

# VIEW OF LIFE

*By Catherine Bell*



*ILLUSTRATED BY C. PITTS*

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A 'HER TV' NOVEL

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## VIEW OF LIFE

By Catherine Bell

### **(1) Overworked Mother**

Charles's family was almost all women — his mother, Courtney, had three older sisters and no brothers. His father, Maurice, had four older sisters and, again, no brothers. All of Charles's aunts and grandmothers were divorced except Courtney's sister, Lisa. Lisa's and Courtney's were the only intact marriages — all the rest of the women, aunts and grandmothers, had sought divorce once they had enough children. Charles was the only grandson in the extended family. Maurice's sister, Maureen, had a live-in lover, Glenn. He was a lay-about but called himself an artist; Maureen did not mind supporting him inasmuch as he had no agenda for her and encouraged her to spend time with her sisters. He did not smoke or drink so he was no great expense to her. She was a bit softhearted and kept him so that he did not need to get a job, because she knew that he hated working for a boss or on commission. He was willing and able to do construction maintenance and kept her house in good condition — no tap leaked in that house nor did anyone ever shout, “Jiggle the handle!”

Charles and all his aunts and grandmothers lived in the same neighborhood, many in the same cul-de-sac and the rest around the corner. It was a development of row houses, groups of six to eight units in a park-like setting.

Courtney ran a small travel agency which had a fair amount of consumer business and one major customer, Stillwell Mfg. Corp., a producer of specialty castings. Courtney and one other woman were able to handle it all and still have enough time to run personal errands and break for coffee whenever they felt like it. They almost always left at closing time. Stillwell bid on a big contract for the Navy and got it. It would give them a lot of profit, but a lot of headaches too, because the Navy needed the castings to conform to rigid specifications. Stillwell's engineers would need to make a lot of trips to Naval installations all over the country. Courtney's agency was overwhelmed with work. Courtney had to look for a temporary agent because Stillwell expected the extra activity to last only six months. Courtney found another agent, but he spent more time fixing his mistakes than making travel arrangements. She replaced him but this one had such an abrasive personality that she got fired quickly. Courtney finally got a schoolgirl to work in the afternoons doing the clerical work. Even so, she and the other agent had to work a lot of overtime for a change.

### **(2) New Underpants**

One morning before breakfast, Charles called out to Courtney, “I don't have any clean underwear, Mom.”

Courtney had not done the laundry for more than a week. She had been too busy at work and something had to give, and it was a lot of the housework including the laundry. Charles's sister, Frances, was now living at college, but all of her old clothes were still in her bedroom, including a lot that she had outgrown. Courtney went looking and found white cotton panties and one white camisole in Charles's size. She carried them to Charles's room and set them on his dresser, saying, "You can wear these today and I'll do laundry tonight. It's girls underwear but no one will see it anyhow."

He said, "That's okay, Mom. I'll wear yesterday's underwear."

Courtney said, "Oh no, you don't! Nobody in this house wears dirty underwear. That's the way you can tell if a single man is trying to be macho. He'll pick the least dirty socks out of the dirty clothes rather than do the wash."

"Some of the older boys at school don't wear underwear at all. I'll just do that today," Charles offered.

"That's just another macho trick. They get dribbles of pee on their clothes and it smells awful. That's what underwear is for — to keep your outer clothes from getting dirty from the inside."

Charles put on the panties and the camisole and finished dressing. He was careful at school to remember to use a stall rather than a urinal.

Courtney was too tired to do the laundry that night so she found several training bras in Charles's size in Frances's room and brought them to him.

He objected again, and Courtney collapsed on the bed weeping. "I'm such a failure. I haven't done the laundry like I promised, and I'm neglecting you. I'll sell the damn agency and go back to being a full time mother."

Charles said, "Aw, Mom, don't be so hard on yourself. I'll wear Frances's underwear and everything'll be okay. You know how much you love your work normally, and how much you hated being alone in the house after I started nursery school. All this extra work will be over in a little while, and things will be the same as they used to be."

"You're such a sweet child. Give me a kiss, and I'll fix breakfast." She hugged him to her breasts and gave him a wet one right on the mouth.

He wiped his mouth on his pajama sleeve and said, "I love you, Mom." He did not know why, but he felt good. Courtney did, too. For several years, all they had done was to exchange dry kisses on the cheek. They had been very close until he started first grade, especially his third year when Maurice had a job that required a lot of travel and overtime. Maurice quit it shortly after Charles's third birthday but Charles and Courtney continued with a strong bond.

He had no clean jeans, so he went through Frances's abandoned clothes and found a pair of jeans that fit, although the waist and crotch were a bit tight. He failed to notice that they had no back pockets.

A couple of days later, Courtney found time to do the laundry and Charles was back to his regular underwear. She left Frances's underwear in his dresser just in case. A week or so later he ran out of clean underwear again and switched to Frances's without telling Courtney. He did not want a replay of the teary scene.

The next morning Courtney noticed his grungy pajamas and brought him a flannel nightgown of Frances's. "Wear this until I do the wash, Sweetie. Oh! and don't wear your panties underneath the gown. You'll want to get in the habit of sleeping with nothing on your bottom so that you'll be ready for your boyfriend whenever he wants sex."

"Mom, I'm a boy, remember?"

"Oh dear. I'm so mixed up these days. Of course you're a boy. Do it so you'll be ready for your girlfriend. Goodness, I'm running on autopilot. I'll be better when I've had my coffee. You're such a good daughter!, my favorite seventeen-year-old."

"Oh, Mom!" He gave her a wet kiss on the mouth and pulled himself into her breasts.

"I think you like the way my boobs feel, don't you, sweetie pie?"

"Yeah, Mom. They're all soft and squishy. I like hugging you, too."

"I like hugging you, also. Girls are much more touchable. Your wearing girls' underwear seems to improve our relationship," said Courtney.

"Aw, Mom. I'll make a point to not let the kind of underwear I wear affect how much I hug you. When the wash is done, I'll keep on hugging you," Charles explained.

When the sisters of Maurice and Courtney heard that their nephew was wearing girls' underwear and unisex outerwear, he was deluged with all the clothes of his cousins that had been too good to give away when they were outgrown. Included was a good bit of girls' outerwear, but he put these in Frances's room. He was not a sissy.

One result of Courtney's spending so much time with Charles and Frances in the period before he started school was that he came to read well before the other kids his age. Courtney felt manipulated by TV and avoided it by reading and teaching her children to read. Charles's first grade teacher found him to be a problem because he was far ahead of the other children and needed individual attention. She made him aware of her problem and he responded by faking ignorance and reading teen books hidden in first grade books in the same manner that other boys read comic books. His teacher was aware of what he was doing but it got him off her back and she made no objection.

When he was in the third grade, one of his cousins, Eleanor, came home from the university for the weekend even though she had an English test on the following Monday. All of her family were busy or out of town that weekend, and Saturday morning she asked her aunt Courtney to read her the questions at the end of the three chapters that the test covered. Courtney was overwhelmed at the travel agency and suggested Charles. Eleanor objected, saying that he was entirely too young to be able to read a college textbook. Courtney said, "Beggars can't be choosers," and urged her to try him before rejecting him. She did and he caught on quickly, mispronouncing a lot of words in the beginning, but doing it only once per word. When they broke because Eleanor was meeting her boyfriend at eleven, Charles picked up the book and read the first few chapters. He was a quick study. Because it was an introductory course, he understood much of it. When she returned, he was able to understand some of her answers, and even correct a few. Eleanor was impressed. Word got around to the rest of

his cousins in college and he was soon spending parts of many weekends reading their texts and questioning them.

Remembering how his first grade teacher was upset by his knowing too much, Charles kept his college learning to himself at school. He did the same at home to a lesser degree, because it caused Maurice and Courtney to become puzzled and less close.

### **(3) Housekeeping Service**

Maurice's sister, Elizabeth, was the only one in two families, not counting Glenn, who did not have a job outside the home. Her husband had paid generous child support and alimony and continued the alimony voluntarily after their two daughters had finished college. Elizabeth had wanted to be home for them and had just drifted when the younger one started college. She had continued to have sex with him after the separation and gave him supper and sex a couple times every week. Word of Courtney's overwork soon got back to Elizabeth. One day she called Courtney at work and said, "It's Dullsville here, knitting in front of the TV. I'd like to clean your house for you now that you're in such a squeeze. It'd be good for me to get out of my house, and you can spend more time with Charles and Maurice."

The last idea sold it to Courtney, who said, "Well, okay. But I'll pay you for eight hours at half again the minimum wage. No carfare, though! Ha, ha."

Elizabeth said, "It's a done deal. I'd rather have done it for free, but I won't refuse the money."

The next morning Elizabeth showed up at Courtney's house as soon as they were awake. Courtney showed her where things were. Elizabeth left and came back as soon as they went to work. She set to her own work with a will and was almost done when Charles arrived home from school. "I threw out those ratty Y-fronts and undershirts of yours. You've got lots of panties and training bras you can wear until your mom gets a chance to buy you some more boys' underwear. I trashed the PJ's, too."

"Aw, you didn't have to do that, Aunt Elizabeth. Let me go get them."

"It's too late, Honey. The trash man's already come. After a couple of days, you won't even miss your old underwear. Some girls in your class at school have figures as straight as yours. They're perfectly comfortable in this type of underwear. You will be, too."

Every day Elizabeth came by Courtney's house and spent a few minutes straightening up and cleaning the kitchen. She did not like Charles's being home alone, so she arranged for him to come to her house after school. She had no idea how to deal with a boy so she treated him like a girl. She told him about her experiences as a schoolgirl and let him help her prepare supper. He needed to wear an apron when he was working in the kitchen. Elizabeth let him wear a smock in the beginning because food seemed to jump at him. It had ruffles around the openings and hem and might have been called a pinafore in an earlier age. He soon graduated to an apron with ruffles.

#### (4) A New Prescription

One night at supper, Maurice and Courtney started talking about Charles's height. Maurice said, "I sure hope Charles doesn't grow as tall as me. Being over six feet tall in high school was so embarrassing. Being so skinny made it worse. The kids called me 'Beanpole'. I hated it."

Courtney replied, "I thought you were cute sometimes, but pressing my face into your chest when we hugged was gross!"

Charles interjected, "I'm the second tallest in my class, but not by much. Jeannie Thompson is the tallest."

"Yeah, but she's already past menarche and had her growth spurt," Courtney said. "You could continue to grow in your first year of college, Charles. I think I'll talk to your pediatrician about it. I saw something in the paper about a growth hormone some time back. Maybe there's an antigrowth hormone, too."

Bath Maurice and Charles thought that was a good idea. This exchange brought to Courtney's mind the circumstances of Charles's being a boy instead of a girl. In spite of a strong tendency towards girls in both Maurice's and Courtney's families, she had conceived two boys before Frances came along. Courtney had aborted both boys because she and her husband wanted a girl. Charles's conception had been an accident, and when they found out that she was carrying a boy again, they both knew that an abortion was called for, especially in light of their knowledge that almost universally a son in the family pushed the daughters into a neglected position. They were both feminists and were very careful to nourish Frances's self-esteem. They knew that, despite their best intentions, Frances's self-esteem would suffer a lot, making her a people-pleaser in an attempt to regain her position in the family. Courtney hated the idea of another abortion because she had become more outward going and sensitive. She had come to view a fetus as something well on its way to becoming a person. After a few weeks of indecision, Maurice and Courtney made a solemn agreement to let Charles be the secondary child. After he was born, they bent over backwards to make sure that Frances knew that she was the important child in the family. They did not mistreat him and gave him enough love so that he grew up with only minor damage to his psyche, but it was he that developed the people-pleasing characteristics. This had made his wearing of girls' underwear a practical endeavor for Courtney. Once Frances left for college, Maurice and Courtney tried to build up his view of himself, but, because he was now well beyond the most formative stage, it was slow work. Somewhere in the back of Charles's mind was the idea that girls were better than boys.

Dr. Wood, Charles's pediatrician, referred them to Dr. Greenberg, Courtney's ob/gyn. She explained to Courtney and Charles that boys were taller than girls because girls had puberty a couple of years earlier than boys and that estrogen inhibited the spurt of growth hormone during puberty. "I could give you something to slow you down, Charles. You are plenty tall already, and you've already developed all of your primary sex details."

Charles asked, "What are the primary sex things, Doc?"

“That's the development of your penis and testicles, the source of your sperm, what makes you a man. The secondary characteristics are a beard, extra body hair, oily skin, and so on.” explained Dr. Greenberg.

“Oh, gross!” exclaimed Charles.

“The estrogen will inhibit all further male development. Estrogen inhibits the production of testosterone and sperm. Testosterone is the hormone that causes secondary sexual development. I can give you something called FSH so that sperm production will continue and your penis and testicles won't atrophy back to the prepubescent state. You'll still be a man but not too tall and without a heavy beard. How does that sound?”

Charles said, “That suits me.”

Courtney said, “Me too, but we'll have to talk to Maurice first. We'll get back to you. Okay?”

The doctor replied, “That will be fine. I won't do a thing without your say-so.”

Maurice thought it would be a good idea, and Dr. Greenberg gave Courtney a prescription for the hormone. Over the next year Charles didn't grow another inch, and his penis stopped growing as well. Greenberg replaced his prescription with one for estrogen and progestin and another to induce the continuing production of sperm. The danger of a growth spurt was over, and Charles never gained another full inch in height but his penis did remain five inches long when erect.

The effect of the estrogen, other than inhibiting growth and the secondary male characteristics, was not immediately apparent. Charles remained skinny and thus his chest and hips grew little. The baby fat that had smoothed his body was replaced with womanly fat that did the same, the pubic hair at his crotch had a flat top rather than rising to a point; his hair was thicker, and his waist had shrunk, but these changes were too subtle to notice. Charles told no one about how big and sensitive his aureoles and nipples had become. Nobody noticed the missing male secondary sexual characteristics because they were not expected for another couple of years, and people usually do not usually notice things remaining the same, anyhow.

### **(5) A Different Body**

Not much later, Courtney did notice the enlarged aureoles and nipples one morning when Charles came out of the shower. “Dear, tie the towel under your armpits rather than your waist. It will save your daddy from being embarrassed.”

“How's that, Mom?”

“Darling, men find the sight of breasts stimulating, and you don't want that. Sex with one's daughter is a big taboo. He would be sexually excited by your breasts and repelled because you're his daughter. That's very uncomfortable.”

“But, Mom, I don't have breasts. And I'm not his daughter, either.”

“You're flat-chested I admit, but your nipples sure give the impression of boobs. You've got to be careful! I notice that you've developed a waist. I'm going to see if Frances has have some jeans or slacks you can wear.”



“Okay, but no sissy stuff.”

Courtney replied, “Fine,” and soon brought him three pairs of Frances's jeans. They fit better than Charles's regular jeans, and, because they tapered in the waist, he did not need a belt. She found him a rose-colored blouse to go with it. He complained that it buttoned the wrong way and it was a sissy color. Courtney explained that no one noticed which way clothes buttoned, and that his father has pink oxford-cloth shirts. Charles grumbled but wore it.

That afternoon, Aunt Elizabeth noticed that he was wearing girls' jeans. She said, “That bulge in your crotch doesn't look right. Those pants are cut for someone with a flat crotch. Your cousin, Tamara, took ballet for a while when she was younger. I think I can find some leotards that would fit you.” She quickly found them. “Take off all your clothes, except your bra and socks, and put on this pink leotard. Now reach in the leg openings with your fingers and push your balls up into their recess. Hold them there with your left fingers and use your right to push your prick back between your legs as far as it will go. Now take your left hand out and use it to hold your prick in place through the fabric. Take your right hand out and pull the leotard up in front and in the back. Now get dressed. You won't need your panties. Go look in the mirror and see how much better you look now.”

“Gee, Aunt Elizabeth, I look like a girl and my prick hurts.”

Elizabeth replied, “Well, beauty often is a lot of trouble or uncomfortable. You'll soon get used to it and stop feeling the pain. Nobody will notice your flat crotch, but they would certainly notice that bulge in your jeans.”

“Do I have to strip naked to pee?” asked Charles.

“No, Sweetie. How do you do it now?”

“I use a stall and pull my panties and pants below my hips, sit and push my peter down and let go.”

“Well, just push your pants below your hips and hold the crotch of the leotards over to one side and do the same. Afterwards, stand up and replace your prick between your legs as I showed you before you pull your jeans up,” explained Elizabeth.

“It sure was easier to pee when I wore boys' underwear, Aunt Elizabeth.”

“Nobody said it was easy being a woman, Charles.”

Charles realized that any answer now was an invitation to a lecture. He changed the subject. Elizabeth gave him a pile of leotards to take home even after he explained that Frances had a bunch of them, too.

He complained to Courtney about how much trouble wearing the leotard was. She called Mrs. Straightlace, the buyer for foundations at Simmons Department Store and explained Charles's problem. Mrs. Straightlace did not bat an eyelash but said she would call around and find something more comfortable for Charles. She asked for his waist and hip measurements and the length of his waist, too. A few days later she called Courtney and explained what she had found out. A buyer for a New York specialty store knew a source of gaffs, penis-concealing garments worn by male dancers sometimes. This buyer had also mentioned that some sissy boys liked specialty pant-

ies designed to show off women's butts to the best advantage. These panties separated the cheeks a lot, being as they were quite tight through the crotch. Charles would find them very effective in hiding his penis, and they would give him a sexy fanny, too.

Courtney relayed the message to Charles, except for the parts about the sexy butt and the sissy boys. He was eager for anything more comfortable. She told him to go see Mrs. Straightlace that afternoon after school for a fitting. Mrs. Straightlace had him try on a pair of the specialty panties to make sure of the fit. They were much more comfortable and provided easier access to his penis for urinating. He wore one pair home and carried the other two and the hated leotards home in his book bag. Mrs. Straightlace tried to encourage him by telling him how well the tight panties were liked by the sissy boys in New York.

Charles said, "I'm not a sissy!"

She said, "Yes, dear."

He said, "One of the girls in my class wears boys' clothes and has short hair, and I've heard it said that she was a tomboy. I guess I'm a tomboy"

She said, "Yes, dear."

He said, "See, I'm not a sissy, I'm a girl... a tomboy... I guess I'm a sissy after all. Don't tell anyone, please."

She said, "Yes, dear. You're a dear girl, and your mom must be proud to have a daughter like you."

"Thanks, I think."

## **(6) Food Service**

Courtney's sister, Jean, was a master baker and ran the back room at Scheaffer's Bakery. She reported for work in the wee hours of the morning and was home before lunch. She was a master cook, too, but cooked only for herself now that her daughters were both in college. It was not much fun for one with her talent. When she heard that Elizabeth was cleaning house for Courtney, she offered to have Courtney and her family over for dinner every night, explaining that it would let her enjoy cooking again, and that it would give Courtney more time with Maurice and Charles. Jean wanted to do it for free, and Courtney wanted to pay restaurant prices. They compromised on a weekly rate that was approximately half what a restaurant would charge. Jean worked out menus light on fats and heavy on vitamins, but always tasty and appetizing. She catered to Maurice twice a week and Charles likewise. Courtney explained to Charles that good girls did not make scenes over food that they did not like. They ate it in good grace. They considered the cook's feelings and avoided anything that would make her feel bad. They defined themselves by the way they behaved with others rather than by what they ate. Charles understood. This was another lesson in his ongoing socialization as a woman.

Maurice's sister, Gloria, became envious of Courtney. Gloria wanted to do textile art and only found time for it on Saturday afternoon. She asked Elizabeth if she would do her house, and got an eager agreement. She then asked Jean if she and her daughter,

Harriet, could buy into Jean's dinner, too. Jean accepted gladly. It would be no more work and six people around the dinner table was even more fun than four.

Over the next few months, the rest of Maurice's and Courtney's sisters bought into Elizabeth's and Jean's services. Maurice's mother and Courtney's mother also joined. Elizabeth cleaned house for her mother for free, and Jean would not accept any money from her mother. After she had cleaned a house several times, Elizabeth could do it in about three hours, including the laundry. Elizabeth was glad that the women had approached her at different times because this let her learn one house at a time. Now she was cleaning and picking up ten houses, keeping her busy seven or eight hours every workday. She was earning a lot of money and used some of what she earned the first few months to buy a really good vacuum and several other pieces of classy housekeeping equipment. Jean did likewise, buying bigger pots and pans and a top-of-the-line range. Elizabeth also got herself a new washer and a new dryer, both industrial quality but household size. She often did the sisters' laundry in her house rather than fool with a temperamental washer or dryer in the sisters' house.

## **(7) Becoming a Human**

Charles continued to hang out with Elizabeth after school and sometimes complained about his mom's having him wear girls underwear. Elizabeth explained that she thought it was a good idea as it would keep him from growing up to be a man. Before he started wearing girls' underwear, he had not been as intent on being a man as most boys. Something had probably happened, or failed to happen, when he was a toddler that kept him from a strong feeling of maleness. Politicians and media people, such as advertisers, would use his identity as a man to manipulate him into voting for particular candidates and into buying advertised articles and services. He argued that he would be just as able to be manipulated as a woman. She showed him that he would not have a woman's identity either unless he really tried to have one. He would look like a woman but he was too old to easily form a deep belief that he was one.

Later, Elizabeth talked to Courtney and told her of the conversation with Charles, suggesting that Charles should wear to supper some of the nicer dresses that he had been given. It would do him good to dress more formally part of the time. Courtney liked the idea and sold it to Charles. Wearing dresses would make him more comfortable to the women and it would make their bonding a lot easier. He needed to bond with them, especially with Courtney and Elizabeth. There was no way that he could bond with the men, because they already thought he was a sissy, a girl. At an intellectual level, they knew he was male, but this knowledge was not operational except when they were doing rational thinking, which was only about five percent of the time, if that. He was mostly persuaded by the opportunity to hug her more. He really wanted to be close to her. He planned on wearing the dresses with gathered or flared skirts so that he could wear regular cotton panties rather than the special ones that held his penis in his crotch. That night, several of the sisters complimented him on how nice he made the dress look. They did not change the subject when he came into the room. Heretofore, when they were talking woman talk, talking about menstruation or sexual acts, and Charles came in, they would change the subject abruptly.

Another day, Elizabeth finished that day's portion of house cleaning early, shortly after Charles arrived home from school. She said, "You know, you need to develop a sense of style, a knack for picking clothes that make you look feminine, clothes that don't call attention to you, or, if they do, say complimentary things about you."

Charles replied, "Shouldn't I be learning about men's clothes? I'm a boy, you know."

"Yeah, you're a boy, but you're going to spend the rest of your life in a body that looks like a woman's. If you try to dress like a man, you're going to get all kinds of undesirable reactions. Some people will think you're a sissy boy and others are going to perceive a woman that's unhappy with her sex. Both will treat you badly and take advantage of you. In school, you're trying to pass as a boy, but most of the kids and teachers already think you're a tomboy. That's okay in high school, but it won't work well when you're grown. Kids are allowed to try on a variety of identities, even strange ones, in their crazy teens, but not later. By that time, you've got to conform your appearance to your body because people get uncomfortable with sexual disparities."

"But I'm a boy, Aunt Elizabeth. I don't want people to see me buying a dress. Everybody knows I'm a boy, and I'd be teased unmercifully if anyone I know sees me. Let's just skip it, huh?"

"Nobody's going to see you, and, if they do, it won't surprise them. Be a dear and put on a dress and we'll go to the mall now."

"Okay, I'll go. But let me wear my school clothes, please, Aunt Elizabeth."

"Well, all right. Get a slip and a pair of breast pads and put them in your book bag."

They went to the mall and into a store catering to teen-age girls. Elizabeth explained that he was looking for a dress that would bring out his femininity. The saleswoman looked surprised for a moment, but a sale was a sale and a commission. She decided to treat Charles as a tomboy, one who was being led away from boy's clothes. She picked out dresses that were simple and avoided the fussy ones. This was just what Charles wanted. If he had to have a dress of his own, at least it would not brand him as a simpering sissy without a thought in his head. Elizabeth started calling him Charlotta now.

### **(8) Sex Service**

Courtney and her sister, Margaret, were talking one night after supper, and one thing led to another. Margaret said, "I sort of miss having a dick in me sometimes. When a guy came in me, I really felt that I had done my good deed for the day. I think getting a man's nuts off is almost as important as feeding him."

Courtney replied, "I think you're right, but I'd rather cuddle. I let Maurice screw me because it's so important to him, not because I like cum running down my leg or sleeping in the wet spot."

Courtney continued, "The most embarrassing thing happened last night. I was so tired that I fell asleep while Maurice was pumping away. He didn't even notice until I started to snore. He was much hurt. I apologized and explained and he halfway understood. I sure hope it doesn't happen again!"