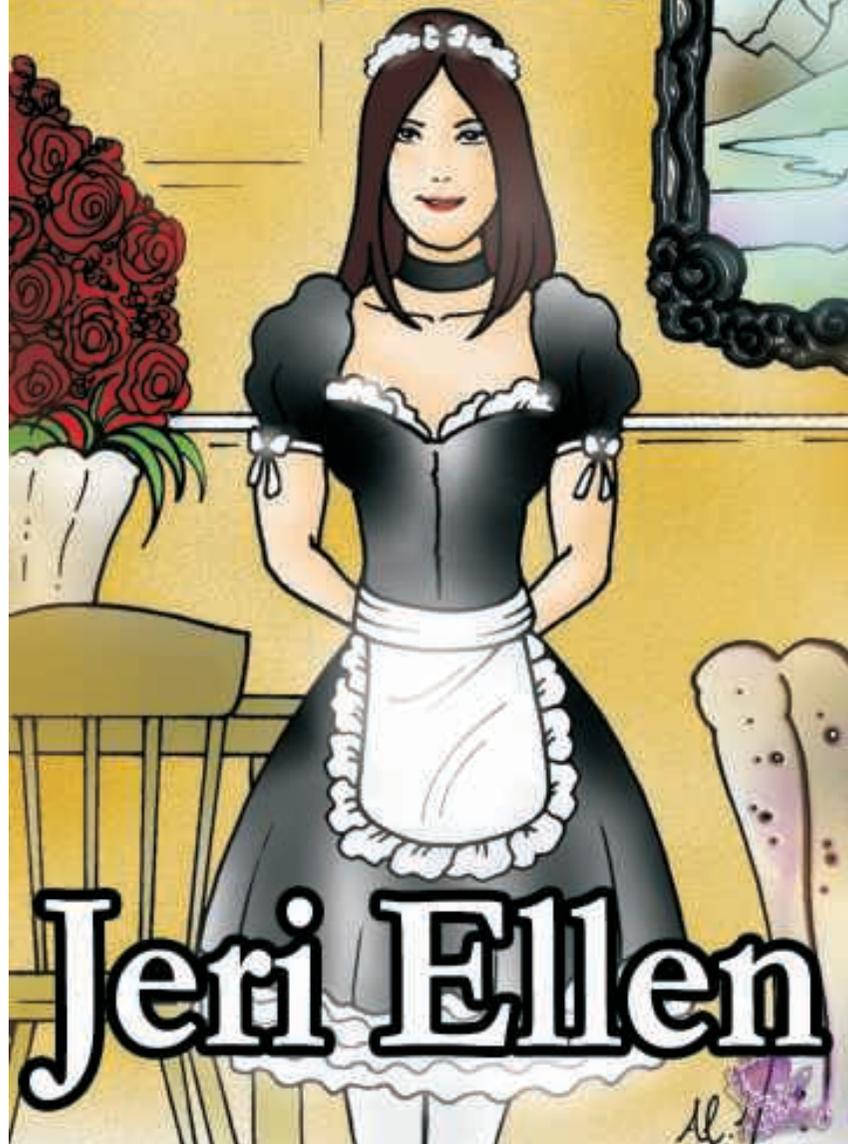


Hidden



Jeri Ellen



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HIDDEN

By Jeri Ellen

PRELUDE: March 28, 1990

Sgt. Emilio Gomez looked over the last bunch of used bills that had been exchanged for the crisp, new ones that he had delivered. All told there was just over two million dollars worth of old faded and torn bills of all denominations. They would be counted again and then dumped in the incinerator.

After slamming the rear door shut, he checked to be sure it was locked, and then got in the cab of his armored truck. The rain suddenly came down heavier. He fastened his seat belt, then started the engine and turned on the windshield wipers full speed.

He was already behind schedule and now the weather was getting worse. He hoped to make up for it once he hit the interstate but he knew he would have to drive more cautiously as the weather conditions changed.

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A sudden bout of late season flu had left them short handed. He had been working double shifts and some Saturdays. He was tired and wished he could be home.

After taking a gulp of his coffee he carefully he pulled out into the street. Several blocks later he turned unto the expressway that led to the interstate. The hard rain continued as he made his way to the interstate on ramp.

Traffic was light as he entered the westbound lane and headed back to the Twin Cities. It would be dark soon and he hated driving at night. The overcast of the storm already made visibility poor. His hopes for a speedy trip back to the terminal were pretty much dashed.

Forty-five miles from Minneapolis the radio crackled with the news that a semi truck had jack knifed about twenty miles ahead. He was instructed to take the next exit and follow a secondary route around the accident which would hook up with the interstate again just beyond the wreck.

Cursing his bad luck Sgt. Gomez exited the interstate and began taking a state highway north. This would lead him to another state highway west and then another state highway south again to re-connect with the interstate.

This loop would take him thru several small towns and the detour was only going to make him that much later than he already was.

To make matters worse the raindrops were now rattling on the roof of the armored truck. It was beginning to freeze making driving more treacherous. Things would be going from bad to worse once the highways became glazed over and of course there would be snow on top of that.

Twenty minutes later Sgt. Gomez turned left from the north-south highway and headed west. He could feel the roads getting slipperier. He thought about reducing his speed but he also wanted to get back to the terminal and go home.

Half an hour went by. He reached the junction of another north-south highway that paralleled the river. Traffic had

been light but he was still behind schedule so continued to drive at the maximum speed.

He turned left and headed south as the freezing rain turned to snow. He continued to push the truck against his better judgment. He just wanted to get home.

The truck began to slide a bit around the curves of this old two lane highway accelerating his pulse. Nevertheless Sgt. Gomez kept going.

As the snow got heavier he felt the heavy truck's traction and it seemed to be pretty good. He felt a little better and continued at the posted speed limit.

Several years ago he had left a company in Texas to join a relative in Minneapolis. In Texas he had never driven in weather conditions like this but he felt he could handle it.

To his right Sgt. Gomez glanced at the river. It was a raging torrent. The winter had a heavier snowfall than had been expected. The last two weeks had been warmer than usual so the spring melt was considerable. For a week there had been flood warnings down stream.

Entering a sharp curve of the old and narrow two lane highway Sgt. Gomez felt the truck start to skid. He took his foot off the gas and tried to correct the skid but the truck slid over the embankment.

It tumbled down and landed upside down in the river. The swift current began dragging the truck downstream as it sank deeper and deeper in the water.

Upside down Sgt. Gomez was disoriented as he struggled to free himself from his shoulder harness and seat belt. The truck began filling with water. He began to panic but managed to get loose of the belt.

The door wouldn't budge. Something slammed into the drivers' side of the truck and knocked him around the cab. Water had nearly filled the cab as he valiantly tried to open the opposite door. It wouldn't budge either.

Trapped with no way out Sgt. Gomez exhaled the last of the air in his lungs and sucked in the ice cold brown water of the river. In a few minutes Sgt. Gomez succumbed to the blackness of death.

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The storm continued that night. The next day crews began clearing the snow from the roads. By the evening the traffic continued to flow at its' normal pace.

Other than the storm the leading news story was the mysterious disappearance of an armored truck and its' driver Sgt. Emilio Gomez.

A picture of the truck and Sgt. Gomez was published in the paper and shown on all the news casts for the next several days.

The spokesperson for the armored truck company would only state that they were co-operating with the FBI and the contents of the truck was "a little over two million dollars."

News of the search for the missing guard and truck continued for several days but then was dropped from the broadcasts and print media.

PRESENT DAY

Something wasn't right. I knew it right away when I was very young.

Standing naked in front of the full-length mirror on the back of my bedroom door I knew that boy I was looking at wasn't me. I thought that I wasn't a boy but that I was a girl.

I reached out with my finger and touched the glass in front of me, then reaching down I touched my genitals. I had a feeling that they didn't belong there.

I wasn't sure just what a man or a woman for that matter was supposed to feel like. But I felt disjointed. Like I didn't belong in the body I had.

The reflected image in front of me wasn't the real me. It was the image of Phillip West, but I wasn't him. The real me was hidden. It was hidden deep inside of me. Like my heart or my lungs.

My clothes were all wrong too. My mother dressed me in jeans, sport shirts and sneakers. I should be wearing skirts and blouses like all the other girls. Underneath my shirt and pants were white cotton briefs and a T shirt. I should be wearing panties and a bra.

At school I always felt more comfortable around girls than boys. Of course I participated in sports because that was what boys do. I played soccer and was an average player because I liked it better than baseball. I was short and small so that eliminated football, hockey and basketball.

I never knew my father and my mom worked two jobs. Days she worked in a large hospital laundry and evenings she tended bar. She was gone a lot so we never really had a "family life" like other people.

She stressed the importance of work and school. "Everybody works and everybody eats" she once said.

A healthy diet and staying active were impressed on me early on as well. For someone young I was able to keep myself in the peak of good health.

When I wasn't active in school sports we were walking in the park or riding our bikes in her very limited free time. Despite the way I felt I was developing into a very healthy kid.

The summer after finishing the sixth-grade mom started me with light weights at the Y and signed me up for swimming lessons. I wasn't sure about that but as a dutiful son I went along with what she asked me to do.

Whatever made her happy was good enough for me since we had so little time together with her working so much. I guess you could also say keeping me busy kept me out of trouble.

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When I entered the pool for the first time, I felt really good. The water was warm and I liked the way it felt on my skin as I glided back and forth in the pool.

It was a sensual, almost erotic experience even though I was too young to know what that meant. No doubt some shrink would say it was a way for me to regress back to when I was in my mother's womb but I think that idea was a total crock.

I stopped playing other sports and stuck to light weights and swimming.

I made the swim team and while we were not great shakes I thoroughly enjoyed myself. My mom joked with the coach about me spending more time in the pool than I did on land.

Swimming and working out with light weights almost to the point of exhaustion was a good way to get rid of my frustration. Despite my workout with the weights I became stronger but didn't get much bigger physically. I had no idea what I was going to do to resolve my "situation".

There was no one that I could talk to about my "feelings" or my "condition" if you could call it that.

I was strictly alone in that regard and I knew that I had to keep this "secret" to my self until I could find a solution. If there ever was one for someone who felt the same way that I did.

Two years of swimming got me into scuba classes. Money was always tight so I would be without my own tanks and other scuba gear for a while yet but my instructor happily informed my mother that I had taken to scuba diving like a "duck takes to water"

I knew she was pleased at my progress as well as the fact that I had been earning good grades in school and had stayed out of trouble. I was still a very happy kid because of my feelings which I was keeping hidden.

The next summer she bought me the scuba gear I wanted so badly. Despite my instructors warnings at the conclusion of our outdoor classes to “never dive alone” I was very confident in my ability to dive safely in any of the surrounding lakes and rivers.

I couldn't wait to do that but I stuck to the instructors guidelines and twice a month dove only with the scuba club members in local shallow lakes.

My first dive was exhilarating. There was a whole new world hidden under the surface of the water. I wondered why more people didn't take up diving. This undersea environment was beautiful and of course far removed from the one people were living in.

There was no noise, no crowds of people and of course it was always quiet down there as opposed to the hustle and bustle of the unhidden world we all lived in. I found these experiences away from the real world I was forced to be a part of to be very stress relieving.

I was always the last one out of the water. There never seemed to be enough time to explore everything I wanted to. But of course it was always necessary for all of us to return to the above water world.

Despite being with the group I enjoyed the solitude of being underwater just as I had enjoyed the solitude of the parks when mom and I biked and hiked the trails.

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These sojourns were very soothing and relaxing. They kept my mind off the more serious problem of my identity and those strong feelings of desire to be wrapped in femininity.

I found my self enthralled with watching the women in commercials and some of the TV shows. The way they walked in their high heel shoes, sat, and ate or drank.

Out of my slim allowance I bought the yearly bridal and prom guides. I kept them hidden in my room. You are probably thinking I should have had an interest in men magazines with pictures of naked women or perhaps pornography but that was not me.

Our internet connection opened my eyes to a whole new world. Mom trusted me so there were no parental controls on our home computer.

Separating the porn sites from the legitimate web sites was time consuming but well worth my efforts. Soon I had a list of the commercial websites as well as the informational ones and those of professional men and women who counseled people like me

I learned about cross dressing and sex changes for both men and women. The websites that were most fascinating to me were those that sold feminine products to men who cross dress.

They sold everything from apparel and shoes to wigs. Some of them sold pills to take for breast enhancement and a more feminine appearance.

At that point I wasn't sure if that was who I was or was I a woman who was trapped in a man's body. These were questions I had no way of answering. My



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feeling would have to remain hidden until I could find a resolution.

Imagining myself to be cross dressed I was overcome with a strange but wonderful erotic and euphoric feeling. I wondered if that was the way girls felt when they got dressed. Maybe I wasn't supposed to be a girl after all. Maybe I was supposed to be a male who just liked to wear feminine apparel and makeup.

The websites called these men sissies. They seemed to enjoy and derive great satisfaction from prancing around in very feminine clothes as they were involved in play acting or role playing.

This type of charade, particularly in the company of one or more "dominant women" as they were called seemed to give them a great deal of erotic satisfaction.

Some of them expressed an interest in living that way 24/7 but I wondered if that was possible or just their fantasy.

For most of them it seemed they were all like Cinderella at midnight. Whatever they put on would eventually have to come off and they would have to revert back to being their real selves.

I had no doubt that this vacillation caused many of them distress. Almost the same distress as I was feeling because I could not yet attempt to cross dress and discover what it would feel like to spend some time as a female before going back to my male self.

This made me even more confused. How could I enjoy these tremendous feelings of femininity when I was a male? The stirrings in my groin were another sign.

Why was I getting these erections if I was supposed to like girls but enjoyed the fantasy of dressing and acting like they did?

Masturbating as I looked at pictures in magazines, catalogs and printouts from the internet provided some physical enjoyment and release but didn't do anything for my emotions.

In a sense I felt disconnected from the male world. In addition, I felt as if I had been left out of what most people would call the "normal world." I seemed to be the "odd man out" as the saying goes. I also felt very alone, it was just me and my hidden feelings and thoughts so to speak.

Yet I knew I was not a part of the female world either. I was sort of stuck in the middle. Seemingly I would have to act and behave one way in my male life while secretly hoping to do the same in a female existence.

Would it be possible for me to join the female world and live a life cross dressed while maintaining my male body? What woman could possibly understand a male like me?

Did the dominant women I had seen on the internet websites really exist? Could they help transform me and help me to place myself in a feminized sissified way of life?

Apparently only those women who were described as "dominant" were able to transform and keep the man in the picture hostage as they forced him to live and work cross dressed.

Not all of these dominant women were portrayed as bitchy, angry, hostile or cruel. Most of them were just very self assured and controlled their sissified men in a quiet and determined manner.

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I liked those kinds of women and wondered if I would ever be able to meet someone like that. I had no desire to be tied up, beaten or talked down to in a demeaning or humiliating manner.

For me and the way I felt no force would be necessary. I wanted to be totally ensconced in the feminine lifestyle from changing my body to living and working cross dressed. At least that is what seemed to be the most plausible explanation for someone like me.

A number of websites showed men who had been feminized and were living that way of life but I often wondered if that wasn't just a fantasy provided to adult viewers for entertainment.

My increased strength and experience landed me a slot on the freshman swimming team. Using electric clippers I kept my body hair free though I had very little body hair to begin with.

This was supposed to give our bodies less resistance in the water. For me it seemed to enhance the sensual feeling I got from gliding thru the warm water of the pool. I wondered if the other guys or the girls too for that matter felt the same way I did.

Despite being busy my hidden feelings were never far from the forefront my thoughts. I knew sooner or later I was going to have to face the reality of coming to grips with the way I felt.

While walking in the park that next summer with mom we saw a man swinging a metal detector. We stopped to talk to him. He answered all of our questions and then mentioned that the companies that manufacture this type of thing also made units for scuba divers to search underwater.

We left the park. Later I began thinking more and more about treasure hunting, particularly having a unit used for underwater hunting.

Those company websites were filled with stories of people who had found valuable items as well as professional treasure hunters who did nothing but search world wide for lost treasures and artifacts.

If I should be one of the lucky ones to find something valuable I might be able to afford to live the life I wanted to have as opposed to the life it looked like I was going to be stuck with. That was a very pleasant fantasy for sure.

I was still a minor so I was not able to see one of the therapists who specialized in treating men like me. That would have to wait until I was of age and was able to come up with some money.

Until then I was going to have to just suffer in silence. I would have to keep everything hidden until I could find a solution to my "conundrum" as one website described it.

It seemed like a good fit to combine my scuba diving with using an underwater detector. I checked some websites and got information about models, prices and local dealers.

The units weren't cheap but this would provide an interesting diversion from my concerns about my hidden feelings.

So I plodded on with my life.

With mom's help I landed a part time job at a hardware store in a large shopping mall near where we lived. I could ride my bike back and forth to work.

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When school ended for the year I began working full time.

I applied for and got my first credit card. The minimum amount could get me started buying some products off the internet, but I decided to put a hold on that.

Mom had warned me about charging too much to start with. It would be easy since the monthly bill would be my only living expense. My small allowance and my part time job easily met the minimum payment requirement, but I always paid the balance in full.

I enjoyed my job. Everyday was different. Unloading a truck, stocking shelves, or greeting customers and helping them find the items they wanted to purchase. Each customer was looking for something different too.

The days went fast and there was usually little time to be bored. There was also less and less time for me to be thinking about my secret.

At home, especially in the evenings or during my off hours I still had to contend with my innermost thoughts about what I was going to do about my situation.

Once again I found solace in websites and print pictures of feminine apparel. In my imagination I saw myself wearing all of them, along with makeup, wigs and high heeled shoes.

I particularly loved the lingerie section. Exquisite lingerie seemed to be at the heart of femininity.

Those nylon tricot or satin ruffled panties with their matching bra and garter belts to hold up seamed or sheer stockings or fishnets excited me to no end.

Multiple petticoats to flare out the skirts of the “sissy” dresses or French Maid mini dresses only added to my enjoyment as well as the prospect of learning how to prance and mince in those stiletto heeled pumps.

Most of the wardrobe section sold costumes but some sold “sissy” blouses and slim skirts to be worn over foundation garments and lacey camisoles, with their matching half slips or full slips alone.

Formal apparel was just as enjoyable if not more so. Party dresses of various hem lengths, and of course bridal and bridesmaids’ dresses too. I was certain if I could try on all of them I would feel like floating around the room instead of walking.

Despite the euphoric erotic enjoyment I derived from my imaginary sorties into femininity my masturbating always resulted in a climax which was followed by a strong surge of masculine feelings.

Unfortunately, these feelings were the direct opposite of the way I wanted to feel. Feeling very masculine afterward only added to my confusion.

I couldn’t come to grips with the fact that at the peak of feeling so tremendously feminine and giddy that I would suddenly feel so masculine and powerful. It didn’t make any sense.

What if I went thru a sex change? Would the giddiness and feelings of femininity disappear? Would I then become a woman trapped in a man’s body? How was I ever going to find the truth about myself?

My dives with the class became more infrequent because of my work schedule. I still dreamt about uncovering some lost artifact or cache of valuable coins.

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Money derived from my find of course would be used to see a therapist and find out more about my hidden feelings and what I was going to do about it.

The winter months were the worst. I felt confined since I was not able to spend more time outdoors. I missed that erotic feeling of being underwater too.

Nearing my high school graduation I had to start thinking about what I was going to do for my life's work. I was hamstrung between trying to find a so called "man's occupation" and training for what some would call "women's work" though in this day in age the two had become melded for the most part as women drove trucks and men were nurses.

I was certainly in a quandary. I didn't have much time to decide either. I hated to be pushed into anything but I felt I was genuinely between a rock and a hard place. There had to be a solution out there someplace and I was bound and determined to find it.

As soon as I turned eighteen I was going to find a therapist. I had to find someone to help me with these hidden feelings. I knew I couldn't do it alone.

My desires seem to have gotten stronger as I grew older. I fantasized more and more about cross dressing as well as the possibility of both working and living that way.

I was concerned about these hidden feelings getting to the point of an obsession. Perhaps a therapist could help me before that became a reality.

Living at home I was able to save some money. I put off buying a cheap car since I could bike or walk to work and ride with another member to the Y where the diving club would meet to take us to local shallow lakes.

I borrowed mom's car for the Senior Prom. The girl I asked was someone I had a few dates with. We really didn't know each other well and I took her home right after the dance. There wasn't going to be a serious relationship for me until I could get myself "straightened out" so to speak.

There was never a time when I was attracted to men. I knew for sure I was not gay but I was more comfortable around girls but not in a sexual way more like I was another girlfriend.

Mom's death at work came as a big shock. It happened the day after I graduated. I still hadn't decided what I was going to do with my life. The next several months were spend with funeral arrangements and then settling the estate.

I continued to work at the hardware store until everything was settled. There was very little money left but I used it to trade in her old car for a newer used one.

Apartments didn't appeal to me but the large duplex we had been living in was too expensive so I moved to a smaller one.

The owner was a nice old lady whose husband had died the year before. She was very nice and I had been concerned with the regular turnover in an apartment building you never knew who your neighbors were going to be from one year to the next.

With the estate settled and all of mom's stuff either sold or donated to the local thrift stores I settled in to a routine of living alone.

The hardware store job didn't pay very much. The money from mom's estate would keep me going for

about two years. I talked with several temp agencies about finding something better. "We will let you know" was a common response.

A solution to my feelings was once again in front of me. I was now alone and felt I should take the bull by the horns and talk to someone. It would be the first step so to speak in unraveling my conflicted feelings or it least I hoped it would.

I chose to see Dr. Miranda Santiago. She had a website and was in an office building complex not far from where I worked.

My fingers shook a little as I pressed the numbers for her office. My voice was dry and shaky as I gave out my name and address. The receptionist gave me an appointment several days ahead on my day off.

That night I didn't sleep well. I kept wondering if I was doing the right thing but rationalized it with the thought that I had to do something and the sooner I got started the better off I was going to be.

I reported to Dr. Santiago's office fifteen minutes early. After filling out the medical questionnaire I took a seat and waited to be called. I was very nervous and flipped thru a couple of magazines before Dr. Santiago came out and introduced herself.

"I am Dr. Santiago and you are Phillip West, correct?"

"Yes," I replied with a dry mouth.

She was an imposing figure. Her hair was short and she didn't wear makeup. She was wearing a black pantsuit, black flat shoes and a plain white blouse. I extended my hand and she took it in hers giving me a strong handshake.

"Come into my office Phillip and we will get started," she said

I followed her to her inner office.

"Have a seat Phillip," she said as she motioned to the chair in front of her expansive desk.

I sat down as she looked over my informational form I had filled out earlier.

"So Phillip, what makes you think that you should have been a girl?"

I thought a minute and then things began to pour out.

"Well, I am not sure exactly. It is hard to describe the feelings I have about myself. It's almost as if I don't belong in the male or female world,"

"I see, how so?"

"Well I am more comfortable around girls than boys. Almost as if I was one of them instead of a boy. Boys at school for the most part tend to be rowdy, loud and with a condescending attitude towards girls,"

"Did you date in high school?"

"Very little. Money was tight and I didn't have a car,"

"Have you had sex yet?"

I felt embarrassed to answer her but did anyway.

"No. I am very unsure of myself. I guess I was afraid to fail as a male too, I mean not knowing what to do exactly,"

"I understand. Have you experimented with makeup or cross-dressing?"

"No. My mom just died recently. When she was alive I didn't want any packages coming to the house or have her come home at the wrong time and catch me,"

"Besides vacillating back and forth can be tiresome and very unfulfilling since eventually I would have to revert back to my male self,"

"I see. That's perfectly understandable Phillip. Do you think you just might be a cross dresser rather than a transgender male seeking sex reassignment surgery?"

"I'm not sure about that either. I guess that's why I came here. I was hoping to find out more about myself with your assistance,"

"That's a very smart thing for you to do Phillip. Too many people, men and women alike, either don't get help or live very frustrated lives. Sometimes their feelings lead to drugs and/or alcohol trying to cope with what they feel is an insurmountable problem. Occasionally they may even attempt suicide. Have you ever thought about killing yourself Phillip?"

"No. I am trying to find a way to resolve my feelings and then seek the best option for me,"

"That's good Phillip. You have a good head on your shoulders. I want you to stay positive so I can help you thru this. Since you haven't used makeup or cross dressed yet how does the thought of doing so make you feel?"

"Well in my imagination I would feel a tremendously and gloriously feminine. It would be a totally exhilarating and euphoric experience at least from my standpoint now,"

"I specially enjoy the prospect of having a totally hair free feminine body. After a perfumed bubble bath, a dusting of perfumed body powder and applying makeup and perfume with a shoulder length wig I know that I would love to be wearing lingerie under pretty dresses and wearing high heel pumps. Not just party dresses or formal apparel like bridal and bridesmaids dresses but even everyday wear like skirts and blouses or shirtdresses."

"I see. Does this imaginary sequence of events that would bring this about cause you to have an erection?"

"Yes, but when I ejaculate I am filled with a tremendous surge of a masculine feeling. I can't rationalize my desire to be so completely and totally feminine yet when I climax I feel so strongly powerful and masculine but still dressed in feminine attire,"

"That's' because from what you have told me so far you are not a transgender male Phillip. You are most likely what is called a transvestite. A sex change operation would be a horrific mistake. Afterwards you would still feel this euphoria but the sensation in your groin would be gone because your male genitals would be removed,"

"I understand. So what do I do now?"

"I see you are working at a hardware store, correct?"

"Yes. It doesn't pay much but I have registered with several temp agencies hoping to find something better,"

"Have given thought to what you might do for your life's work?"