



Reluctant Press

Dress Code Wars

Annie Warren



ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHAS

A 'NEW WOMAN' NOVEL

Copyright © 2003, Friendly Applications, Inc. - All Rights Reserved

Reluctant Press TG Publishers

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

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

Protect Professional Fiction on the Internet!

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

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

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

The Dress Code Wars

By Annie Warren

Fantasy and Science Fiction and magic have their places,
And I have written stories in those genres,
But for me I prefer to write stories that really “could be”.

—Annie Warren

Chapter 1: Two Macho Dudes

It was a large office populated almost exclusively by women. In it, however, were two who could easily be termed “token” males. As it turned out, however, the two of them were not hunks. Contradicting this, however, was the fact that they did not have the necessary appearance to go along with this self-image.

Looking at them, you would most likely come to the conclusion that these attitudes came from overcompensation; neither of them was taller than 5’ 5”, making them even shorter than some of the women in their office. Adding to this “short-fall” was the fact that each of them was slender. There were no bulging muscles nor well-developed upper bodies. Also, they weren’t hairy or any of the other characteristics one generally associates with the macho image, but these shortfalls did not stop them from acting the roles they had chosen for themselves.

Another reason to overcompensate in acting macho was that one was named Cecil and the other Marion, hardly what could be called macho names. Cecil was called “Ceese” and Marion was called “Mar”, at least to each other. We won’t repeat here some of the other names they had gotten in the office.

Their attitude was one of ruling the roost, which they didn’t really. What really irked the office crew, however, was the fact that although they were at the same

grade level as their female coworkers, they rode them mercilessly as if they, by virtue of being male, were innately superior. This made for a tinderbox just waiting for a flare-up!

Summer had come on once again with its heat and humidity, and once more clothing became a popular target on the gripe circuit for the women, especially when it came to wearing hose of any kind on a hot day. In the office there was, more or less, a ban on wearing shorts, pedal-pushers or even slacks. Of course, bras were also mandatory, regardless of need for wearing, adding to the clothing layering and resultant heat. The “breaking point” between the men and the women, if you’d like to call it that, came when these dudes overheard the women griping about the dress code that called for hose and bras, along with other “injustices”, real or imagined.

As far as the dress code went, these two saw no problems. They had their slacks and lightweight summer shirts. Of course they had to wear ties, but that was a relatively minor irritant. They wore their proscribed suits into the office where they took their coats off when they got to their desks, adorning their office chairs with them. So what if the air conditioning was barely adequate for the office? These two certainly weren’t suffering. What was the women’s problem anyway?

When the women heard their comments about *their* lack of problems with *any* dress code, they thought that if these strutting popinjays were put in the women’s place, they wouldn’t be able to handle the dress code in this office. These women were also confronted by the continued macho “better than thou” actions and attitudes of the dudes. This led to the women’s certainty that these two could never handle the female dress code.

This virtual “can’t” raised the dudes’ dander. They naturally saw it as a challenge, one that their macho roles could not let stand unanswered. When they argued the women’s accusations, the women replied with a “put up or shut up” response, which did little to ease any of the tensions building between the two factions. It actually fired it more as the men gradually got into more heated discussions, letting emotions override fact and reality. It continued to heat up more and more as time went on and the situation remained unresolved.

It was definitely a very lopsided argument with so many women arguing against the two males. Finally, push came to shove, and they ended up drafting a written agreement that echoed the men’s “abilities”, or lack thereof. In it, two of the women would agree to swap dress codes with them for a week to see if the guys could handle the women’s code which the dudes had so easily derided as “no problem”.

Chapter 2: An Interested Arbiter and an Unforeseen Addition

After drawing up the agreement, they realised that they could not carry out any actions such as these, certainly not in an office environment such as theirs. They knew it couldn’t be done in a vacuum; a small contingent of women plus the men called on Ruth Parks, their immediate supervisor.

Ruth was a middle-aged, middle-management type who was solid in both body and mind. She did not have any gray hairs, but that is not because the office crew don't give her enough stress; she was just too young yet. She met with them and listened to their story, such as it was, with a few nods of her head, but not enough to disturb the close curls of her tight semi-Afro hairdo. She took the agreement they had written up and rapidly read through it while pondering the situation and what she could possibly do with it. While reading through it, she formed some ideas for some additions to the agreement that were not included in the original document.

Although she had maintained an office separate from the large office that she ruled, she was well aware of what went on in it. She had known for a long time of the friction engendered by and the problems these two men had fostered in her one time all-woman office. She saw in this document the possible solution to both the women's and her problems with these two men.

Having read the document, she looked up at the contingent that was awaiting her decision. Both men were there, looking smugly sure of themselves while the women were showing just a trace of nervousness. She wondered if these men realised just what it was that they had agreed to on this simple piece of paper. She doubted it but decided to take advantage of their naiveté.

Instead of just giving the nod, she stated that she wanted to think it over first. Holding on to the agreement, she told them that she'd call them back after she had studied it some more. A plan was forming in her head, and, as they filed out, she called for her secretary to come into her office.

Even as the two groups continued sniping at each other, she reviewed the situation. Then, smiling to herself, she took their simple agreement and drafted a more complicated and involved contract whereby two women, Dana Miller and Bobbie Harrison, would swap dress codes with the boys for the period of one week, as the original agreement had stated, but with "conditions".

It had been an easy choice of which women to include. She knew the "flavours" of her workers and thus picked the two women who had the shortest hair and the most lesbian bent, if she had read them correctly. They were definitely assertive, being the most macho of the women in the office, probably the reason they had been in the original contingent.

She also pondered what more could be done with this incident and thus expanded on the original agreement they had brought in, putting into the contract some additions of her own, expansions that would promise to make it much more "interesting".

Once the contract had been typed into the computer and then printed out in multiple copies, she called the ringleaders and the proposed participants back into her office. Setting the contract before them, she asked if the two women she had chosen would be willing to swap dress codes with the boys. They turned out to be ready and willing to swap dress codes. They had not thought that they would be the ones to participate, but, having been chosen by Ruth, they were nevertheless quite ready and willing.

The men quickly scanned the contract but did not read it in depth. They were nervous about the legalese Ruth had put in it but nevertheless signed it along with the women chosen to swap codes with them. Both Ruth and her secretary, who had helped set it up and had also typed it into the computer, countersigned the document as witnesses. As a final action, thanks to the office's copy machine, each participant/signee was given a photocopy of the final document as signed and witnessed.

At their desks, the men scanned again the contract they had agreed to and found a zinger in the "fine print" - something they hadn't noticed before. "*For each dress code violation by any member of a particular team, men or women, the length of term for that team's dressing under the other gender's code, will be extended by one week until the full term is met or the members resign from the company.*" They pointed it out to the two women who had not yet found the clause. They too became somewhat upset.

The signatories gathered together and went back to ask Ruth about the clause. She merely laughed, saying that it was an added incentive for them. She then handed each of the men a copy of the women's dress code, and also handed a copy of the men's dress code to each of the women. Thus the stage was set.



Dana was blond and stood 5'7". Bobbie stood 5'8" and was one of those natural flaming red heads. Both were quite muscular as women go, more so than the men. Ruth had chosen well the two that would play opposite the men. Cecil was 5'4" while Marion was 5'5". Cecil also had red hair, maybe a shade darker than Bobbie's but a lot longer, long enough to need to be in a pony tail in the office to keep it under control. Marion's hair was down to his collar and was either a light brown or a dark blond. The contract had been signed and witnessed; they were now committed.

Each of the men went out and independently bought a woman's pants suit for himself, thinking that would be sufficient. The whole fracas was to start at the beginning of the following week. All of the "contestants" thought that they were properly prepared; however, as stated, *not one of the participants had really read* their respective codes. They all had a lot to learn.

Chapter 3: It Begins – We Get Our First Evaluation

On Monday, the start of our week of the dress code swap, I managed to get to the office before the other participants and got comfortably ensconced at my desk. A number of women were also there. They looked at me, but did not say anything about my attire. When Mar came in, I noted that he, like me, was attired in a pantsuit. I smiled and complimented him, "Good morning, Mar. My my, but it is obvious that pink really *is* your colour!"

“Mornin’ to you too, Ceese. Thanks for the compliment. It was just something off the rack. Hey, it looks like off red is *your* colour. It looks real good on you!”

“Oh come now, Mar, where’s your fashion sense? You should know quite well that this is fuchsia, not ‘off-red’.”

At that we both laughed, enjoying our little banter. Both of our pantsuits had built-in shoulder pads, which managed to almost square our shoulders. Neither of us had worn anything special underneath nor on our feet. Feeling that black oxfords wouldn’t go with this outfit, I had put on a pair of white tennies. I thought it made a good-looking outfit. In the V of Mar’s jacket, I could just see a few hairs on his chest, not that he had all that many to begin with. I didn’t have any at all showing on my chest as I have always had a bald chest. Obviously, neither he nor I had worn anything under our pantsuit jackets.



The girls showed up in what at first glance looked like three-piece suits. Under the jackets, they wore white man-cut blouses with rounded collars. With them they also had string ties; however, the coats and vests neither matched each other nor did the pants match any of the other parts. They were obviously femininely-cut, one with a side zipper and the other with the zipper placed in the back. Of course, their attire showed off their curvaceous bottoms as the cut of their trousers was designed to emphasise. They made it a point to come by and see what we had done with ourselves and to almost proudly “show off” their outfits. From the looks of it, this was not the first time they had worn such clothes, but never at the office, of course. Like us, they had done a minimal job in transitioning.

Both were wearing two-inch pumps with what looked like beige hose that clearly show off their trim ankles beneath their pants legs that ended just a bit short, apparently for the purpose of showing off the ankles and their hose. The jackets were more like women’s blazers than suit coats, including button placement, and as such did absolutely nothing to conceal their protruding chests. Although neither was in any way overly endowed, their modest breasts were nonetheless quite evident under these jackets.

They wore the jackets with the underlying vests open, showing off their white, probably nylon, blouses underneath. Of course, with the partially sheer nature of the cloth, we could see the obvious outline of their bras underlying the white blouses. As if to put even more emphasis on her lingerie, Bobbie had actually worn a black bra that was much more apparent than Dana’s simple white bra which was nevertheless quite obvious, showing its lacy nature where it contacted the blouse. They thus came off as women wearing almost, but not quite, pantsuits but not really what could pass as men’s suits.



At noon, the four of us were called in to see Ruth. We stood before her desk, which she calmly sat behind, looking the four of us over with a sort of smirk on her carmined lips. And then she started in, beginning with the girls...

“I see that you have followed the spirit of the law but not the letter. Let’s see...” She looked at each one in turn, going from shoe to hair and back again before continuing. “Violations: You girls are wearing pumps — the rules say ‘sensible shoes’. You are wearing feminine necklaces and multiple earrings. Rules say ‘one earring and/or one necklace is allowed’. They also state that ‘ties will be appropriate wear and will be of standard design for office wear’.” She paused to take a breath and then continued. “They state, ‘suits will be two or three piece and all elements must match. Only in wearing sports coats will this be allowed otherwise, if the office manager allows it’. And I *don’t* allow it.”

During this dressing down, as it were, we boys smiled almost conspiratorially, glancing and smiling at each other, as we had been aware of those rules. She closed with, “That should give you something to start on... *This time, read the code.*”

Our mirth at this dressing down was short-lived, for then it was our turn. Before the girls could properly react, she turned toward us and started in. “The code calls for ‘skirts of reasonable length, pants are not allowed’. ‘Makeup is to be reasonable and tasteful’. ‘Blouses are to be tasteful without showing too much lingerie nor too much cleavage’. ‘Appropriate lingerie will be worn at all times, to include a well-fitted bra’. ‘Hose, either held by suspenders, stay-top, or pantyhose will be worn daily to the office; bare legs are not to be displayed’. ‘Unless physical problems exist, heel heights will not be lower than 2 inches, 3 or higher being preferred’.”

She was looking directly at us, as she recited these lines at us, as if reading directly out of the women’s code. She then closed our part of the examination with, “You also had better *read the code!*”

All four of us stood there in stunned silence. We had all, both men and women, been caught in multiple flagrant violations of the respective codes that we were supposed to be following. Obviously none of us had *really* read the codes.

“Well, that is but a cursory count of problems. Let’s see. What does that make? That’s something like four for the women and five for the men? Now that you know that the contract you all signed is serious, we will split the difference; that’ll be two more weeks for the girls and three more weeks for the boys. You will be given until next Monday to remedy these problems. I’d suggest strongly that you don’t wait to the last moment, but start *now* to seriously apply yourselves to correcting your individual problems and to doing some sincere work on resolving these deficiencies...” She paused, looking over our somewhat stunned faces, then added, “And, I *do* mean *seriously!*” She paused again, but we were still too stunned to react.

“Since you all have vested interests in this ‘project’, I want you to pair up and advise each other on how to cope. I will expect you to share your knowledge and experiences.”

We looked at each other. Bobbie’s eye’s locked on mine and she gave me a slight nod while Marion and Dana did the same. Our “pairing” had been set. But there was no real mirth in our proposed “liaisons”. It was like being forced to negotiate with the enemy on how you can win a battle with them. There were still the original tensions that had got us here in the first place; nevertheless, needs would have to play their parts too.

With a “You may go now,” we were dismissed and filed out of her office silently, almost like prisoners leaving the bar. Each of us was steeped in our own thoughts as to what this *really* meant. We went back out into our office where we met like an instantaneous, *ad hoc* subcommittee. We went over what was said and so decided on an “expedition” to the mall. Of course, the girls were much more enthusiastic than we were, but none of us had any real choice in the matter.

Chapter 4: Alleviating the “Problems”

That night, we met together directly after work, went out to a fast-food joint for a quick dinner, during which we all sat eating and reviewing our respective codes. Not much was said. The codes were complicated so we would advise them on the men’s dress code and likewise they us on the women’s. If it were only that simple, it might have ended differently. But once we had eaten, it was off we went to do our shopping.

This time, shopping for me was not for just grabbing a pantsuit, for that had proven inappropriate for the office according to the code (or more accurately, according to Ruth’s interpretation of the code, right or wrong, that we had to go along with). We were out to obtain a small, adequate wardrobe that would carry us through the trial that we all recognised had begun. It was now no longer a week but almost a month with Ruth’s penalty extensions added on.

Thus, much to my embarrassment, even though I was dressed in my *obviously* women’s pantsuit, we purchased panties, bras, blouses, dresses, skirts, and several business suits for me. We also purchased a like amount for Mar. Somehow, all of our new skirts ended up tight at the waists, loose at the hips, and narrow at the hems. The narrowness put a limit on my “stroll”, if not on my general ability to just walk. Even the skirts of my suits were slim, again limiting how far I could move my legs before hitting the constrictions of that circle of cloth, cutting down on the length of what I had up to then considered my “normal” stride. The women never seemed to consider skirts with “walking slits”. I only learned of the existence of such slits later, after I had obtained my “reasonably compete” wardrobe.

Buying my high heels was another ordeal. The salesman quite obviously knew that I was male and snickered the whole time he was fitting me with several pairs of high heels to match my new skirt suits. Mar got the same treatment. Nevertheless, we ended up with more boxes to add to our already expanded collection of

women's clothing. This was turning out to be an expensive excursion! I put out a lot more money than I would ever have expected!

The girls suggested that we wait on getting a complete makeup kit until we could come back to the mall properly "dressed" to get a full evaluation. We agreed wholeheartedly; besides, our constant blushing would most likely have given them false readings on our basic skin tones. Nevertheless, when the occasion arose, they had us get a partial kit of makeup that was thrown in with the other stuff. They said we'd get a makeover in due time. Somehow, that did not warm the cockles of my heart in the least.

To our further humiliation, as if shopping for these things was not enough, we also had to stop in at a medical specialty shop to get fitted for some breast prostheses. The girls insisted that we had to have the correct look and feel. I am not certain, however, why the "feel" aspect was supposed to be important. They went on about something concerning our chests "moving right". Most breasts I had seen had not moved much, especially in the confines of the office. They insisted we get the "higher priced" brand, saying that foam just wouldn't do. The forms we got were really expensive, but I had to admit that they did look and, I suppose, feel much like the real thing. Of course, we had instructions on application and removal and the last thing done was applying them to our chests with some sort of glue that would last "as long as necessary". We were also supplied with more glue, *just in case*. In case of what? My bra had to be readjusted and now felt entirely different!

««=»»

Having stashed the last of our "treasures", as they called them, in our respective cars (it took seemingly innumerable individual trips to get it all there), we then went back in with the women and helped them select several suits, shirts, ties and shoes. It went relatively quickly, almost instantaneously in comparison to our ordeal. It occurred to me at the time that maybe we were the ones to have made a gross error in entering into this contract as our shopping was much more involved and complicated, to say nothing about being much more expensive, than theirs. It also boded a much more difficult time we could look forward to when it came time to come into the office in "full drag."

Probably equally as bothersome was the number and variety of cosmetics in our "partial kit" that managed to have been picked up somewhere along the way. The girls said that we had best start using some, as it would be expected, reminding us of what Ruth had said about "reasonable and adequate" makeup. On reflection I remembered that all of the women in the office wore some level of makeup. Bobbie explained that it was "expected" and, unless one had a medical excuse, was required by the code. Thus we were introduced to makeup, another requirement we had not really been all that aware of, though a look in the code found the entry. Only after the fact did I remember the comment of the "complete kit" and the "makeover" promised to be in our collective futures. I knew then,

without a doubt, that Mar and I had probably a lot more of this “women’s stuff” to look forward to.

Somehow, I did not try any of them on again until I had to.

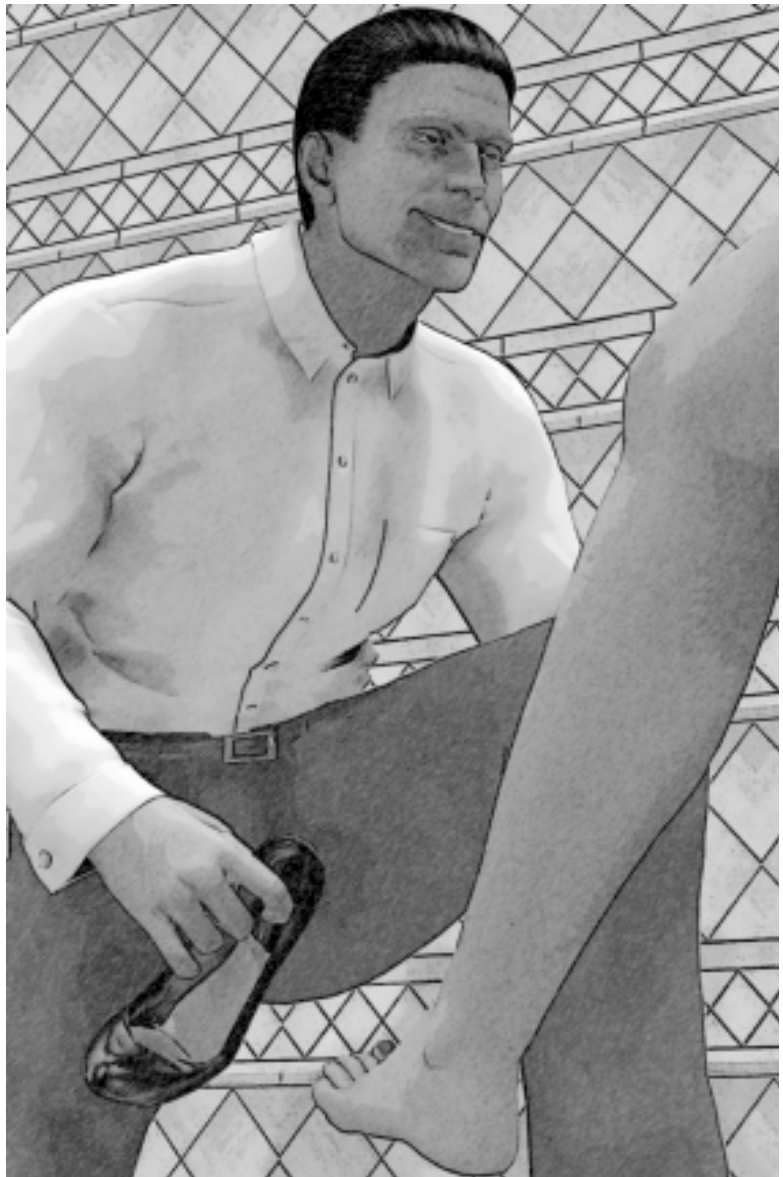
Chapter 5: One More Try, But More to Come

Monday morning was a trial, for sure. Dressing from the skin out in the soft and silky lingerie definitely had both a physical as well as a psychological effect on me. Of course, having those “realistic” pads firmly planted on my chest had its own effect, one that was not as evident now as when I had first put them on my chest in that specialty shop. The thought was sobering as I pondered my oh-so-obviously protruding bra strapped over my shoulders and around my chest as I gazed in my mirror.

Covering my bra and silky panties with a skirt and blouse gave me another set of weird feelings. This was not a woman’s pants suit that somehow by some stretch of the imagination could mimic a man’s suit.

As I put on the jacket part of the suit, it became almost painfully evident from its cut that did nothing to suppress but rather emphasise my bulging chest that this was a full-blown woman’s suit. The built-up shoulder pads that I had not noticed in purchasing it now seemed to stick out, in more ways than one, giving me much squarer shoulders than my previous reality had endowed me with.

Fortunately, I had been told how to put on pantyhose or I probably would have run through all of the pairs I had got. They turned out to be somewhat more complicated and challenging than the simple knee-highs I had worn under my pants suit.



It also took quite a lot more now to pry myself out my front door than when I wore the pants suit which now hung in my closet, perhaps never again to see the light of day. This morning, my mirror had shown me to be a sort of average woman in a nice suit, with an adequate bust, and wearing moderately high-heeled shoes. Topping off this image, I put on some lipstick, the fiery red they had purchased for me. It seemed to make an immeasurable difference, capping the image as totally female. I knew that more makeup would have been more realistic, but this was as far as I was willing to go...then... But it *did* get me out of my flat!

When I came into our office, I got a number of compliments on the “nice outfit” and did actually get some work done. Mar was apparently under the same limits/compliment regime. He did look good though in his skirt suit... By Tuesday, after a full day Monday being dressed “in drag”, we were a lot closer to being comfortable but the strangeness still permeated our beings.

««=»»

On Wednesday, Ruth called Marion and I into her office and asked when we had had our last gynaecological exam. We were quite startled that she should ask us such a ridiculous question. We looked at each other, and laughed. Our reply, with a bit of a chuckle, was “*Never*,” after which we turned and walked out, thinking that such a question was preposterous. Ruth said nothing nor did she do anything to stop us. I went back to my desk and sat down, still chuckling to myself, but not failing to note how my narrow skirt now gave me a solid lap, something that pants had never done.

On Thursday, she called us in and asked the same question again. This time, however, before we could really react or leave, she continued, informing us that our penalty for not conforming to the dress code had been extended for an additional week and was now up to a four weeks extension.

She did not have to stop us this time.

We looked at each other. Marion had a rather startled look on his face; his deeply reddened lips open in an unspoken, “*What?*” I’m sure I must have had the same sort of expression on my face, though my lipstick was a bit brighter and redder and more intense as I had just applied it before coming in.

We turned back facing her, but before we could even ask “why”, she continued, citing some more lines in the women’s code. She again recited while looking us both in the eye, a neat trick in itself, “semimonthly gynaecological exams must be held for each female employee; the results of which are to be kept in the office in a confidential file.” When we tried to argue that we were not female employees, she referred to yet another clause in our contract (a copy of which she just *happened* to have lying on her desk). It stated, in no uncertain terms, that during the period covered by the contract plus any extensions, we were to be considered in all aspects of our employment and in particular, in reference to the dress code, as female employees. We had been caught again.

To our openmouthed astonishment, she explained that the exams were paid for by the company when the employees visited their designated “company doctor”. We could, however, elect to go to another certified gynaecologist, one of our own choosing for our exams, opting to pay out of our own pockets, or now, as she pointed out with a wry smile, our purses. It had been pointed out quite adequately that this exam was a part of the code with which we had no choice but to comply. As much as we felt abased by this peculiar clause, our contract had stated that each party would comply fully with the dress code of the opposite sex, which, for the term of the contract, would be considered *our sex*.

Knowing now that we *had* to comply, we knew we were (*again*) whipped on this and so we agreed. At this concession on our part, she pulled out a sheaf of additional forms for us to sign. She explained they were necessary for the completion of the exam and the return of the results to the company’s confidential files. Just what I wanted, my name in a confidential file with the results, whatever they would be, of a *woman’s gynaecological* examination.

After the error we had made in not reading the contracts, we tried to read these new forms, but we did not understand all of the jargon nor what all was implied; Ruth, of course, feigned ignorance when we asked her. So, under the coercion of do-it-or-get-extended-until-you-do hanging over us, we signed all of them.

Ruth then smiled at us and said that since she just *knew* we would agree, she had made appointments for the two of us at her gynaecologist, who also *just happened* to be the company gynaecologist, for tomorrow, Friday afternoon. Finally, we were told to stop by her office before we left to pick up copies of the forms to take with us to the exam. This time we were much less jubilant when we left her office.

««=»»

The next day, Friday, came all too soon. Ruth informed us that since we would be “occupied” that afternoon with our appointments, that the meeting to look for (i.e. count) flaws had been put off for this week; we all got a free week worked off. Of course, before reduction it was Girls two and Boys four, though we could not really tell them why it was 4 and not 3 for us, nor why it had been put off.

Chapter 6: An Appointment with the future

Friday afternoon we went to Ruth’s office, picked up our copies of the forms, and then went off to our appointment, which turned out to be for a “full” exam. Since Ruth had set up the appointment, we knew that they would have absolutely no doubt that they were dealing with men coming in for a woman’s gynaecological exam protocol. To say the whole incident was embarrassing would be the grossest of understatements.

It started off with some counseling on how to be a woman. This included some more forms to be signed; releases, consents and other things that we did not un-

derstand, which were not explained, but which we had been told were absolutely necessary for successful completion of the exam. We were told that they were also “necessary to get out the door”. We ended up rubber-stamping them without reading enough to know what they encompassed. Then it progressed to the tests.

We had to remove our skirts, blouses, even our lingerie, replacing them with the paper exam gowns ubiquitous to all medical establishments everywhere it seems.

Then there was the stirrup exam, during which our genitals were manipulated, complete with disparaging comments by both doctors and nurses. We were putting on a show for them that they were enjoying immensely. We had to give samples of blood, urine and, most demeaning of all, seminal fluids. I doubted seriously that this last sample would have been a part of any woman’s normal pelvic exam; nevertheless, they had no problems extracting them. There was also an application of the speculum, but it was applied where it had not really been originally designed to be used, once again, much to their amusement and our discomfort. They also had great fun palpating our fake glued-on breasts, checking for cancerous nodules and such, or so they said between ever-widening grins.

Before we left, we both were subjected to a series of shots to correct the problems encountered (without detailing or even discussing said problems). As it turned out, by signing the releases, we had actually given them *Carte Blanche*. We were thus given some long-term, high-potency hormonal implants and testosterone blockers; however, we weren’t told they were implants. We were not only not told what they were, but we were also kept in the dark as to what they would do to us.

Finally we were allowed to get dressed. It actually felt a lot better having real clothing on, even if it was a bra to hold our firmly-affixed fake breasts, silky panties to titillate our loins, and blouses and skirts to cover these things. Before we were finished, we got a bit more counseling on womanhood and some additional words on “after effects”, none of which we understood, nor did we get any clarification. And then, at long last, we were finally done and left.

We departed, each of us with a really sore bum and much-deflated ego. Needless to say, our going was as fast as we could manage on our high-heeled shoes that were just beginning to get broken in—or was it our feet that were breaking down?

Whatever had been done had been done with a concerted attempt, quite successfully, to debase and embarrass us. I wondered how much of this might have been different if our supervisor had been a George instead of a Ruth... There were definite biases at work here; the longer it went, the more they showed up and worse, the more they worked against us.

««=»»

As we left the medical building, we were totally unaware of the potent two-year implants of female hormones and testosterone blockers we now carried within

us... not by our choice nor with our informed consent, though we had signed forms that requested them. It was as if we were actors (actresses?) in a play in which we acted parts we did not know but which we were carrying through expertly. We had been set up and had fallen for a pattern of actions that were to prove to be life-changing. And the changes were not just the attempt at coping with a stupid dress code. That was a tool, not an end in itself.

««=»»

When next week began, no word was given about either our exam nor for our evaluation for any code violations that had been skipped the week before. The women were beginning to get exuberant as they were on their last week of extensions. Next week they would be back to “normal” and we’d still be in skirts, blouses and high heels, left to suffer under the women’s dress code, a task we realised was as they had all complained about, beastly, though neither of us would admit it.

Chapter 7: Back To Work – Another Change

On this, the women’s last week, on Thursday instead of Friday, we were called in and given the word. Both teams had three more violations, three for us and three for the women. They were not as disturbed as we were. In fact, it seemed not to bother them anywhere near as much as it bothered us. Among other things, they actually looked good in their men’s clothes and appeared to be quite comfortable, a lot more comfortable than we were in our women’s clothes. After the meeting, Mar and I put our heads together and talked a bit, coming to the conclusion that we were going to have to start getting *really* serious!

One of the topics we discussed was makeup. Mar and I had bought it, even had some of it in our desks, but had not used it other than applying lipstick, what we thought of as token makeup, though we both tended to slather it on. The women had not followed through with the “full kit” option they had talked about on our joint shopping excursion. So, that afternoon was spent with the help of several women in the office, including Dana and Bobbie, learning about the qualities and enhancements of makeup and how to apply it. I wonder if Ruth ever thought about the lost work time given over to fulfilling this crazy pastime we had got ourselves wrapped up in. Worst of all was that the original basis of the argument, the question of whether or not we could handle the women’s dress code, seemed to have been totally lost in the shuffle of trying to come up to Ruth’s ideals. Her thrust was obviously the *strictest* interpretation of the dress codes for the participants in this odd contest.

Mar and I went home with full makeup kits along with the admonishment by our colleagues to wear it on the next day and *every* work day. We had learned enough to be able to carry that out. Our weekends and holidays were our own to do with as we pleased, but not work days...