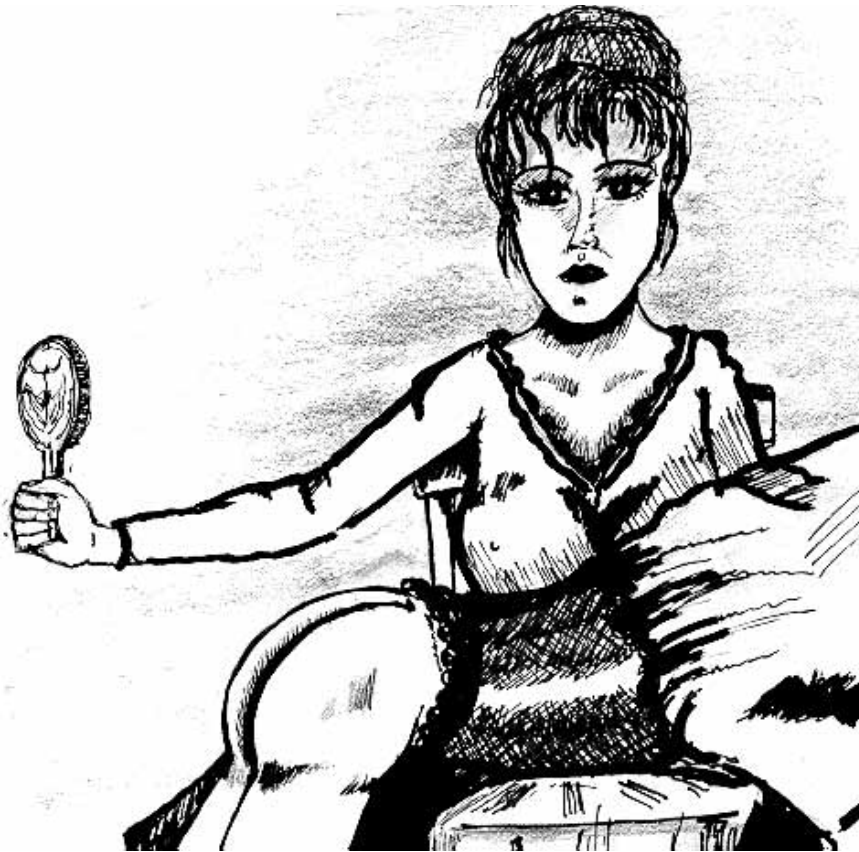


SPACE-AGE PETTICOAT PIRATES

By Derry



ILLUSTRATED BY C. PITTS

A 'HER TV' NOVEL

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(Author's Introduction)

I know that the title will confuse many modern readers. However, when I was young the word “petticoat” was used as a way of both describing and trivializing femaleness.

This is the story of Ulysses, my brother; Napoleon, my evil second cousin who was to be my husband; and Robert, his bratty son. They will find out that the so-called Petticoat Space Pirates were not a myth or a rumor but a reality.

In one way the term “Petticoat Pirates” was a misnomer. These ladies in fact NEVER wore petticoats. However, it turned out that there was a justification for their name besides their sex. Ulysses, Napoleon and Robert became Sissy, Nappy and Booby. They were to find out much, much more about “petticoats” than they could even have imagined.

This is also the story of how a good gentle man learned that love could survive changes in politics and values. A man doesn't stop being lovable when he has to wear a dress.

I dedicate this story to the daughters of the 25th century. I know you will be surprised to find out how things were in my youth. Mankind had moved forward and explored the stars. Womankind had been driven backwards into the kitchen. How different for you. I am glad that most boys have come to accept that full civil and political rights will never be for them. That legal special status is of course a protection for the male. It is for the dear boys' own good.

In some ways the changes in attitudes toward clothing are the ones I notice the most. A part of me is still surprised to see a woman and her husband both wearing long, loose cotton frocks on a hot, humid summer; or the same couple wearing thick, warm long pants in the winter. It's so different from my girlhood and from most of my later experiences.

Clothing was a very important practical and symbolic part of the power structure, where my story begins.

SPACE-AGE PETTICOAT PIRATES

By Derry

Part One

(1)

It would soon be midnight. I had nearly finished the mountain of ironing. My foundation garments were uncomfortably tight; at least this corsolet was not as suffocating as the full corset. And to cap it all off the soap opera was on too loud. I turned it down. I got a sharp response.

“Jessica, don't you EVER do that again.”

I can only assume that my brother Ulysses actually liked those shows. I do not know whether he could see the propaganda or not. Families were happy when wives were obedient. Viewers were expected to feel happy when a husband hit his wife. She then said sorry and he forgave her.

Some of these were set in the 18th and 19th century. Some were right up to date—set on the newest Planet colonies.

More than once Ulysses had talked about using real violence on me. He was not my husband, but he demanded that his breakfast was just so. He demanded that his clothes be perfectly ironed. He also wanted the boys- our younger brothers- to behave perfectly. If they did not it was my fault.

I went to bed at half past midnight. As I was getting to sleep I wondered about the myth of a golden age for homemakers. Was it true that there were once washing machines, dish washing machines and machines which swept floors? Was there a time when most pies were bought ready-made, needing just five minutes in this strange thing called a “microwave”? Was there a time when women weren't expected to wear tight under things?

I got up just after six. I had to put outside clothes on before I made the breakfast. I would not have time to change.

The first thing was the corset: I hated it. It squeezed me and it was difficult. Since mother's death there was no woman to help me with it. Ulysses had gotten this machine for me. I fitted in the laces than turned a handle. It had a little electric bell to tell me when the corset was tight enough. The amazing thing was that Ulysses really thought I would be pleased to be given this instrument of self torture. I had tried making it looser. Sometimes the matron checked me- sometimes Ulysses did. And he enjoyed being able to find me in the wrong.

I didn't like the corset for another reason, too. Even then I thought that my breasts were really beautiful. I remembered how wonderfully womanly it was when they

erupted around my 18th birthday. The lacing squeezed and confined them. I think it was felt that breasts symbolized sexuality- if a girl was allowed out she should not show she was sexual. I wondered whether I would have problems with feeding if I ever did have babies. Not that I planned on any at that time.

I remembered when my mother had been expecting Wilson, and later the twins. She had much less constricting clothing. This, however, had been matched by an even more constricted life. Confinement was such an accurate term for women's lives for those months either side of a child's birth.

That morning I found I had the curse. This was not going to make either doing my job or my household chores any easier. I was in pain. Sanitary protection was primitive back then. I had to wear an oversized pair of panties. Into these I carefully folded a baby diaper. I would have to make sure I was carrying two more when I went out. I found that to be the worst bit of laundry. It was not only getting rid of the blood, but the fact that I had to wear the same garments as an infant was most insulting.

Next came the pencil petticoat. It fitted around my waist, down to my ankles. I buttoned it onto the bottom of my corset. Around the hem at the ankle was a strong cord. It meant that I had to take very short steps.

Then I put my proper petticoat over my head. This was full length. There were hoops; one was parallel to my knees, the next was a few inches lower and the third was at the hem. All my underclothing seemed to be made of the heaviest possible cloth.

I liked the dress. But I would have preferred only to have that fashion on special occasions. The frock was cream colored and had frills at the neck, sleeves and hem. Cooking breakfast in this attire was very difficult. Having an apron on top was essential, but it was something else to trip over.

Since mother's death I had cooked breakfast for six every morning- except when Wilson and Herbert were away at boarding school. Now the twins, Andy and Martin were eight. It was fair enough that I should cook for them. But Wilson was 16 and Herbert 17. Ulysses was 21. The older boys ought to have known how to cook and wash the dishes.

I was glad Wilson and Herbert would be going away to school that day. I did not like what I had heard about boys' boarding schools, but their absence meant two less meals to cook twice a day, less washing and less ironing. I would not have to tidy their bedrooms every day either.

I kept my mouth shut., but I really resented being treated as a domestic servant—like I had seen on soap operas set in Victorian times. Ulysses, as the oldest surviving male, was my legal guardian even though he was a year younger than me. Granted, he was not as brutal as many men, but he could be nasty. He picked his times to punish me. He used to make sure that my little brothers were watching.

He would say: “Hand out, girl!”

Six strokes of a ruler hurt. What hurt more was having children watching while I was treated as a child.

Looking back, I wonder why I accepted this treatment. What would he have done if I'd said “no” when he wanted to hit me? Probably he would have done nothing. If it actually came to a physical fight I could have won. However, he had everything on his side. He had the money and the power. If he needed it, he could call on all the resources of the state to control “an unruly hysterical woman”. I do not think he would have gone that far. But at the time it would have been a terrifying risk.

Luckily that morning Ulysses was also in a hurry. He had made a fuss about his breakfast being cold. I had woken him before seven but he stayed in bed. His breakfast was cold because he let it get cold. Yet if it had not been for the hurry I would have been hit and humiliated for it.

Getting to the streetcar stop in time was difficult. I could only take tiny steps because of my clothes. Walking and breathing were always difficult. The fact that it was a very hot, humid day certainly did not help.

I saw another lady trip on her pencil petticoat. I helped her up. There was a boy about the twins age laughing. I congratulated myself on how well I was bringing up my youngest brothers. They would never do such a thing.

(2)

The streetcar journey lasted 20 minutes. There were a couple of seats near the back. However the task of maneuvering my voluminous clothing there, then trying to find a way to sit down, made it not worth the effort.

The seats on streetcars were not designed to be easy for women wearing what were considered “respectable” outdoor clothes. I thought about these things but did not talk about them. Most of the passengers were women. Men could get drivers licenses and most owned cars.

By accident there was one feature which made things comfortable for a tall woman like me. The way the luggage rack was fitted I could lean my back against two of the bars and my full skirt and hooped petticoat fit underneath. Despite everything- the pain from my period, the crushing tightness of my corset and my worry about being late- I relaxed for a minute. I think that I was unusual in never having fainted. Most women found the combination of the weight, the constriction and the time of the month occasionally caused them to pass out.

I sleepily reminisced. I had two memories— one very good the other very bad. Yet both had happened on the same day:

It was six years earlier. I was 16 and Ulysses was 15. Herbert and Wilson were going to their boarding school for the first time. Both parents went with them. Ulysses would not be due at school for another week. I was looking after Martin and Andy. They were two. I was putting off the hour I would have to start my least favorite job.

I would have to buy washing powder. I put the twins in the baby carriage and pushed that heavy vehicle to the local shop. I resented having to put on those heavy clothes to be respectable outdoors. Who's idea was it that you needed a pencil petticoat AND a hooped one just to push infants 200 yards to the shop?

When I got back I put Martin and Andy into the playpen. As an experiment I left several different toys there. As I had suspected Martin especially liked a doll. Of course I could never let mother, let alone my father and brothers know that.

Then I started the slow process of undressing. I would not get anything accomplished in the way of housework until I had changed. My dress seemed to have a hundred buttons at the front. In the absence of any other women in my household it was vital that I be able to fasten and undo buttons without assistance

I'd just lifted the hoop petticoat off me. Then I sat on my bed, undoing the buttons which attached the pencil petticoat to the corset. I lay on my back and put my legs in the air. I was struggling to breath through the tightness of the corset. I pushed the hem of long thin petticoat over my feet. Then I could kick it off.

Then bliss. I could release the constricting corset. I lifted it over my head once it was loosened. Then for about a minute I just stretched out my body, luxuriating in the ability to breath properly.

I stayed barely dressed for the next few minutes while I hung up my outdoor clothes. I think maybe I was deliberately working in slow motion. I wanted to put off putting on the corselet. This didn't crush me as much as the outdoor corset but it was still uncomfortable. Nor was I looking forward to the washing that needed doing. Then it happened.

"Bang crash!"

My 15 year old brother fell to the floor. Ulysses had hidden in my winter wardrobe. The door he was leaning on gave way. As you can imagine I was not pleased.

"What the hell are you doing in my room?"

He got up and replied, "Just looking."

"Well, I don't like peeping toms. What have you got to say for yourself? Well?"

He was unsure and hesitant.

"Well, I- er, just wanted to see. You know. I just wanted to. I like looking at you..."

Then he got arrogant.

"Well, what are you going to do about it, GIRL? Don't you know I'm a man- you're just a girl? You've got to do what I say."

Then I was feeling very embarrassed. I wished I had put a robe on. I did not like a man- even my brother- seeing my underwear. I went to the summer wardrobe. I opened a drawer and was picking out clothes. Then I caught sight of my brother leering at me. It was disgusting and I was furious.

"GET OUT!!"

Then he surprised me. He came across the room and hit my bottom- twice. I became incandescent with rage. I turned around and grabbed his hands.

This reminded me- and perhaps Ulysses- of two things. One of these was that I am a year older than him. The other thing was this: Mostly men are bigger and stronger than women, but I was taller, heavier and stronger than my brother. Housework is hard

work, and he just lazed about all day. I did not know what I was doing. I just pushed him away, while holding onto his hands.

“Now apologize for being in my room, apologize for spying, apologize for hitting me. NOW!”

The tone of his reply surprised me:

“I won’t!”

For all the world he sounded like Martin or Andy having a tantrum. Usually they were good but every child of that age has tantrums sometimes. I laughed and he got angry.

“Don’t you EVER laugh at me again! I’m a man. You’re a girl. I will NEVER have to apologize to you for anything.”

That was the moment I got crazy. I did not think about what I was doing, I was just so angry. I think for a few moments he was too shocked to resist. I pulled his hands down to my knees, and squeezed my legs together, trapping him. Off came his tie. I secured it around his hands.

I took a thick black scarf from the wardrobe. I tied it round his face, blindfolding him. I did not want him to see my body. He was not pleased.

“Stop it, I can’t see.”

My reply was a statement of the obvious, “That’s the idea.”

I pulled him to my bed. I undid his shoes. Shoe laces replaced the tie. Each hand was now tied separately to the bed rails. He was on his tummy. I pulled his pants down. I tied his feet to the other end of the bed.

I looked at my rough red hands. They had got that way through to much house work. I looked at his big ass. It had got that way through too much lazing around. I gave him a massive spanking. I just used my hands. They had got hard from helping my mother with housework. His ass was soft as a baby’s. I enjoyed the sense of power.

He bawled like a baby, too. That gave me more satisfaction. Then I started remembering my obligations. I remembered that however nasty Ulysses might be, Martin and Andy still needed me. I had some urgent housework. I stood up and was looking in my wardrobe. This was when Ulysses made his big mistake. Maybe he thought the spanking was enough to satisfy my anger. If he had said “sorry”, maybe it would have been. Instead he said, “You’ve got to stop this. I’m a man you’re a girl. Do as you’re told.”

He had said it once too often. Instead of getting myself dressed I started getting Ulysses DRESSed. I was looking at the most horrible garment of my girlhood. It was a waist and bottom corset. The basic idea was that it not only crushed your waist but also pushed in your bottom.

I had only worn that particular corset for a few weeks. The school I attended for a while insisted. When dad found out about it he protested and said it was unhealthy. The school insisted that all its young ladies wear the garment. I went to a different school.

I heard the babies shout. I went downstairs, looked in on them and they were happy again. An idea entered my head. I wanted Ulysses to have the worst of the curse of

womanhood. I was so angry I swear I would have made him wear USED sanitary items if I had my time of the month.

Back in my room, the two baby diapers I kept in my drawer for use during periods were clean. I put them into a pair of panties. I undid one of his feet, slipped the panties over it and tied it up. Then I undid the other foot. I pulled the panties to his knees and re-tied his foot. Then the panties were pulled right over his sore ass.

It must have been very frightening to feel unfamiliar things being pulled over his body without any idea of what they were.

“What are you doing, you bitch?”

I felt strong enough to reply.

“You said I had to do what you told me, because I'm a girl and you're a man. Well I'm changing that.”

He yelled, “Help! Let me go! She's a hysterical maniac!”

I explained. “One of the penalties of having an expensive detached house is that the neighbors cannot hear you. Scream all you like, if you want. In fact, maybe tantrums suit your emotional age.”

I was now really enjoying this. I undid his legs and slipped the top of the “waist and bottom corset” over them. He was kicking, but I was stronger. Of course the actual garment, even unlaced, constricted him more and more as I pushed it higher and higher. Soon the wide, unlaced top part was up to the bottoms of his arms. I then retied his feet. I was able to fit the laces over each shoulder without untying his hands. Actually I knew that many girls had resisted this particular kind of garment and had experienced being forcibly dressed by mothers and aunts- and indeed by big sisters.

The laces and stays pulled and crushed several different ways. His tummy and waist were pulled in. His bottom was pulled upwards and his shoulders were pressed downwards. And of course being a boy, he had a bit of anatomy that girls don't have. His privates would also experience extra pressure from the “sanitary arrangement”. Nor was it an accident that the wearer of this garment could not take it off, or even loosen it, without assistance. The laces were joined tightly at the most inaccessible part of the back.

I remembered how much I had hated wearing it. Not only was it difficult to breath, but also the lacing was so tight it really did hurt. There was one more feature. I actually had to ask my mother or one of my teachers to help undress me when I needed to go to the bathroom. This kind of corset was only meant to be worn for three hours at a time.

Then I heard shouts from downstairs. Both Martin and Andy needed help. I ran down and changed Andy. I thought about the washing. Then a wicked thought came into my mind. Martin really pleased me. He did not want to be changed. He wanted a potty, like he had seen his little friend Emma use.

I went back up to Ulysses and untied one of his feet from the bed. Then I tied his feet together. It was time for his- I mean her- petticoat. It was not difficult to slip the garment over his feet and then pull it right up. The skirt of the petticoat just slipped over. The

back of the bodice had buttons. When I had pulled it over my brother's back I tied his feet back to the end of the bed.

I untied one hand at a time and threaded the arms through. Then did the buttons up. There were lots of them, all at the back. At that time I still needed my mother's help to dress and undress. My mother needed my help with many of her frocks, also buttoned at the back.

He fought my efforts but not very hard. I'm not sure he knew what I was doing. I think he must have guessed. Probably he just couldn't believe the outrage I was committing on him. He probably assumed that no male had ever suffered such a humiliation. At the time I thought that too.

This petticoat was both decorative and restrictive. It looked frilly at the hem and was not that long, only just under his knee. The hem had a very strong thread in it. It was not as bad as the pencil petticoat, but he would not be able to walk fast and certainly would be unable to run far.

The actual dress was in a quite juvenile fashion. I think I wore it when I was 12. One of my father's few faults was wanting me to stay a "little girl". Although sized for a 12 year old, the frock was styled for an even younger child. I was glad he was quite slim and the corset helped that too. It was a more than a little short; the skirt went well above the knee and was quite full. No girl of fifteen would be allowed a frock which stopped over her knee. It too buttoned up at the back.

Strictly speaking, of course, the petticoat did not go with the dress. But petticoats are seen as equaling femininity. I liked the idea of my Sissy's underskirt always being visible.

Then I got dressed. At that time my breasts were quite small and undeveloped. I could fit into my father's T-shirt and pants. I looked relaxed and informal. It felt different, too. It's hard to convey how odd it was to be dressed and NOT feel your whole body being crushed. I guess I too associated maleness, and my father, with power. Of course my father used his power in a much more loving way than most husbands, fathers and guardians.

Finally I put white ankle socks and high healed sandals on my brother's feet. I untied him. He pulled off the blindfold. He saw himself in the mirror. He was furious. He got up and tried to chase me. Then he fell onto his face. I laughed.

"You've got to be careful how you move when you wear petticoats and high heels."

He got up and tried to grab me. Then came his next shock.

Click, click, click.

I used my father's instant camera to capture my brother firmly buttoned up in his femininity. He kept coming for me. I went back to my dresser. He came after me. Then I pushed him and pulled the bolt. He was locked into a closet.

I put on my father's hat and managed to hide my long hair in it. For once I saw the point of the bun fashion my mother so liked. I mailed a letter, and some photos.

I let my brother out of the closet. I told him about my special friend. I told him that I could totally trust my friend and nobody would ever know who she was. (By the way,

she was a he. A boy who when things were very private LIKED to wear frocks). I told him that my friend would leave the photos sealed until I asked for them. Then I told him that his best friend Brian, the captain of the boarding school football team, would receive the photos unless "Sissy" did exactly as I said for the next three days. I was not expecting my parents back until the weekend.

His attitude towards football was typical of my brother's problems with reality. I mean, his body was not well designed for such a physical game. He did little enough exercise. Yet he had an idea that one day he would be picked.

I wondered how I had the courage and anger to do what I had done to my brother. I think there were two reasons. One was that I was so angry that I was not consciously thinking. Part of that anger was rooted in shame. Like other women of that time I had learned that the body is dirty thing. My brother had seen me in that state.

I suppose the other factor was that when it came down to it, my father had power. While he may become angry, he would never allow real harm to come to his "little girl".

(3)

I was brought back to the present by two things. The first was the noise of a rocket taking off. This happened several times a day but was still loud enough to give me a start. The second was a worker from the Family Values Service. He was checking passes.

Women who wanted to travel on trains or streetcars needed written permission from their Guardians, in my case my brother. I started reaching for my purse, then I thought of something. I had an idea who the uniformed FVS man was after. I had recognized Jill when she got on board, only she was wearing men's clothes. I hoped she would get away with it. I knew she was near the back of the car.

I looked towards the front of the vehicle and managed to drop my purse. I also took plenty of time in finding the bit of paper. I did a very good act of being a silly, confused young woman.

Sadly, the FVS employee found Jill. I dread to think what happened to her at their hands or those of her father.

Then I went back six years in my head and remembered the best bit. I explained the situation to my brother:

"If you do not want everyone at your school to see those photographs you will have to do exactly what I say for the next few days until Dad gets home."

It worked. I had the most restful day in months. I had already done most of the housework. There was just that chore I had put off for so long. I showed Ulysses- my Sissy- how to scrub one diaper on the board and to disinfect it. I made it clear he would be doing the rest.

In the meantime I was not idle. I was with the twins. But I did not consider playing with two intelligent, inquisitive little boys who liked their big sister to be work. And Andy learned from Martin about potties.

Maybe he thought he could escape by doing a poor job in the washroom. I saw that the "clean" diapers were still visibly stained. I told Sissy to wash them again. I repeated my threat. By the third effort he had done a good job.

After what he had been doing I told Sissy to wash his hands three times before lunch. Then we ate a big meal. I quite liked cooking- when I could choose what we ate. While cooking I thought of the luxury of three days being able to give any housework I did not fancy to Sissy. Unfortunately Sissy spent the whole of lunch nagging me:

"You won't get away with this. Wait till I..."

Then of course I reminded him of reality. "Well, who will you tell? Is there anyone in the world you want to tell that you spent the last week of your vacation wearing a dress and washing diapers? And what if you were asked why? Would this sound good: 'Because my sister made me.'" I continued the hypothetical conversation.

"And if anyone believed you, how good for you would be this dialogue? 'Why did your sister do that?' 'Because I was hiding in her wardrobe watching her get undressed.'" "

Somehow the knowledge that he was in a helpless situation did not make him shut his mouth. A lot of it was just insults.

"You're a lazy bitch. You're an evil witch..."

I was worried about Martin and Andy hearing those particular words. He did have one legitimate complaint.

"I can't get these things off. What happens when I need to go to the bathroom?"

I also realized that this was a new area of power I had over him.

"Well, I'll help you with that at six tonight- provided you have done what I tell you."

He instantly stopped all drinking. I had a few hours to figure out how to let him use the bathroom, or maybe a potty, without actually releasing him. I had an idea. In theory it would probably have worked. It relied heavily on physically restraining him, but then I supposed he would be so anxious for relief and to avoid a humiliating accident he would cooperate.

Still he went on- nag, nag, nag.

"Why are you doing this? I'm not horrid to you. I mean, it was only a bit of fun. You're being unfair. Please, let me put on proper clothes, then you put on proper clothes. I won't tell anyone. Only don't keep me in these things. And don't make me wash any..."

He droned on and on. Then I remembered something my parents had bought as a joke. It was a replica of a medieval scolds bridle. It was used by judges in those days to silence nagging women. The device was a metal mask which held down the tongue of the victim. It was partly a way of enforcing silence but also a humiliation. I had also spied and seen what had happened one night a few weeks earlier. It proved what a good sport my dad was. During a party they had taped the conversation. They counted the words. They measured the minutes. There was not doubt Dad talked most. So during one evening he allowed himself to be bridled and silenced.

During his tirade Sissy had not noticed me go out of the room. I do not even think he knew I was behind him. I managed to get the contraption over his tongue while he was

in mid sentence. I told him about its use and that until our parents came home he would be my "wife". I told him I would not tolerate nagging.

(4)

As usual I arrived at work tired. I was two minutes late. From the view of the Matron it might have been 4 hours late. I would lose a whole hour's pay. This did not make much difference to me, my wages were paid straight to my brother. He kept me on a very small allowance.

The dressing down I got reminded me of something else that had happened six years earlier.

I was enjoying the luxury of playing with the twins and having someone else do the least pleasant work. I had a slight disappointment. Andy forgot his new potty training. I shouted to Sissy.

"Sissy, Andy's made a present for you- in his diaper!"

My brother carefully came in from the washroom. He was still having difficulty walking with the high heels and restrictive petticoat.

Then it happened: Mother came home- three days early. She saw my brother. She was livid. Something else happened to make both mother and brother even more furious. Ulysses was still gagged by the bridle. He was trying to tell her something urgent, but it was too late. It turned out the "sanitary arrangement" under his panties and corset was a good idea, but there was still a puddle.

Until father came back I wore that bridle. I was hit several times on my back with a belt, both by mother and by Ulysses. Looking back, I think mother was much more frightened than angry. She reminded me that girls had been sent for MAT- Mental Adjustment Therapy- for much less. We never knew what happened in those clinics, but we were all scared. It was used as a threat, like the bogeyman, on girls as young as three.

I remembered all this so clearly because it was UNLIKE most of my childhood. I'm not sure my father ever hit me. My mother did not do so as often as most mothers. I had a much happier and freer childhood than most girls.

Of course I never told anyone on Earth what I'd done to my brother. Neither did Mother or Ulysses.

I was in a greater hurry than usual to get changed from my street clothes into my uniform. This was much less oppressive than most feminine wear. On the other hand, having a dress that goes above your knees can be uncomfortable. Male patients could be quite unpleasant and rude.

I liked my work at the nursing home much more than my housework. Some people are very dependent when they get old. They need a lot of help and some of the help they need is very personal. But I did notice that a lot of them wanted to be as independent as possible.

On the women's wards there were what the more aware nurses, like me, called the "refugees". These were women who had pretended to be senile to escape unpleasant husbands or sons. A few of them had even changed their names.