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## **Uncommon Attraction**



**Philippa Peters**

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AN 'ADULT TV' E-BOOK

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# UNCOMMON ATTRACTION

by **Philippa Peters**

## I. SOUP OF THE DAY

I couldn't believe it when I looked up and saw who it was; Melissa, our receptionist, was leading to table seven, one of my tables. I stood stock still in shock and Greg, one of the bus boys, walked into me. We were lucky not to crash right there in the middle of Turo's restaurant.

Why, oh why, did he have to pick this restaurant, my restaurant, at least the one I worked in, to bring his latest conquest to, for a night out? I stood there, blank for a moment, as Greg worked his way around me and then, trembling, I retreated to the kitchen.

My tight black skirt had never felt so tight, my waist cinch seemed to cut into me and my bra was stupid and wrong. The long braid down my back swung as I turned my head to avoid more of the bustling workers in the kitchen. I could feel the golden hoops bouncing on my neck.

"What's the matter, Angie?" Maury, my boss, asked me. "You look like you've seen a ghost."

I have, I thought, I have. Then, I jerked myself together. There was a mirror on the Out door for us to check our looks before we went out into the restaurant proper. I looked at myself, at the heavy, blonde bangs across my forehead, at the heavy, womanly makeup I wore when I was working. There was a chance that he wouldn't recognize me. It had been what, over a year at least, since he'd last seen me. I might seem just a little familiar to him. I might. I shuddered and my short, dark skirt pulled at my thighs.

Maury looked concerned. "What is it? Are you sick?" he asked anxiously. Like everyone else in the restaurant business, Maury was deathly afraid of his staff getting sick and infecting the patrons in some way.

I shook my head and my braid swung across my back, the soft white silk of my blouse caressing my soft, hairless skin. "No," I said, taking a deep breath, feeling my padded chest rising. "I just thought I saw someone I knew from the past. A bad experience. I needed a moment before I served new customers."

Maury smiled at me and patted my hand. "That's a good girl," he said. He held the door for me to go out and wait tables for Ian Pennington and his popsy, as my father had always called the girl friends Ian paraded past the town in his open sports car.

My heart was pounding as I got iced water and went to the table, placing it in the proper position in front of them. She looked up and smiled at me, blonde, in her forties, definitely not a popsy. Expertly made up, fashionably dressed in a little black dress and pearls, she looked able to fit in wherever they were going or had been. I think I might have seen her somewhere before.

“May I get you something to drink?” I asked in the lilting accent it had taken me so long to perfect.

Ian didn’t look up from the menu. “White wine, Jane?” he asked, frowning at the menu. “I’ll have a Scotch and water on the side.”

I should have known that right away. I quietly stated what the specials of the night were and retreated. I had managed to stay slightly behind Ian as he listened, nodded at what I had said as he went on studying the huge menu we served at Turo’s.

I felt nothing but relief as I gave the drinks order to John, the bartender. I had got past Ian. He hadn’t recognized me. I picked up his drink orders and headed back as daintily as I could, swinging my hips on my high heels, high heels that Maury insisted that his waitresses wore. It made our legs look longer, he insisted. It would raise our tips. He was right.

I placed the drinks in front of them and stood back a little, waiting for the order. Of course, they wanted the lobster bisque soup that we were famous for as well as the veal Maury claimed was the freshest in town. Ian snapped the menu to and looked up at me for the first time since he had sat down at my table.

The shock on his face was almost instantaneous, blowing any hopes I had that he might not recognize

me. "Good god, it's you," Ian said as I stood there, my temperature rising, knowing that I was blushing, embarrassed beyond belief as his eyes went up and down my body from my heels and dark stockings, my short, mid-thigh skirt, to my curvy figure, my bustline and my hair, makeup and earrings.

"I will go and put in your order," I said, turning away quickly as I heard his popsy ask him what the matter was. I didn't hear his reply as I got myself once more into the safety of the kitchen. I gave the orders directly to Maury's brother, Arturo, the head chef.

"You don't look good," he said to me directly as I hesitated about going back.

"Must be something I ate," I said, a running gag between us since he knew I always ate in the kitchen and loved everything he cooked.

Arturo smiled at me, patted me on the arm and went back to his cooking. I thought about the other customers I had and forced myself to leave the safety of the warm kitchen. Ian's chair was empty. Luckily, no one wanted my attention immediately.

"So, how is your wonderful sister?" asked a sneering voice from just behind me. I nearly jumped a foot in the air. My face must have shown my fright as he smiled and looking pleased with himself to have come on me undetected. My sister always referred to him as 'that bastard Ian' and I could see what she meant.

"You must have me mistaken for someone else, sir," I began but he smiled even more widely at me. He peered at the nametag on my chest.

"Angie," he read, his eyes on my chest. "As fake as the shape under your blouse?" he sneered again. "I thought you would be a Brittany or an Ashley. Aren't

those the types of names that all drag queens use these days? What were you for me?"

He knew very well. He hadn't been drunk. He had known precisely what he was doing to me as I had known what I had done for him. I saw the woman at his table frowning at us, as we stood beside table two that I had started to clean up, the twenty per cent tip left there very welcome. 'Jane' seemed concerned that we were talking together, clearly knowing each other from somewhere.

"I'm sorry, sir," I said softly, trying to fake being as puzzled as I could be. "I think you have confused me with someone else." It had been Jessica, the name my sister had conjured up, not Brittany or Ashley, as I am sure he knew very well. If he couldn't remember that, maybe he was as big a womanizer as my sister claimed Ian was.

"Oh, come on, Nicky boy," he said, his voice dropping in volume. "I never forget a pair of legs as pretty as yours."

Ian sauntered off to his table with a smirk. I was left there, stricken with fear, shame and embarrassment, as Ian went back to his lady friend. They began an animated conversation then. I could guess what the subject of that conversation was. It would be all about me, Nicholas Walton, the son of Preston Walton, artist, neighbor to the Penningtons of Longview.

I turned on my high heels, my hands shaking, and headed back to the kitchen. I had to get out of there. I had to leave. I couldn't bear it to see the kind of looks I knew I would get from her. I knew it would spread quickly through the restaurant. Soon, everyone would be looking at me, the boy in a girl's skirt, his face madeup, his hair in braids, wiggling his hips like all of

the other waitresses, and flirting with the young male customers to win more money in tips.

Other waitresses would be looking at me, making snide remarks. Then, it would be Maury, who would be astounded at first before being angry. He might come after me. I'd seen him use his hands and fists before on the help that didn't measure up to his standards. He'd certainly fire me.

"The soup is ready!" Maury hollered at me as I shook and tried not to think how silly I must look, a boy as a waitress. "You're table seven, Angie! Serve them now!"

Both Maury and Arturo demanded that we serve any table as soon as it was ready. Anyone could have been there and picked up that order. It was just my luck that it was me and my table.

I picked up the serving tray automatically and was a step towards the Out door before I realized what I was doing. I halted, shivering. Janice, another waitress loaded with a big order, pushed me forward and I went through the door.

"Out of the way, sleepyhead," she said cheerfully. "Got customers to serve."

I edged out along the pathway between tables. I nodded to a man at one of my tables who held up an empty beer glass.

"Miss, miss, waitress," said an older woman at another table where there had been an accident.

"I'll just be a moment," I said quickly, trying to give her a reassuring smile, hastening to offload at Ian's table.



"This tranny was amazing," I heard Ian say as I set the tray partly on his table and served her, his woman, with the first bowl of soup and bread rolls warm from the oven. "She had me completely fooled. It was all some kind of blackmail scam, really, but my masculine charm laid her low."

"But you said she was a man?" said the woman, aghast at what he was describing. "Don't tell me that you couldn't tell the difference between a man and a woman?"

Ian smiled at me. "It isn't easy to tell, is it, Angie?"

The woman looked at me, her eyes widening. "Our waitress is a boy?" she asked incredulously. Her words carried to the nearest table. I saw the startled looks on people's faces. I was crimson myself and wanting only to die, on the spot.

"You can recognize one like her right away," Ian mocked. "When you see luscious lips like those ..." He never got to finish the insult he was about to give. I tipped the bowl of hot bisque onto his nicely starched shirt front and all down the front of his beautiful Savile Row suit. Then I fled from the commotion. I went out straight through the kitchen into the waitresses' area, grabbing my purse, coat and umbrella and headed out through the back door.

I heard someone shout behind me. It was Maury. I heard him running behind me, the click of my high heels never having sounded louder. "What are you doing, Angie?" Maury yelled into the dark night as I scurried across the parking lot next to Turo's. "You can't treat a customer like that and run away, no matter what he said to you!"

Then, Maury turned and hurried back into the restaurant. What his irate customers would then tell him about me would scorch the inside pages of the Sunday newspapers, I was sure. I belted my raincoat, and hurried as fast as I could to the series of bus stops on Market Square Street. There was a Number Eighteen about to go. I ran for it and got on quickly. It wasn't exactly right for me to get back to my Houghton rooms but it was moving out and that's all I wanted it to do.

"Almost missed it, love," said an old man, sitting just inside the door

"Yes," I said, sitting down opposite him, crossing my legs, one stocking sliding over another. I saw the old man's eyes light up as he had a good view of my thighs as my coat opened. I eased my skirt down with my red-tipped fingernails and thought grimly how he might react if he had heard Ian Pennington earlier that night. If only Ian had told the truth about Jessica and him, I thought, but it was all so mixed-up in my mind now that I doubted I could sort it all out properly.

## II. HORS D'OEUVRES

I was going to be a rock musician. That was why my hair was so long. I was going to be the next Robert Plant or, if my father would buy me a guitar, maybe the next Jimmy Page. So I wouldn't let anyone cut my hair when I was a teenager. It was Mom who insisted that I wash it well and comb and brush it properly. She fended off all the snide remarks I got from the rest of the family. It was a horrible shock to us all when she ran off with another artist, a rival of my father's, going

to live with him. I was eighteen by then and wondering what to do with myself

Mostly what I did was go down to the pub with school friends, drink away my allowance from my father and occasionally give my sisters a hard time. Then Bonnie married and went off somewhere in the mountains. Eva was the one who dated Ian Pennington. I could never 'get' her. She really didn't care what I said or what jokes I made about her. Her reputation was even worse than Bonnie's but what could you expect, most people said, after my mother ran off with Douglas Redford?

None of that really meant anything to me. It had always been said in the family that I was the one who had inherited my father's artistic talent. For a time, I believed it as well. So I wasn't going to be a rock star. I'd always been able to draw and my cartoons of my friends and teachers graced many a pub table top in Moston or Pixley, the local towns within walking distance of our country cottage. We lived right on the edge of the Longview estate of the Penningtons.

What I did for a long time after school was to paint. Not at all like my father. He hated my paintings, daubings he called them. He hated them because of the acrylics I used instead of the oils which he tried to impress on me were the true expression of art, his art. He told me that I would never sell one. At the time I didn't care about that at all.

Dad didn't paint at all after Mom left and drank all the time. He'd ask me from time to time what I thought of his work, fuzzy architectural pieces. Privately, I thought his latest work was painfully derivative of the masters of Impressionism but I couldn't tell him that.

Still, being at home had the advantage that I could use his 'studio', the ramshackle building that had once been a cowshed at the back of the farmhouse-cottage we grew up in. Since my father rarely painted any more, it gave me access to canvases, brushes, paint and thinners, easels and even frames, which made my work look professional, even if no one would ever see it but me.

My father was rapidly becoming the town drunk after Mom left, berating her to all his friends, which is why I went out so much. I hadn't an inkling about how strong Eva's infatuation with Ian was until she stomped in one night as Dad and I were eating leftovers of leftovers for supper.

"Did you see the evening paper?" she stormed when I asked her if anything was wrong. There was always something wrong with Eva. She stormed in everywhere she went. "Did you see what Ian said about me?"

Dad unfolded the previously unread *Post* and turned to the page Eva directed him to. 'Moston's most eligible' ran the headline with an article about Ian Pennington and his brother, Gordon, the horse rider and motor car race driver.

"There," said Eva, pointing. "See what Ian said. He's tired of going out with girls who are female impersonators. He wants his next girl friend to be the real thing. Ooh, he thinks he's being so clever!" She actually stamped her foot then on our hardwood kitchen floor, frowning at me as I winced. "Everyone knows we've been going out for the last six months!"

"Until you dumped him for his brother," I put in, which was true.

“You should have heard the women at Athenia’s laughing about me until Sharon shushed them up,” Eva went on grimly. “Ooh, I can never show my face in there again. I just can’t. Not until I get that bastard Ian back.”

Eva was looking at me as she said that. I made the mistake of flicking back the strand of hair that had fallen over my face. “Nicky,” she wheedled. “How would you like to help out your favourite sister in getting her own back on a crummy ex-boy friend?”

“No,” I said, and stood up to dump most of supper in the trash can.

“Two thousand,” she said, taking a wad of money from her purse and waving it at me. “Gordie took me to the races today and his trainer told us where to bet.”

I could believe that. Eva loved all kinds of racing, fast cars and fast horses. The Penningtons had a horse bloodstock farm and a horse training establishment on their estates at Longview.

“What do I have to do?” I asked facetiously. “Kill him or dispose of the body?”

Even Dad looked mildly interested when I said that. Eva smiled her best smile at me. She looked very beautiful when she did that but I knew it was like the smile on the face of a cobra before it strikes. “Both,” she purred at me.

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Mom was fast asleep in front of the television in our Houghton flat, the empty gin bottle clutched in her hand. Sighing, I kicked off my high heels, hung up my

coat and minced over to her. I clicked off the TV and she awoke slightly.

“Eva?” she murmured.

“Yes, Mom,” I agreed and pulled her to her feet. She was already in her nightdress and robe, still very frail long after the birth of my half-sister, Grace, and the surgeries that had followed. Her hair was gray now as she refused to dye it back to her favored sungold when she had eloped with that deadbeat, Douglas Redford.

After I settled Mom, I looked in on Grace. She slept, well, like a baby, and that always made me smile. She shared the room with me as I didn’t trust Mom at times around her. I didn’t need a light to find the hanger for my blouse and the one with clips for my skirt. I hung them and headed to the bathroom, closing the door softly before I put on the light. A girl looked back at me from the mirrors of the vanity and from along the glass panels of the bath and shower.

I undid the bands that held my hair and let it free, a golden corona thick about my shoulders. I shook the braids free, a girlish gesture, and felt a twinge of emotion as I looked at myself in the short, white slip over my dark panti-hose. I took off my big earrings and put in my studs, delaying the obvious for as long as I could.

I liked looking at myself as a girl. I could get off on me, I knew. I was guilty of rampant narcissism. I knew it and wished I had a girl like me whom I could talk to or be friends with, but I had no-one, save for Mom. Oh, there were the girls at Turo’s, more acquaintances than friends, but they all had boy friends. On weekends, they were totally engaged in what their men wanted to do.

I slipped off my panty-hose first. That didn't change how I looked, my legs so hairless and smooth. On a whim, I had painted my toenails a few days before and most of the red lacquer was still in place. I took off my slip and so my chest was revealed. There was something there that aped a girl's chest. The gel-filled bust beneath my bra came off with its tape and showed me a flat-chested girl.

My padded panties, when removed, still left doubt as to my true gender. My waist-cinch, my little corset, hardly seemed to constrict me at all as it had when Eva first put it on me. I wore a gaff under my panties but it was little more than a tight pair of panties holding my male parts snugly in place. With it on, in my makeup but without my bra, I looked very much like a teen-aged girl about to bud, so to speak, or, I suppose, a drag queen.

I took off the gaff and there was no doubt what I was. I removed my makeup with Noczema and had to scrub my eyes to get rid of the eyeliner and mascara. I set my hair in two very thick pigtails to sleep in and eyed myself. I was a hairless freak, thanks to my sister. My eyebrows had gone almost completely missing after the first time she had dressed me and they had never grown back.

Once I had painted on canvas, I thought; now I painted on myself. I scowled at my art work. I couldn't help still 'doodling' a lot. Turo had seen me do quick caricatures of Maury when he was in one of his moods. He'd laughed his head off. He'd even kept a couple of the napkins I had drawn on and had them framed with photographs of Maury and himself. He told me I'd be famous some day.

Dad had told me enough times so I knew how little talent I really had. He'd said that I showed no desire to dedicate myself to art. Well, I didn't, not to his art, anyway. To be an artist, I had to go to college, my father rambled on. Fat chance of that now. I might be 'artistic' for the rest of my life but not in any serious, professional way, not like my father.

I pushed my hair behind my head. Maybe if I did have it all cut off? No, I still looked girlish. I would have to cut my bangs, too. I let my hair go. In my pyjamas, I looked like a young girl about to go to bed. When did my waist ever get to be so thin, I wondered irritably. I didn't really have a figure as such, not without a lot of padding, and I supposed it was easier, certainly it was less painful, to add rather than to suppress.

Now that would be a picture that I should draw, I thought, looking at myself. That would be realistic enough to please my father. He might even confuse it with his own, as he had done once before. Jane Elgart, his agent, had gone off with some of my last year's portfolio in with his street scenes and landscapes. Which is one of the reasons I never got considered at art school since my portfolio was incomplete. Jane Elgart! That was the woman with Ian! What was he doing taking her out to supper, I wondered. Perhaps he fancied older women now, I thought maliciously.

Before I went to bed, I checked my purse. I had had several good tips. It would have been a monster night but for Ian Pennington. I regretted it now. I shouldn't have dumped the soup on him. I should have gone home sick the moment I spotted him. I should just have borne his comments and insisted he had made an error in identifying me. I could have got by Maury and



Arturo, I was sure. They liked me. They liked my sassy attitude and tomboy habits, as Arturo called them.

I'd got up from one of the tables when I was there six months before with Mom and Grace. The brothers were desperately short of help. They only had two people serving and over fifty tables to be served. Maury had been joking, I think, when he dropped the check on us, apologized for the lack of service. He'd smiled as he asked me if I wanted a job.

I had jumped at the chance to Maury's great surprise, I think. And I had helped him a lot. Maury had hired me at the end of the evening. He said I had a really nice manner with the customers. But he did want me to wear a skirt the next day and more makeup. I hadn't been wearing any and probably was completely androgynous. Maybe that was why I got over two hundred in tips that very first night. I hadn't realized that Maury had thought I was a girl. I hadn't realized that everyone had.

I swore I wouldn't go back the next night. No way was I ever going to dress up again, not after what had happened with Ian Pennington weeks before. But when I got back to our Fetton Lane rooms, there was Mom sitting outside, drinking a flask of gin, while Grace was crying in her bassinet. Mom was completely disoriented, hardly realizing that we had been evicted because she had drunk away the rent money.

The two hundred plus from that first night at Turo's had come in real handy to get us a room for the night and to find us a place the next day. I bought my first skirt, panty-hose, blouse, shoes, female underwear and makeup and became Angie Nicholson, the name of an upper-class girl I knew back in Moston.

It served anyway to get me 'temporarily' employed at Turo's. No-one asked me again after the first month who I was. I was even paying taxes, for goodness' sake, as Angela Nicholson. I was the girl that everyone had supposed me to be the first night I had worked there.

Now, after one rash act, I had lost it all. I had had one of the best jobs in town. It was trendy or it would never have drawn Ian Pennington there. A weight settled on me as I realized what I had done. Where was I going to find another job? Could I get another job as a twenty year old man who looked like a teenaged girl? I shivered when I thought about it and damned 'that bastard Ian' again. He had shamed me once more. It was more than I could bear to hear him putting me down to a woman like Jane Elgart.

It was all his fault, I thought miserably. No, it was all Eva's fault. Then, as I climbed into bed, I had to admit the truth. It was all my own fault, the predicament I was in.

### III. APPETIZERS

"I won't do it," I said, aghast at Eva's crazy suggestion. She had tossed the money on the bed in her room where we had retreated and she had made her outlandish proposal.

"He said he wanted the real thing," she cooed, her face animated as I hadn't seen it in years. She was usually sneering at me. "So, we'll give him a real female," she smirked. "Impersonator, that is."

“But I’m not a female impersonator,” I insisted, a sick feeling in my stomach since Eva had made the suggestion in the first place.

“But you could be,” Eva said. “You have lovely hair.” I reddened at that. “And really, with my help, you could look like a woman, I promise you.”

“I won’t,” I said stubbornly. “Besides, Ian knows me. He would recognize me.”

“Not after I get through with you,” she promised. “Oh, he might notice a slight family resemblance between our cousin, Jessica, and me, but that will be all.”

“Jessica?” I asked, a flutter inside me at the name she used.

“Remember when you came in from painting and I was making out with Ian on the couch? You never even noticed us! Two weeks ago last Tuesday?” she asked.

“Remember what?” I began. I didn’t ever recall her making out with Ian in our house.

“You came in with a painting smock over your clothes,” she said, a strange smile on her face. “You had your hair pulled back in a pony tail, and a wide, a really wide, red rubber band holding it back. It looked like a red ribbon.”

I recalled it. It had come off some packaging of Dad’s. I’d just used it because I nothing else. “So?” I asked.

Eva laughed. “We hunkered down and were real still,” she said. “You were humming a Spice Girls’ song, right up there in falsetto. Ian thought you were a girl. He asked me who ‘she’ was.” Eva over-emphasized the ‘she’ making me blush as I felt another strange flutter of emotion. I hated it when I was called

'miss' in the village by people who ought to know me. Ian should have.

"I told him you were my cousin, Jessica," Eva giggled. "Ian said you were pretty. I never contradicted him or told him I was joking because he started kissing me again as you went upstairs doing Celine Dion and that *Titanic* song about the heart going on."

I winced and flushed as I did remember doing that, laughing at myself as I was doing it. It had been on the radio in the studio. I hadn't bothered to change stations. Trust Eva to catch me on the one night I wasn't doing *Stairway to Heaven*.

"He didn't know you then and he won't know you again when I make a real Jessica out of you," Eva said, smiling at me, attempting to be friendly. Like the smile on the face of a crocodile, I thought with a shudder.

"No," I said, shaking my head, feeling very chilled all of a sudden. "What will everyone be saying about me, even if I did fool Ian for just a little while? I'd be the laughingstock of Moston."

"No," said Eva. "It's Ian who's going to be the laughingstock. That's the idea. You'll be anonymous. That's why I'm going to dye your hair. How will you like being a redhead?"

"I won't," I said. "I'm not doing such a stupid thing."

Eva sighed and opened her purse. Notes, big ones, fell from her fingers. There must have been five thousand on the bed. "Gordon's share," she said. "I'm supposed to be holding it for him. I'll tell him I invested it in a ring." She laughed and rolled over the moneyed quilt to her dressing table. "Yes, this one will do," she said holding what looked like a diamond ring to me.

“Don’t you recognize it? Mom threw it at Dad when she stomped out. It went under the sofa and I picked it up.”

I looked at my sister. We looked a little alike but her hair was darker than mine, ash-blonde she called it. She always wore it tight back on her head in a chignon. I always knew she was vindictive person but this was ridiculous. “You hate Ian Pennington this much?” I asked, collecting the bills on the bed and putting them together.

“Oh, yes,” Eva murmured, lying back on her bed. “He humiliated me. I want my revenge.”

I counted over five thousand and there was still more on the bed. Eva sat up suddenly, reached over and took the wad from my hand. “If you want it all, little brother,” she said, her mouth in its characteristic smirk, “you are going to have to earn it. Are you in?”

“Tell me your whole plan,” I squawked nervously, feeling most silly and stupid that I should even be considering getting dressed in girl’s clothes.

“Here,” she said, counting out five hundred. “Put it in your pants’ pocket. That’s just for trying. Let’s see how much of a girl you make. If it doesn’t work, if you or I think it wouldn’t work, all you’ll have to endure is me calling you sweet Jessica for a while. You’ve heard a lot worse than that anyway, haven’t you, with your hair like that?”

I had. Much worse. The kids at school weren’t the worst. It had been guys like the Rugby Club members who had been the worst with their shrill whistling and high-pitched put-ons that had, to tell the truth, never really bothered me. But Neil and Ronnie, longhairs like me, had cut their hair after one bad hazing at school. I

didn't care. My girl friends had begged me not to cut it which was enough for me. Come to think of it, that bastard Ian Pennington had been an outstanding rugby player and had been a member of the Rugby Club at about that time.

"You have to take this seriously," said Eva crossly when I reacted to the strange perfumes I smelled wafting about the bathroom. "You have to remove all your body hair as well, under your arms and on your legs, on your chest and arms. I know you're really fair like Mom but we girls don't want hair anywhere. Don't shave your face. I'll get that with wax and Alec."

"Alec?" I had to ask.

Eva laughed at her own joke. "Alec Trolysis," she said. "Dad bought me my own machine when I took that beauty course."

And never finished it, I thought, like everything else Eva had ever started. If anyone had asked me what she did, I'd have been hard pressed to answer. She had started and abandoned so many things. What she was best at now, my sister, was being a sponge. She sucked money out of Dad like a vacuum cleaner.

I thought taking a bath, and washing my hair, would have been the easy part but it wasn't. As soon as I was in the water, Eva came in and poured more stuff in the bath. I thought I was in a flower garden. Then she supervised my removing my body hair as I tried to keep my private parts, well, private.

I asked her to leave the bathroom but she wouldn't. "I want to see what I'm paying for," she said. "I want it done right."

Eva did leave at some point and came back with what was to me a stack of women's lingerie. After I had

soaked for nearly an hour, she let me out. I felt instantly weird as I dried myself. She gave me the bottom of one of her bikinis to put on over my private parts and, well, with all the feminine fragrances, the clothing, even what looked like rubber breasts, I couldn't really get the bikini on.

"Well," said Eva. "Run the water really cold for a while in the bath and sit in it."

I did. When I got out, the white bikini fitted me very snugly. I didn't know where I had disappeared to but I had definitely shrunk!

"Just like when you go swimming," said Eva smugly. She had me put on some other panties, padded ones, that I wouldn't have believed she owned.

"Well, we girls aren't all perfect as we're growing up," Eva said in answer to my question. "We need help at times. Those panties were Bonnie's once, then mine, now they're our little sister's."

I objected as she smiled at me. "Softer," she said. "Don't speak from down there. Lift your voice. Speak from your head. Put on that upper-class accent that you use when you tell jokes."

"Oh, I'd rather not," I said in plummy tones and she laughed.

"That's the one," Eva said. "Now keep it up there." She had been playing with my hair all the time. Now, she started twisting it here and there, braiding it, I realized, and pinning it with pink little plastic bows.

"Couldn't you find another color?" I asked.

"Higher," she said. "I won't answer you unless you speak properly, like a girl."

I protested and Eva wouldn't answer me until I tried to be higher. "No, I couldn't," she answered to my original question. "Besides, you look pretty in pink."

She had decided not to dye my hair, she said later. It would just have taken too much time. Besides, if we didn't like it, it would take at least as much time again to get my hair back to its natural blonde color.

I nearly freaked when she began to cut my hair. "Oh, don't be so stupidly boyish," my elder sister said. "I'm just taking the scraggly lengths away. I'm surprised you don't have birds and squirrels living in this mane." She began them with a curling iron as I contemplated what she was doing to me. She did something to the front of my hair, rolling the front in papers and cutting again, not listening to my strenuous protestations.

"This will comb out easily," Eva said as she warned me not to move or she'd burn me with the curling iron. It smelled like my hair was burning. "I wish I had such nice hair as you do. You know, with a really good cut from one of the better places in town, you'd look stunning."

"I don't want to look stunning," I protested and had to say it twice more before Eva deigned to reply.

"All girls do when they go out," she said.

"Go out?" I squeaked.

"Of course," Eva said. "How else are you going to meet Ian unless we go out dancing? I can't very well invite him here to have sex with my cousin, can I?"

"Have sex with him?" I screamed, getting up from the bathroom commode where I had been perched.



“Of course not,” said Eva, laughing. “It’s not going to come to that. But we do want Ian to be interested in you. That’s what I’m paying you for.



"I want some interesting pictures of the two of you dancing, cuddling. If you could get a peck or two on your neck, that would be the ultimate. Just enough to make him look ridiculous when it turns out he's been nuzzling a boy, the real thing. Let him live down public ridicule for a while as this family's had to for long enough."

I knew what she meant by that. Eva had the reputation she had gained as a chaser after anything in trousers. But the worst was Mom's elopement. It had hit us all hard. Now we had heard that she was pregnant with Redford's child. I must admit that I hated her for a little while there as Dad now seemed permanently retired to his bottle of booze.

Eva put what she called a waist cinch on me. I called it a corset and she laced me in it tightly. She used tape about my chest and, with the bra padded with what seemed to me to be gel packs, I felt suddenly very constrained. She put a dark-colored, filmy slip with thin straps over me to cover the cinches I was wearing. I moved to her bedroom where I got to look at myself.

At first, I just saw my shape, my hairless legs and the way my chest stuck out. I looked like I had a girlish figure. My hair was like any girl's hair in a hairdressers' with parts curled and wrapped but it was shaped about my shoulders and cheeks, very much in a female style. I protested and was ignored as Eva steered me to the commode with my back to the mirror.

Eva waxed my face and eyebrows. While she was doing that, she had me put on a garter belt over my panties. The touch of the garters dancing on my thighs was the most ludicrous yet. While before I had just been feeling pulled, belted and constrained, these were

exotic and something that no man should feel. Then, she had me put on stockings and attach them.

It was enervating, to say the least, spine-tingling, as the soft nylon eased itself over my smooth leg and, with trembling fingers, I attached the stocking to the garter belt. Then I had to do the other. Eva noted my reaction and laughed at me.

“Now you feel like a woman,” she said. “That’s why I had you wear them. They make me feel girlish. Ian loves his women to wear garter belts and stockings. Let him get a flash and he’ll be all over you.”

My face was itchy before Eva removed the wax and rubbed lotion all over my face and neck. She got out Alec, “for a few strays,” she said, before she put makeup on me. It felt as if my eyebrows were frozen as she plucked away, painted me and worked for what seemed like hours on me. I didn’t realize it at the time but she thinned and shaped my eyebrows most femininely. And they didn’t grow back, as she said they would.

Eva gave me false eyelashes, making up my face with rouge, eyeliner and eye shadow, painting my lips pink, to match my dress, she said, and finally covered me in translucent powder. It had taken an hour and a half and she began to take off the papers and clips from my hair.

“Take a look,” she said as she brushed some makeup on my chest where the tape had created a crease.

A very pretty, blonde-haired girl looked back at me from the mirror. An intense, sick feeling swarmed through my stomach and threatened to overwhelm me as I realized that it was me I was looking at. I did look

like a real girl. She, the girl in the mirror, was me! I felt a quivering all through me. I couldn't do this but there was Eva, smiling in triumph, spraying me with a fragrant cologne, putting perfume behind my ears and at the cleavage that I seemed to have.

"Stunned, are you?" she asked, laughing at my reaction to myself. "I knew you'd make a lovely girl. You should have been born a girl. Bonnie and Mom always said so."

I'd ignored such comments, growing up, but now it was terrible, looking at myself, with my eyes all sultry and so blue! I shivered, my groin so tight, hurting. I stared at myself, my feminine figure and my legs in the stockings. I wanted to caress this girl myself but it was me.

I tried to conquer my conflicted emotions, determined at one moment to immediately head to the bathroom and become me, Nicholas; at another, I was elated to feel the light slip move against my stockings. I was paralysed by the feelings of softness and pleasure that I felt. It was so weird.

"Well, that's all fixed," said Eva. I jumped as she put cold metal, a gold chain about my throat. Then, she put earrings on my ears, big ones, pink like my lipstick. "We'll be going out at eight with Gordon and Ian, over to Bingham. There's a charity dance there at the Ballroom. Gordie has tickets."

"Me! Go out as a girl!" I squealed. "I can't do that!"

"Say it right," Eva insisted. "Say it right!" I tried and eventually repeated my disbelief in high, breathy tones that she frowned at but she said would do. She did my nails, or rather, she glued these bright pink, acrylic nails to my own fingernails which changed

them completely, making my hands look so feminine. Then she added thin pink bands to my arms before she ushered me to her wardrobe.

“You’ll look great in this,” Eva said and took out a dark pink dress, the silk, outer covering having lighter circles of pink all over. The inner part was lined in white silk and the petticoats, I guessed that’s what they were, made the dress shapely. It rustled even as Eva took it off the hanger.

“I can’t wear a dress like that,” I protested again, strange, eerie feelings going through me. I actually felt excited and really eager to see how the girl I was becoming would look like in such a dress. I was even strangely glad when Eva ignored my protests and had me step into the dress. She pulled it up about me and arranged the neckline and the sleeves. She pulled my waist cinch even tighter before she zipped me into ‘my’ dress.

Moving before in my stockings, in the light slip and with my arms brushing my fake bust had been a spine-tingling experience. Now, moving in the dress, with the rustle of petticoats and their constant, light, airy touching of my legs, was shattering. Eva let me go to the mirror. I looked at myself, my beautiful, girlish self. I shook and my dress shook with me. I had such a figure for a girl. I was pretty! I couldn’t and didn’t want to believe that ‘she’ was me.

“Shoes as well,” said Eva, smiling sardonically at me. “Wow, I did better than I thought, didn’t I?” She stood beside me, her own light hair blonde-streaked and brushed back in a tighter chignon. “I have to dress up now and try to compete with my kid brother! Anyway, put on these shoes,” they were pink high heels, “while I get ready.”

I wobbled as I slipped my feet in them. They were actually small for me. I could barely walk in them. Eva made me take small steps and put one foot in front of the other, my hips swaying and the dress swirl about me girlishly, filling me with exciting feelings and emotions.

"Now, I just want a few pictures of you and Ian nuzzling," said Eva. I felt my temperature spiking and goose bumps breaking out on my fevered skin. "Don't worry about Ian really. He's always courteous, a gentleman. I was the one who chased him, you know. He won't leave you standing at the front door without a chaste kiss goodnight. That's the money shot, brother. It'll be very light and quick. You whisper how much you enjoyed the night, come in and run upstairs. We can giggle over the photos I'll have of you and Ian."

"I-I have to kiss him?" I squeaked in dismay.

"He'll kiss you," said Eva, pouting as she put on bright red lipstick. "Don't worry. It won't be a passion-rouser though if you could get him to do that, I'd double what I'm giving you. He thinks you are Cousin Jessica, up from the country, shy and naïve, who doesn't dress up often, and whom I am lumbered with for the night.

"Ian's doing Gordon a favor and keeping you, Jessica, out of my way with Gordon tonight. Little does he know the surprise we have planned for him. Wait till he reads the *Post* on Friday. I hope we get a picture good enough to print."

Eva was gloating so much over her revenge on Ian that I couldn't get a word in edgewise. I had to wonder if such a revenge wouldn't rebound on her relationship with Gordon. Or was she just using him, too, as she was using me. My picture with Ian in the *Post*?