

# OUT FROM THE CLOSET



# Stella SATIN

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# OUT FROM THE CLOSET

**By Stella Satin**

The pizza joint was crowded and I had to pick my spots as I wended my way back to the table that our group had, two pitchers of beer in my hands. It's not that it was that great in the place, but the pizza wasn't bad – and the beer was cheap – a GREAT attraction for people like myself, watching every dime – mostly college students, part time workers, people wanting to be 'noticed' by big-time producers (As if successful producers would be caught dead in such a place!). Magda, my current steady and me had gone in there after a movie and met up with some people we knew – or who SHE partly knew. Had a few drinks.

I sincerely hoped she'd quit the beer. Magda had no head for drinking – and a loose mouth that worried me, as I discovered, with good reason. I couldn't afford even the two measly pitchers of beer that I was carrying but knew that I'd already had my fair share – more than my fair share of other people's drinks – which is why I'd reluctantly gone to the bar to pay my way. Knew that tongues would wag if I didn't pay some of my share.

I was just heading for the table where about eight to ten of us sat on the rough benches around a (supposedly) old table. Saw the looks that everyone was giving me as I approached. The men looked a little odd – ashamed maybe? The women were looking at me, some with amused eyes – some with a lot more chill.

And I knew that the silly bitch had opened her mouth.

I saw her look at me guiltily, then speak with a sneer, as she kept on talking.

“ . . . and there he was – in my undies! Bra, panties, stockings! Had the bra padded and looked like a fuckin' woman! Was even actin' like one!”

“C'mon Magda! He couldn't have looked THAT good!” A female beside her asked, looking at me, but teasingly.

Magda looked confused though admitted. "Shouldn't have! But he didn't look THAT bad. For a minute . ." She hiccupped. "I thought the bastard had got himself another bitch while I'd been called for that audition. He didn't know it had been cancelled . . ."

Then she looked at me sneeringly, but I could see that she was covered in guilt. "Oh HI sweetie! I didn't think you'd mind . . ." Her face was red with a kind of shame – mostly at herself, I think.

I knew that my time with her was over. Just was thankful that I'd no clothes or anything worth talking about in her apartment. Had the keys to her car in my pocket. Laid them on the table, along with the pitchers and managed a smile.

"See you later Magda" I said, and left.

I had NO idea of the shit I was really in.

\* \* \*

I came home from the Chinese restaurant where I worked as a part time worker at around midnight the next night. It was unusual to see my roomies – three guys wandering around the fringes of Entertainment media the way I was – to be together and obviously waiting for me.

I should say 'obviously', but I was so friggin' tired that I headed for the fridge and pulled a beer. Opened it and took a healthy swig.

"Hi guys. What gives?" I asked pleasantly.

"You a fucking queer or what?" Ollie asked me suddenly, taking me completely by surprise.

"Am I a WHAT?" I asked him, careful to keep my voice non-accusatory – he's a BIG son of a bitch. Can get mean.

"He asked if you're some sort of fucking faggot!" Stan said tersely.

I had this terrible feeling growing in me, but had to play things out.

"I don't know what you fuckin' idiots are on about . ." I started nonchalantly.

"Magda says that you wear women clothes. She wrong?" Art asked.

He's the one of my roomies that I almost give a shit about, a nice guy. I looked at the three of them sitting on judgment – on me. Ignored his question.

"I ever laid a hand on any of you? Any ONE of you saying that I ever made a play for you? C'mon now! You gonna listen to the bullshit that some broad that can't stand her liquor – and says. Gets stoned stupid out of her mind on a few wines?" I was quite belligerent with this.

They all looked askance, and I thought I was almost done – but Stan screwed me up.

"You make sense – but you didn't answer Art's question. DO you wear women's clothes?"

"You lot HAVE been through my drawers and closets – haven't you?" I asked nastily. "Ever find anything?"

They looked guilty. "Yes! We went through 'em." Ollie said meanly. "Just as well we didn't find shit!"

"So there!" I tried to shout. "What do you guys HAVE? Not a fucking thing!"

"Still dawns on me that you haven't answered Art's question." Stan said levelly. "Why don't you do just that? Answer him."

Suddenly, I got sick of the whole goddamn charade I had lived with for years. I took a deep breath.

"Fuck it. Yes I DO. I'm NOT gay, but I have this insatiable desire to put on women's clothes now and then. Can't do fuck about it. Just HAVE to, I guess. I figure it's nobody's business but mine. I don't have fuck all against gays – but I'm NOT one! Listen to me!"

There was a pause as they digested this. Then Stan sighed. "You gotta leave this apartment. You know that? Can't stay here."

"Fuckin' queer!" Ollie said.

"Why don't you knock it off, you stupid shit?!" Art said to him. "He's never done a single one of us any harm." Then he turned to me and shrugged. "But you HAVE to go, you know that, don't you? All of us are trying to make it in the entertainment. A 'touch of the bitch' is okay – but only when you're established – and none of us are. You KNOW that a lot of people associate a transvestite with being gay – and right now, none of us can afford to being tied into that world. I'm truly sorry. But you'd better go."

"I paid through the end of this month." I said, slowly with regret. Then next month's as well."

"We'll refund you next month's rent." He said. "Sorry. But can you be outta here in ten days? Can you do that?"

I thought. "I don't know. But I'm not welcome here. Let me check things out. I will if I can, Okay?"

"Okay. Just try your best." He said.

He was the only one I would have liked for a friend, but I knew it was unlikely that we'd ever be friends again – not now.

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"Sorry dear." Mrs. Chang said without inflection and fixing her inscrutable black eyes on me. "You're fired."

I stared at the cold faced lady we knew as the Dragon Lady.

"What?" I asked stupidly.

"You not that good a waiter – and I don't need any waitresses. You're probably too little for the dresses I have." She grinned coldly. "You have two days wages coming. Go talk to cashier."

I felt the shame deep within me. Knew that, somehow, the Dragon Lady had learned about me and my want. Cursed Magda – that stupid shit had brought ruin down on me. “I haven’t done anything wrong!” I tried despairingly. I needed that job!

“Only have big waitresses here.” She sneered. “No small girly uniforms either. No place for pansies. Give place a bad name. Go talk to cashier!”

She said this and turned her back on me. Oh, did I want to kick her – but to tell the truth, I’m small and slightly built. I wasn’t even positive that she couldn’t handle me physically – maybe even enjoy it – and the other waiters around would have no trouble if she couldn’t. Probably glad to show off in front of her. I went and got my money.

\* \* \*

It was a few days later. I couldn’t afford Starbucks – too expensive. My roomies weren’t talking to me and I had less than a week to go before I either had to find a new place that I could afford – or find another place. The wages at the Chinese place had been low – but there was NOTHING going in the form of employment. Maybe McDonalds? But the wages there were pathetic. I knew, exactly how much money I had in my wallet, but it was a miserable looking day, and I decided to splurge on a coffee in a diner that was close by. I went to the counter and went to sit down to order my coffee. Suddenly this good looking broad had come in behind and was beside me.

“Why don’t we order a booth?” She said, tapping me on the shoulder before I could sit. “I’m hungry and could use a nice breakfast. Okay?”

She was so nice and fresh featured. Wished I knew her, but didn’t. I had to smile. “Sounds nice. I really wish I could help you, but I’m broke – no money worth a shit. I can barely stand myself a coffee to tell the truth. But a nice looking girl like you? Trust me – I would take you over there in a second if I could!”

She looked at me, straight up. Her eyes enquiring but friendly. “Nice of you to say so, but I really want to talk to you.” She smiled. “It isn’t an offer you can’t refuse, like the movie says – but it’s at least worth a breakfast to me. I’ll buy. What do you say? Shall we share a booth?” She smiled again. “Don’t make a lady ask twice.”

“You must really want to talk to me bad!” I laughed. “Just be forewarned, I’m hungry and I doubt if I have a single thing that will be of interest to you. But if the offer still stands? Lay on MacDuff!”

“Fair enough,” she said. “Let’s go.”

I told her my name was Don and she introduced herself as Ann. She took off a fairly nice coat and I could see that she was no slouch in the clothes department either. Nice pant suit, pink in color. Hair neat and tidy, makeup understated but nice. The waitress brought our coffee and took our orders. Then she left. Ann got down to business immediately.

“Are you gay?” She asked. “I really don’t care whether you are or not, trust me. It’s just something I’ll need to get out of the way if we’re to talk to honestly.”

I had been on the point of drinking my coffee. Found myself spluttering. Getting mad pretty damn quickly.

"I'm not – if it's any of your business, but a breakfast doesn't pay me enough to answer questions like that. I think you can shove . ." I started to my feet.

"I'm sorry Don. Believe me" She looked at me with deeply sincere eyes. "But I may have an offer for you. You may not like it, but it's reasonable. Me and my friends know that you're a transvestite – or a cross dresser . ." She smiled. "I have had a terrible time trying to figure which is which. "But I had to know if you were homosexual. We've nothing against gays, but one would not fit what we want. Please sit down and hear me out."

I was still upset, but now I was curious. This obviously wasn't a chance meeting. A few minutes later, it turned out that Ann had followed me into that diner and had been following me for some time. She also knew about my fetish – and wasn't put off by it. Not that I could tell anyway. I sat down.

"I don't know how you found out my guilty secret, but I can guess. You were in the pizza joint the other night?"

"Close enough. It doesn't matter," she said. "Now, if I say that we – my two friends and I - need a transvestite for a fairly long while. The job we have is not degrading – at least we don't think so. Will give you board and keep and some money every week – not a lot, but decent pocket money."

"I'm not some kind of circus freak!" I said. "Not going to dress up for public display if that's what you have in mind!"

She became angry and it showed. Inside I started to quail. Bluntly, I'm a submissive. Don't give a royal damn about the male sex trying to be bossy – but when a woman gets mad or comes on strong? I get extremely weak and scared. Sexed up too, if you want to know the truth. Know well that I'm subservient. I just try to hide it as well as I can – and have succeeded quite well so far. At the same time, I get weak in the knees. Thank God, she didn't seem to notice how I was mentally crumbling.

She was a little indignant instead. "We have NO intention of doing a damn thing that you find degrading. We THINK we are offering you a chance to do as you like, and get paid a reasonable amount. If you are interested, say so. If not? It's been a nice breakfast Don. I'm DONE!"

I knew she meant what she said. And even if she didn't? I was in no position to negotiate out of hand. "I'm sorry if I offended you Ann – but what is it that you have to offer?" I said.

"I don't want to sound mysterious," she said. "But there are two other girls involved. You – or they might dislike each other on sight, so I can't make an offer right now. Can you meet with us tonight – here? Say six o'clock at the front door?"

"I'll be here." I said. "With bells on! But here comes our breakfast! Can we talk about something different now?"

She smiled. "Sure." She said.

\* \* \*

I was at the restaurant door ten minutes early. Had put on my cleanest clothes. I even thought of shaving my face, but decided against it. Maybe a lack of testosterone? But I hardly have to shave much. I wasn't expecting to hear my name called.

"Don? Don? Over here in the car." It was Ann.

I felt disappointed immediately. Walked over to the car, could see that she was the only one there. "Decided against it?" I asked.

"No. I'm sorry, the other girls and I agreed that you'd have a better idea of what we're asking you to do if you saw our place. Want to hop in? I'll bring you back here or anywhere you want to go when we're finished."

I felt myself brighten. "Sounds good. Let me get in." A few seconds later I was ensconced beside her in a fairly late model car.

"Where we going Ann?" I asked as I fastened the seat belt.

"The house. Won't take long."

She was correct. We took about twenty minutes which got us to a fairly large house in a nice neighborhood. She had an automatic garage door opener and used it. I wasn't surprised when I saw she was taking the last spot in a three car garage, the other two taken by fairly nice cars. She then closed the automatic door and led me in through the kitchen to a well lit sitting room. Two attractive young women sat there, getting up as we approached.

"Don?" Ann said. I'd like you to meet Sylvia and Irene. Once you get to know them, you can call them Syl and Reen. But first things first. Want a beer?"

I could see that the two I'd just met had drinks in their hands, so accepted. Ann went back into the kitchen and popped a bottle of beer for herself and me. I turned down a glass – more masculine, you know? We all settled down. The first question wasn't long in coming.

"You don't look like a transvestite?" Reen said.

I damn near swallowed the mouthful of beer I'd been about to take in. Found myself damn near laughing. "Am I supposed to look a certain way?"

"Touche!" Syl laughed. Speaking to me, she said. "I think Reen thought you'd be in a nice dress?" She laughed quietly.

"Hey!" Ann said forthrightly to the two others. "I think that you're embarrassing Don. This is neither the time nor place. Let's knock it off and get down to business." She then spoke to me. "I know you haven't had much time. But tell me – real honestly – what you think of this place?"

"Here? Very nice."

"Stop being polite. What do you really think?"

I looked around. "You want my honest opinion?"

The women looked at each other and I felt the question was important. I took my time before answering. Spoke carefully. "When I came through the kitchen, I saw some dirty plates and the stove top. I figured you'd all just eaten – but there's no dirty serving dishes that I can see, so the kitchen wasn't cleaned too recently and the dishes may have been left to sit? Not good. I see some flowers over there that have seen better days. I'd throw them out. I think I see some dust on the table over there. I'd move some of your wall pictures – I don't think they go with your color scheme." I smiled at Ann. "Was that critical enough for you?"

She seemed to be blushing a little. "That's fine Don. What do you think of the total place?"

I shrugged. "Neat enough. I'm a bit of a neat freak, so forgive me from being honest – but you did ask. On the whole? Not bad."

Reen broke in. She seemed to be smiling. "It's about dinner time. You hungry?"

"I could eat a dead horse." I laughed, but I'm just here. Want to go out for dinner already? If you're buying fine. Otherwise? I can't afford to pay for the four of us."

"Syl smiled sleepily. "That's not what she was talking about. Do you like to cook?"

"I'm fair." I said modestly after a pause. "Where I used to work they'd let me experiment if the place wasn't too busy and they were short of chefs."

"Anything special you like to make?" Ann asked.

"I'm not that fussy. Will try my hand at just about anything." I laughed. "Truthfully? I like to experiment. Sometimes what I turn out is pretty awful." Then I added. "Sometimes pretty good – although I say it myself."

The three women shot each other a look that smacked of agreement. All stood up.

"Come this way Don," Ann said. "Let's see."

"See what?" I asked, but followed all three into the kitchen.

"Suppose you were going to make dinner for all of us right now?" Reen asked. "What would you make – that wouldn't take forever to make?"

I grinned. "A challenge, huh? I assume it's okay if I look around?"

"Go to it!" Syl drawled.

The kitchen was the way I'd described it. Not dirty, but a good clean wouldn't have hurt any. I looked in the freezer of the large fridge. Some decent steak there, roasts, and stuff – but nothing that I'd want to defrost quickly in a microwave. There was a half French loaf. I closed the freezer door and looked in the fridge. Saw some wrapped packages of deli meats sliced this, ham. Turkey, roast beef. Pretty fresh when I tried them. Plenty of veggies. Checked the utensils and flatware – tons of the stuff.

I checked the larder. Found what I wanted. Went back into the kitchen. "Any allergies or special dislikes?" I asked.

The women looked at each other in surprise. "Nah." Ann finally said. "We eat what's here. Take turns doing the shopping and cooking. If you need anything special just now, but we were hoping . . .?"

I shook my head. "No. I could throw a quick meal together. Nothing special – but it wouldn't take long. Now if someone will tell me what's going on?"

"Could we defer the answer to that for a while?" Ann asked. "I don't want to sound phony, but so far you're what we're looking for. But you knowing how to cook is a major thing. A kinda test. Would you mind making us our dinner?"

I laughed. "If it lets me get some food in my belly pretty quick, I'm all in favor of it. Want me to start?"

Ann and Reen nodded, but Syl looked at me. "A small thing, but important. Can you wait a minute?"

"Sure!" I said as she left the kitchen

"Why don't I take your coat jacket?" Reen asked. "Save it from getting dirty – and you may as well make yourself comfortable."

This made sense, so I took the jacket off and handed it to her – she left the kitchen. A few seconds later, both her and Syl reappeared. Syl had some material in her hand. Pink and white. She walked up to me. "Here. Put this apron on." Handed it to me. Automatically, I took it. Felt my face redden. Tried to give it back.

"Hey thanks. But I don't need this."

"I didn't say anything about needing it. That was Reen. It's a very feminine apron. If you're a transvestite, it should be second nature to put something like this on." She smiled nicely. "So? Over your head dear and get a meal started. I'm like you – starving!"

"Look? I don't think that you ladies understand something." I stammered a little. "Dressing is a very private thing." I blushed an even deeper red. "I've never dressed in front of a woman before – let alone three!"

Syl stepped in front of me, her eyes locked on mine. "I don't mean to be offensive Don, but as I understand it? Transvestites are very often submissive to women. Is this true?"

I felt myself yammer. "I can't speak for other . . ."

"Not asking you to speak about others. Is it true about YOU?"

I hung my head. Felt her take the apron from my nerveless hands, then it was being fitted over my head.

"Now turn around dear, and let me tie you in." She said this kindly, and I turned. Felt her tie me in. Then she turned me back and arranged my shirt around the frilled bib.

"Now dear?" she said. "I can see that you're nervous about this, so the three of us girls will go and make ourselves a drink and you can start making dinner. Now don't feel bad. You look quite nice, if that's anything to you. But does that sound okay? Give you a chance to feel proper again."

Speechless, mired in embarrassment, I nodded and the three of them left.

It took me a moment to get moving again, but I finally managed. Got the half French loaf out and defrosted it slightly. Halved it longwise. Melted butter a little in the micro, then spread it generously on the bread. Coated that with crushed garlic. Put some powdered Parmesan on it.

I pulled out a fair bit of the deli meats – and julienned the meats into thin strips. Put some water on the stove to boil.

About then, Reen came in with nice big glass of white wine. I saw her look around approvingly before she spoke. “You seem to have made yourself at home already Don. I’ve poured you this glass of wine. Would you like it?”

Some of my humor came back. “Bless you! I need SOMETHING!” Took the glass from her and had a nice sip of a good wine. Felt some confidence coming back, though it still felt funny standing there in the apron. “Could you get the table set Reen? Grated cheese, butter, coarse hot red pepper – normal condiments? Just salad and an entree I’m afraid.” I couldn’t help feeling that my voice felt very insecure, but she didn’t seem to notice.

She nodded. “Got it!” Then left me alone again.

She came in a few times to get things I asked for and disappeared into the Dining area again, but she was no trouble. I made up a simple salad, made a cheese dressing for it, and a quick Marinara sauce – meatless - cooked some egg noodles and put the toasted bread in a toaster. Drained the pasta, then put in the meats for a little while and tossed them. Added the Marinara sauce, then served it up – along with the toasted garlic and cheese bread, then called through that dinner was ready.

So, in pretty quick order I served up a salad, then pasta and the garlic bread. I sensed that I was going through some sort of test when I discovered them all sitting at the table waiting for me to serve them and looking for me to do just that. I finally got their meals in front of them. Noticed that a big glass of wine had been served to me along with them, but I wasn’t about to complain. I went to take off the apron before I sat down.

“Please leave that on?” Reen asked quietly.

“I felt kinda silly in the kitchen . . .” I started when Ann spoke up.

“Honest? We DO have a reason. Honest.”

“But?” I laughed, my hands still on the ties.

Syl looked at me with her eyes grave. “Please?” was all she said.

I felt the old weakness course through me. “If it means that much to you all? I guess I should.” I said and sat down.

Ann said a quick grace, and we all fell to eating our dinner. It was plain and simple, but tasted good, especially with the wine. There was silence for a moment as we all took our first bites, then the three women looked at each other, almost in unison.

“Me?” Ann asked, and the others nodded in agreement. Let her do the talking.

“Don?” She said. “This is a lovely meal – and given the time you had, and the lack of knowledge you had about what we had in the kitchen, it’s tremendous.”

I blushed as I thanked her, and she waited for me politely, to finish. Then she spoke again. “As you probably guessed? It WAS a form of test – and for your information, you passed with flying colors.”

I took another sip of wine. “I guess I’ll now find out what you gals are talking about.”

Reen laughed. "I just wanted to say how nice this meal is. Best meal I've had in a while."

Syl grinned at me. "I don't know what those two are going on about. It's delicious – but I never expected anything else!"

Ann rapped her glass with her spoon. Spoke at the other two. "I'm the one talking if you don't mind." Then she spoke to me again. "We've done some preliminary checking on you Don. I hope you don't mind. But you see, Syl heard what that girl said about you in the pizza parlor last week . . ."

"Aw shit!" I said and getting red faced. "That's embarrassing . . ."

"Please let me go on?" Ann said apologetically. "We can understand what kind of emotion you must be feeling at that – VERY embarrassed. But it happened."

"You got THAT right!" I managed, and the girls laughed in agreement.

"But?" Ann continued. "Syl works for an advertising agency now but did some stage dancing for a while and although she didn't meet any drag queens in her . . ."

"WHOA!" I interrupted. "I'm NOT a drag queen! I don't . . ."

Ann held a hand up. "Sorry Don. I'll get some words wrong and even I should have known better than describe you like that, but Syl did have some knowledge of transvestites or cross dressers – and part of what she picked up was that many of you are, by nature, VERY good around a house."

I started to complain, then had to grin in honesty. "Women's work you mean?"

She nodded. "Yes. Exactly. That's what we want to offer you."

I fingered the apron ruffles at my neck a little ruefully. "That why you gals want me wearing this? Make me feel feminine?"

"We thought you'd feel more at home." Reen said. "Let you know that men in feminine clothes don't bother us."

"Matter of fact?" Syl drawled. "I think you look pretty cute!" Then she laughed – but nicely.

I felt myself redden. "That's what you want. A cook?"

"No." Ann said. "We want a housekeeper – and a cook – and . . ."

"Someone to look after us!" Reen said.

"It's easy to see that none of us like housework!" Syl said. "That's why we need somebody like you."

"No offense ladies." I said. "But I need a JOB! I didn't know what you were offering but I don't have a car – so I can't travel, I'm about to get thrown out of my apartment by my ex-buddies who're all scared that I'm some sort of fairy freak. My bank balance is . . ."

"Don?" Ann held up her hand. "No travel involved. There's a room here. A nice room with a bathroom of its own. You'll have no rental or travel costs. We can't pay you much, but we'll pay for all the shopping, so you have NO food costs – and you'll get \$100 dollars

a week for compensation. It isn't much, but considering that you won't have any expenses to speak of, we think it generous."

I blinked. "That mean I could look for a job while . . ."

"No Don." Syl broke in. "We'd want you to agree to stay with us for a year - an agreement we can break only by mutual consent." She gave me a sly look. "Not only that dear? You can wear all the pretty dresses you want. None of us mind you doing that. As a matter of fact, we kinda expect you to like that bit. Just don't go overboard on us."

I could feel the weakness in my groin as she looked at me. She scared me. Not only that? The job that was offered scared me too. I'd been dressing as circumstance allowed, for years. The only problem was that I wasn't given the chance too often - certainly not often enough. Now, the thought that I could dress to my hearts content - and do the type of work that I yearned for - simply scared the hell out of me. I knew I was a male, just wanted to dress nicely. But how would I handle being able to dress all the time? What would I turn into? God only knew, and I didn't. I put on a thoughtful look on my face.

"You know ladies?" I said. "I'm not sure. Can I think this over for a day or so?"

Syl looked at me strangely, but said nothing. Disappointment showed on the other two though. You could tell that they wanted an immediate acceptance from me. But Ann finally said. "Well Don? I hope that you weren't offended by our offer. You will get back to us? I'll give you my phone number. Just PLEASE keep us in mind?"

"Absolutely!" I lied positively. "Just please believe that I wasn't offended. I think you ladies had my welfare at heart and I sincerely appreciate it."

That seemed to give them some heart, but we finished the meal and I was very grateful for Ann to drive me home. I gave her the directions to my apartment entrance and we drove there.

I faltered when she took my hand in hers once we stopped. "I have the feeling that you'll turn us down Don. But please think about us? Honest? It would be like a different life for you."

Of that I had not the slightest doubt, but thanked her. Gave her a gentle kiss of good-bye, and left the car. Watched her drive away, with just the slightest tremor.

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Of course what had been offered attracted me, but I was scared of how I'd end up more than anything else. I knew I was heterosexual - my god, any one of the women I'd seen that night attracted me, but the lack of interest towards me, sexually, on their part was palpable and I didn't know how I would take to that. Could I possibly take being taken as a sexual nonentity by three attractive women for a year? Who knows how I'd react? Regretfully, I figured that I had to continue with my looking.

The following day was miserable. I had to drag myself out of bed and force myself to get ready to look for work. I avoided my roomies eyes, dreading that any one of them would ask me how I was doing in the search for a new apartment or a job. There was some guy advertising for a split in an apartment that sounded pretty good - but we discovered

once I got there that we knew each other slightly – then to our mutual embarrassment, he thought of who I was – and that was the end of that. I pounded the pavement looking for work and there was some – but the wages really sucked. I had a fast food greasy hamburger and fries – no soda, just water, for lunch and spent another hour searching. Finally, fed up, I decided to call it a day even though it was early and headed for home.

Art was there and we said embarrassed hellos. But then he surprised me.

“A good looking broad in the TV room. (As we grandly called it). Wants to see you. Been here a while.”

It dawned on me that his astonishment was even more than mine. I figured out that, no matter what they say, a lot of guys figure a transvestite is gay. Art was one of the good guys, but even he had been taken in by that stupid propaganda.

I forced a smile. “Guess I’d better go see her.” And headed for the TV room.

On the way, I figured it had to be Ann. Had to admit that her offer was even more attractive than it had been but rehearsed grateful ways of deferring any decision again. Figured that if I put her off often enough, she’d get the hint and leave me alone. But it wasn’t her.

Lazily, Syl greeted me. “Hi Don.” She smiled lazily from a chair. “Find anything today?”

I was shaken. This was a damn fine looking woman. Wore a business suit and showed signs of elegant grooming, even though I figured, correctly, that she’d spent a good chunk of the day at the office. Gray wool skirt suit, dark blue silk blouse. Muted jewelry, brown shoes. Big handbag. She still scared me.

“Hi Syl. I wasn’t expecting you.” As she was looking at me searchingly, I went and gave her a kiss – had absolutely NO idea of what else to do. She accepted it as if it was expected of me. Very non-sexual.

“Not much luck today. Tomorrow should be better.” I added.

She smiled. “Oh it WILL be! I’m sure of that!” Then she looked around. “This place is even neater than ours. You help keep it clean?”

“Actually? We all work at it.” I lied and my red face gave me away, but she simply ignored it.

“Lovely.” She said, totally disinterested now. “I feel that you’re going to pass on the job we offered? Turn us down. Am I right?”

I tried to grin. “Well, I hadn’t really come to a final . . .”

She had been rummaging in her handbag as I spoke, then interrupted me. “Come here Don.” she said calmly. At the same time, she pulled the pink apron from her bag. “Come here please,” she repeated.

“What for?” I found myself asking childishly.

She gave me a calm look. “I want to ask you something. Would you please come here?”

I felt a tremulous sigh escape me, but went to her. She handed it to me. “See any difference in it?”

"Huh? No. It looks the same to me." I said.

Please have a really good look, okay?"

This time I really looked at it. Shrugged. "Been washed and ironed?"

"Yes. But that's not it."

I looked even closer. "Aha! It's got a name sewn on the breast. Don't remember that."

"That's it. What's the name there?"

"Dawn."

"See? Even got it custom designed just for you. Just for you. Now put it on please?"

I stared. "I can't do that Syl."

"Of course you can Dawn. Nothing to it. Just slide it on over the top of your head, then tie it at the back. Simple." Her voice took on a little chill. "Or do you want me to get up out of this chair and come to you?"

"Please Syl. Don't do this." I mumbled.

"Dawn dearest? Of course I have to. It's for your own good. Me and my friends want you to come and look after us – there's just one thing I'm pretty sure of that they haven't guessed at as yet even though I dropped a hint the other night."

"One thing?" I had to ask with my mouth all dry.

"Why YES! Of course dear." She slowed her voice down thoughtfully here. "You see I think that you're a male submissive. It seems to be quite a common trait amongst you boys that like to dress in women's clothes." She beamed at me with a bright smile. "Just LOVE to do as you're told. And I must tell you that I think it's SO sweet of you! Now why don't you just slip into your apron. Come along now!"

My arms were unwilling but as if hypnotized I could feel them arrange the apron and slide it on over my head.

She sighed happily as I did this. "Well – that's one point cleared up, isn't it." She wasn't asking a question, but I nodded anyway.

"Come here and let me tie you in," She said, brusquely now. "I don't expect you to be able to tie pretty bows at this moment – that I'll expect you to learn quickly. But right now I think it establishes a sort of . . . symbology? You having me tying you into the costume that signifies woman's servitude." She smiled at me. "That sort of thing. So come here darling and we get that point established immediately."

Red faced and with bowed head I went to her. Heard her hum happily as she tied me into the apron and knew she was taking some time with the bow. "Very GOOD!" she said happily. "Looks just wonderful on you. Now, I saw a pot of coffee on in the kitchen. I could use a little, so go and get me a half cup if you please?" She patted me encouragingly on the backside. "Off you go Dawn. I take my coffee black please."

I stared at her in horror. Made a half hearted laughing sound. "I can't go I there Syl? My roomie Art is in there. He'd SEE me."

"My point exactly darling!" She paused to find words for her explanation before continuing. "You see? I have this feeling. You MUST know? This feminine intuition says that the minute I leave, you'll find ways to avoid coming to work for us . . ."

"I wouldn't do that!" I said sincerely, lying of course.

"Maybe not. But I'd like to be safe. Once your friend sees you in your girlie apron, you'll be more inclined to do as we have suggested to you. Off you go! It won't be THAT bad darling. Trust me, you look nice and cute."

I could no more refuse her than fly in the air. I kept shuffling towards the door and casting pleading glances at her, but she just shooed me onwards with her fingers and a soft, encouraging, "Go on!" Finally I went out of the room and into the kitchen. Art was there, making a sandwich with a beer opened on the counter beside him. He sensed, rather than saw me, and moved aside as I came up. I reached up into the cupboard and got a cup and saucer out before he looked at me. Then he was staring!

"What the shit are you supposed to be? Jesus Don! You're not gonna start dressing like a girl around here, are you? Jesus Christ!" He actually recoiled from me as if I were contagious or something like that. Then he looked around him. "Please don't let the others come home and see you like this!"

"Art? I'm sorry. It's a long story and I can't tell you about it. Just believe me, it's something I have to do. Trust me, I DON'T want the other's coming home any more than you do." Then suddenly, I knew that what Syl had made me do had forced the issue. I really had no choice now. There was no way that she could have known, but Art was an inveterate gossip. The probability that me and my frilled apron would be a topic of conversation amongst our set very quickly, filled me with a sort of quiet alarm.

"I don't know for sure," I told him. "But I should be out of this apartment for good pretty soon. Maybe even tonight. Don't talk about this, okay?"

He huffed. "You know me!" he said. "I'll be as silent as the grave!"

At that point I saw his eyes. I liked Art. He was a nice guy, but to expect him to be quiet about this? After Magda's declaration, and his gossip, I would be branded for life as some kind of pervert. I pretended to believe him.

"I'd appreciate that Art. Excuse me while I get some coffee for Syl."

"Sure!" he said, then got out of the way as I poured the coffee, put the cup on a saucer and carried it through to Syl.

She saw me coming. "Don't you have a tray darling?" she asked.

"Sure. But I thought . . . I thought . . ." I stumbled to a close. "You want me to put this on a tray?"

"Yes dear, and bring me a napkin as well if you don't mind."

If I had blushed in front of Art before, it was nothing compared to the redness of my face as I fixed up a small tray with Syl's coffee on it and a napkin. He didn't say anything, but I thought I saw a hint of a smile around his lips as I turned to go back.

"MUCH better darling!" Syl said. "Now you just set it here, then sit down. I think we need to talk." She pointed to a chair just opposite.

"I didn't really want any coffee, and I certainly didn't need a tray. But I think you know that, don't you?" She asked.

I nodded, and she smiled. "Like to tell me why you think I had you do that?" she asked again.

"Check me out?" I answered. "See if I did as I was told?"

"Aha!" She laughed, "You're not just a pretty face, are you? Have some mind back there." She got serious. "Do you think of me as cruel?"

I was a little shocked at her question but found myself answering honestly. "No . . . no . . . I don't think that you're that way at all."

"Good. I'm not. I AM pragmatic though and try to come up with the simplest possible solutions to problems. I won't even try to imagine what sexual needs drive you to do womanly things – I certainly don't like a lot of them – but YOU seem to – and that is the important thing. You just don't seem to want to admit this, nor want to do a task that seems to suit you admirably – one that me and my friends want you to do. So I don't want to sound like your mother Dawn – but I want you to do this for your own good." She laughed openly and frankly. "Mine too, I must admit. Now are you going to come, or are you going to continue to need me to work on you? Right now?"

"Can you tell me a bit more please?" I asked.

"Good question. You'll be the housekeeper and look after us. I'll keep it from the other girls that you are a submissive, but I'll expect you to do anything and everything associated with running a house. You can dress like a girl all you want – just please don't look ridiculous. . ."

"I don't think you'd need to worry about that." I said huffily. "I don't dress much."

She stared at me. "Hmmm. We'll see. You'll have accounts with the local groceries and shops to buy just about anything you like within reason. Us three women all have jobs, but we all get home about the same time each night. We all like a glass of wine or a drink before dinner and we're off work most weekends, so will probably be home then. In all honesty, we'll probably expect you to goof off a little then too – fix our own meals, though I can't promise anything."

"What about lunch?"

"Only at weekends. None of us come home during the day, so from about 8.30 until about six o'clock the house is yours. All of us go to school at least once a week so don't come home for dinner, but that's pretty regular, so the scheduling isn't much. You won't get a car, but we'll pay you \$100 per week – and that's tax free. You seem pretty healthy, But Reen works in a medical office – so your medical bills will be mostly taken care off. It's not great but . . ."

I had to interrupt. "I don't get ANY medical just now Syl – and didn't when I worked in the restaurant. Anything has got to be an improvement on that."

"Good. I was kinda worried about that." She said. "But that's the important points. Want the job?"

I leaned back in my chair. Found myself speaking frankly. "A little while ago I could have said that I had no choice. But to be honest? It doesn't sound too bad. Just one thing though?" I blushed as I fingered the ruffles around my bodice. "I'm kinda embarrassed about this. Can I pass on . . ."

Syl shook her head. "Sorry Dawn. That is non-negotiable. I believe you when you say that you're a hetero – but without a constant reminder that you're a transvestite, you might try making out with one of us three girls – and I don't want that. Putting it bluntly, we're hiring a transvestite to do a woman's job. I don't want ANY of us ever forgetting that point. There's more aprons back home – and I had your name put on all of them. You'll wear an apron, or something feminine ALL the time when any one of us three are home. Sorry, but I must insist on that."

I could see there was no arguing with her, but she saw the look on my face.

"Dawn? Bear with me. I know this may be embarrassing for you, but it'll get us all off on the right foot. Don't get me wrong – I'll expect you to look after the house. It'll also be very nice if you go out of your way to look after us – we're three career women and I think we'll enjoy any little thing you can do to make our lives more comfortable, but we're not slave drivers and trust me – we're pretty nice people. You be nice to us? We'll be nice to you."

I made up my mind in a hurry. "I've known that I wasn't wanted here Syl and have had my stuff packed and ready to go for a while. I still have a little to do, but it shouldn't take me long. Want me to come with you?"

She thought for a second. No. I don't want the girls to know I was here. As far as they're concerned, you're still making up your mind. Call the house tonight – you have our number?"

I nodded. "Ann gave it to me."

"Good. Call the house and say you've decided to give the job a shot. Just pretend as if I've never spoken with you."

"Can I ask why?"

She surprised me by Getting up and coming over to my chair and leaning over, fondled my ruffles delicately. "I don't think of myself as the bullying kind," she said. "But I think I'd like to keep the fact that you CAN be told what to do, all to myself - for a while anyway. On top of that? If this little experiment doesn't work out – I don't want to be the gal that gets all the blame." Then she kissed me softly. "Welcome!" she said.

I looked up at the woman and managed to hide the love in my eyes. She had already won me, heart and soul, but how could I admit this?

"Better get your apron off darling." She said. Then she added. "Though I'd imagine that you'll get VERY used to it in the near future!"

\* \* \*

I gave Syl plenty of time to get home, then called. Ann came to the phone. "Hello?"

Ann? It's me. Don. Hi"

"Oh – HI DON!" She sounded excited. "I wasn't sure if you'd call us back!"

"I don't know why you'd think that!" I said. "But if you ladies still want to have me? I'm yours."

She was SO pleased. It would have been awkward for me to get there that night – I didn't have a car – and it would have taken too long. Impulsively she asked me that, if she picked me up quickly, could she take me shopping for the fixings a celebratory dinner – on her of course? She wouldn't tell the other girls and keep it a surprise – but only if I wanted!

She was extremely happy when I said I thought it a good idea. She was positive she could get time from work, so we made arrangements for her to pick me up between three and four o'clock – that way I had time to shop, then do the meal. Frankly I felt it a very good way to break the ice and was all for it. Now that the die was cast, I just wanted to get away from my apartment and my current life. Syl scared, yet attracted me, she didn't seem interested in me sexually – but I felt a distinct interest towards HER! I tried hard not to admit this attraction I had to myself, but it was useless.

Ann picked me, and my meager belongings up right around three thirty. All the guys were gone from the apartment and that pleased me immensely. I still had a few days left that I had paid for but even though I could have used the money, I doubted they could pay me. I'd also been the recipient of more than one dirty look as the time for my departure grew imminent and it didn't look like I had anything going. So it was nice to leave without any indication that I was going. I knew that they would wonder – but hoped that my unfriendly act might make them think about their own behavior. So, I said goodbye to my old life without a tremor.

We stopped off at a supermarket on the way home – and she told me with a laugh not to spare any expense. I let her pick the wine – though I told her that I had a nice Reisling in mind while I went and checked everything out. Got some lovely lamb shanks for the entrée along with some veggies. Decided against a soup and decided on a plain endive salad and something quick for dessert. Felt somewhat embarrassed as Ann paid for everything – letting out a whistle of surprise when she saw the lamb shanks. "Never had them before," she stated with a small grin. "I trust they're good?"

"I sure HOPE so!" I said, inwardly knowing that she'd love them.

Some roadwork held us up when we were homeward bound so we were a little pressed for time if I wanted to get the dinner on and be ready for the other girls to get home. I got the very first signs of the potential trouble that awaited me almost immediately, though I didn't recognize it as such at that time.

She'd helped me with my suitcases into my bedroom. It was not overly feminine, but certainly not masculine. My eyes were drawn to the pale pink satin cover on the bed – but the thing that made me shiver was the doll – a pretty one – in a long white dress. Beside it were four aprons lying on top of the bed.

"I know that you're not overly keen on the aprons, but me and the other girls talked it out and decided that it's something you should get used to – so put one on if you don't mind?"