

# Avenger



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# AVENGER

**By Jeri Ellen**

The man in the white suit sat down in the lawn chair and set his glass of iced tea beside him on the garage floor. With his hands in his lap he waited patiently.

Shortly the garage door opened to reveal four large men standing behind a much smaller man whose clothing was rumpled and torn. He was visibly shaking as the four men led him over to where the man in the white suit was sitting.

The man in the white suit with an impassive look on his face looked up at the terrified man in front of him. Reaching down for his glass of iced tea he brought it up to his mouth and took a sip, then set the glass back down again.

“Talk,” was the only thing he said.

The terrified man began shaking almost uncontrollably as he spoke.

"I know nothing senior, I swear. Someone has made a mistake. I have done nothing. Please, I have a family. I know nothing of this."

The man in the white suit nodded to his right. The four men dragged the terrified man over to a metal frame. It was similar to a short table but with extensions jutting out from both front and rear legs.

After they had stripped him naked he was forced on the frame chest down. The four men used duct tape around his chest and stomach to secure him there. Next they taped his upper arms and legs to the tables four legs and then his lower arms and legs to the extensions. The man began crying.

"Please senior I beg of you, have mercy on me, I know nothing of this."

His pleas went unheeded as one of the men brought a metal yoke up from under the table and secured it around the man's neck, then used the turnbuckle to force the man's head to remain in position so that he was looking straight ahead. From the workbench another man inserted a metal turnbuckle into the man's mouth and turned it to keep the man's mouth forced open.

Each man picked the table up by one of the leg extensions and carried to the open garage door. They hoisted the frame and slid it into the back of a cargo van. They closed the garage door, got into the van and drove off.

The man in the white suit picked up his glass of iced tea and walked back into the house to the living room. He sat down on the expansive couch and put his glass of iced tea on a coaster of the coffee table in front of him. He picked up the remote and turned on the big screen TV. After taking another sip of his iced tea he settled back and began watching a soccer game.

After an hours' drive the cargo van pulled off the main highway onto a secondary road. A few minutes later it turned off onto a dirt path and then pulled over to the right. The driver turned it around to face the way they had just come. After the driver put the van in park he turned off the ignition.

The four men slid the metal frame out of the van and set it on the ground. From his pocket one of them removed the cap from a small squeeze bottle of honey. As he walked around the imprisoned man he squirted honey along the man's arms, legs and back.

In addition he squirted some into each of the man's ears and nostrils before generously coating the inside of the man's mouth and throat. Bending over he then coated the man's genitals as well. After replacing the cap on the squeeze bottle of honey he tossed it in the back of the van. Each of the four men picked up the frame by one of the four extensions and walked off into the jungle.

The four men returned a few minutes later and got into the van. As they turned back on the main highway one of the men entered a number in his cell phone.

"Yes?" came the answer.

"Everything has been taking care of. The ants will eat well tonight," said the man with the cell phone.

The line went dead. The man replaced the cell phone in his pocket and they continued back to Miami.

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My mother had a difficult time with her first pregnancy. After my sister was born she didn't want to have any more. I came along much later and my birth

cost my mother her life. My older sister Maria became both my mother and sister.

Maria and I had come home from the park on a Saturday. It was my fifth birthday. The neighbor's said that some men had come and taken my father away in a large cargo van. They had been described as four very large, tough looking men. Maria had called the police and they took a report. He did not return that night or the next.

It was very difficult to sit at the dining room table and eat my birthday cake. I kept looking at that empty chair at the head of the table wondering if I was ever going to see my father again. I did not sleep much that night either. I wondered how we were going to live without his income.

There had been some money after my mother's death. Maria and I each got half of her \$10,000.00 life insurance proceeds. My father had refused to take any of it. Friends and well wishers contributed enough money to pay most of her funeral expenses.

By the end of the week Maria told me that he was probably dead. She got power of attorney for his affairs. After she notified his employer that he was missing she got the check for the last hours he worked. All we could do at that point was hope for the best.

That night she explained that we would be moving. She was attending nursing school on a scholarship but her part time job at a box store was not enough to keep up the house payments. We would no longer be able to enjoy the things we were used to as now money was going to be very tight. I said I understood.

It wasn't as if we had a choice. Things happen I guess but I never had expected anything like this. My father had been an honest man and a hard worker so I couldn't figure out what might have happened to him.

The house sold before school started. After paying off the remaining mortgage we had a little cushion. Maria found a very nice two bedroom apartment which was close to both my school and hers.

She was a very organized girl. Each week she made out a schedule along with a list of my chores. I kept the place spotless and always made sure the laundry was done right, ironed, and folded properly. I took my responsibilities seriously.

At the age of five you don't know anything about the world. I knew I was a boy and that some day I was going to be a man. That made it difficult to understand why I liked wearing my mothers' ruffled pink apron and pink latex gloves when I cleaned the apartment and washed the dishes.

I decided I would have to keep these feelings to myself. My sister had enough on her mind between school, work and taking care of me. It was difficult to push these feelings aside but I had no choice so I said nothing and kept things to myself.

Whether it was my mother's difficult pregnancy or the luck of the draw it seemed I was destined to be a short man. While the other kids shot up as I progressed thru school I had not grown as much. It wasn't long before even all of the girls were taller than I was.

This didn't seem to be a problem to me until I reached middle school where some of the older boys decided they would have some fun by pushing me around.

Maria might have seen this coming as she had started me in soccer right away as well as a martial arts class not far from where we lived. Thanks to her a couple of the school's wise guys were sent to the hospital nursing a fractured skull and numerous bruises.

I loved soccer but deplored violence. There was so much around us, mostly a result of the drug trade. I guess that's why Maria had made certain that despite my short stature I would always be able to defend myself.

By my twelfth birthday Maria had graduated and was working full time nights as an RN. I was very proud of her and felt bad that I wasn't able to give her a graduation gift. I was close to tears. When she asked me what was wrong I told her. She started to cry too and then explained that I had taken good care of things around the house and that was the best gift of all.

A week later my father's body was found. There was nothing left of him but bones and teeth. The dentist made the identification. Maria spared me the details. I would not find out until I was eighteen. I couldn't understand why she would keep this from me but I respected her judgment.

After the funeral we had a little more money. Maria paid off most of her student loans and refused to take my share to pay off all of it. She said she was making regular payments and that was enough. I was going to need money for school in a few years.

I continued doing my chores enjoying wearing the pink ruffled apron and pink gloves. I was still confused about the feelings I had. I wondered if other boys had feelings like mine or maybe it was just me. It wasn't something I could talk to a teacher or counselor about. I was even afraid to bring it up with Maria for fear of what she might do or say.

That summer we attended a quinceanera party. When a Hispanic girl turns fifteen she becomes a "lady" At the party I could only think of what a beautiful dress she was wearing. It was pink. The broad skirt of the dress had tiers of ruffles and was flared out with

several petticoats. I would have given anything to have been able to try it on.

It was hard to not keep staring at that dress. I watched the way she walked, holding her skirts up, and moving about easily in her high heel shoes. I envied her or I guess more honestly, the way she looked. Her hair and makeup was perfect as well. I felt heart-sick that I would probably never know what that was like.

Our lives continued though my thoughts were never far from two things: My father's death and whoever was responsible and my inner feelings about wearing girl's clothes. Not just any clothes either. I wanted to wear pretty dresses, makeup and high heel shoes. My class mates and the girls in the neighborhood didn't seem to care about being pretty though most of them did get their ears pierced.

The summer I turned sixteen I got my driver's license and Maria used some of my father's money to buy me a used Corolla. I enjoyed my independence as well as my summer job at a sandwich shop. I would be working full time until school started again. With me working days and Maria working nights I now had more time to myself as well as the means to come and go as I pleased.

I asked a neighborhood girl, Alicia, who was in my class at school if she would do me a small favor. She was not only a good student but a natural born artist as well. I explained what I wanted and she agreed to accompany me to my old neighborhood.

We spoke with the people who had seen the men who had taken my father away. As each one described all four men Alicia began sketching them. She made corrections as we visited others. The last house we stopped at was owned by an elderly Jamaican woman.

She not only gave the best description but gave me a business card with the admonition to go there if I needed "something special."

I felt she had seen right thru this young man's interest in his father's death as a quest for revenge but she didn't say that. We left the house and stopped at a pizza place for supper. Afterwards I took her home and she redid the sketches. This final draft gave me a pretty good picture of the men who had taken my father away

I took them home and set them on my bed. I looked closely at each one, committing them to memory. I knew it would do no good to take them to the police. Besides there was the possibility if they came back to the people who had given me the descriptions they might be in danger. I didn't think that I could trust the police so it would be better to just keep quiet and go about finding them in my own way.

During the balance of the summer I drove around various areas of the city. I looked closely for the large white van, of which there were many of course. I bought gas or lunch at a variety of places hoping to just get a glimpse of one of the men amid the millions of people in the area.

Just before school started I saw one of the men as I drove by a custom car shop. The shop specialized in what was called "low riders". The man got into an expensive sports car and drove off at high speed to the intersection. His tires squealed as he beat the orange light and headed north of the intersection past a closed fast food restaurant building.

I circled the block and parked behind the closed restaurant. The back door was padlocked but I was certain it could be easily broken. It would provide an ex-

cellent vantage point to view the body shop without being seen.

Each week for the next two weeks I returned to the back of the closed restaurant about thirty minutes before the man was due to leave. There was a tanker truck at the intersection at about the same time as he would be leaving. That night I lay awake and developed a plan in my mind. If everything worked according to my plan this man didn't have much longer to live.

It was late on a Sunday night when I pulled in behind the closed restaurant. I cut off the back door's padlock using a large bolt cutters and opened the door. Once inside I took a quick look around using my flashlight. I noticed a corner of the plywood sheet that covered the front window had been broken off. The small space allowed me to see the intersection. This was exactly what I had hoped for.

I went back out the back door and using an identical padlock I had purchased from a box store locked the door again. No one had been around for some time and I doubted if anyone would be coming here as the place had not seen any activity and the realtor's sign out front had its' share of grime and dirt.

That night as I lay in bed I went over the plan in my mind. There was no guarantee of course. I kept focused on what I was about to do because I owed it to my father's memory to avenge his unwarranted and untimely death.

At school I asked a friend who loved to target shoot if I could borrow his pellet gun. He readily agreed. I went to a public range and got familiar with shooting it. It was a small gun which was easy to shoot and pretty accurate too.

The next day at about four thirty in the afternoon I positioned myself at the hole in the plywood waiting for the man to leave the body shop and hoping that nobody would notice my car parked behind the closed restaurant.

Promptly at ten after five I heard the squeal of tires. I put the pellet gun to my shoulder and looked thru the small scope. On the other side of the intersection I could hear the air brakes of the tanker truck that had just left the gas station across the street from the closed restaurant.

I saw the expensive sports car approaching the intersection at high speed. I sighted in on the driver's side front tire. As the tanker truck began making its' turn I squeezed the trigger. The front of the car on the driver's side dipped and the car suddenly pulled left careening on its' side. It slammed into the tanker truck just to the right of the tractor's dual rear wheels. Sliding on its' side it punctured the gas tank and fuel began immediately spilling out.

I ran out the back and padlocked the door again. There was a terrific "whoosh" as the gasoline ignited. I put the pellet gun in the trunk and got in my car. I drove out of the parking lot and headed away from the huge ball of fire at the intersection.

Driving to the house of the boy who had loaned me the gun I was surprised at how calm I was. I had just murdered a man yet I felt no remorse at all. In fact I felt good about what I had just done. At my friends' house I returned the pellet gun to him.

Back home I was still shaking a little as I fed one of the sketches into the paper shredder. One down, three to go I thought to myself. Not counting whoever ordered them to take my father of course. I poured some

of my sister's wine in a chilled glass and drank it right down.

I felt even better as I surfed the web looking at the formal apparel websites. I wished I could jump into one of those sites and spend eternity wearing those beautiful dresses and high heel shoes. If there was such a thing as a heaven for me, then that certainly seemed to be it.

The ten o'clock news had film of the blaze at the intersection. The reporter said few details were available. The driver of the sport's car had apparently lost control of the car and crashed into the tanker truck. He was dead at the scene and his identity was being withheld pending notification of next of kin. The truck driver had escaped from the cab of his truck and was unhurt.

It was several days later when I learned the name of the driver of the sport's car. It was Ramon Sanchez. He had no family and had been employed at a company called South Florida Distributing Co. The next week I drove to the company's address and parked across the street.

I watched the coming and going of trucks and personnel for less than an hour. I didn't want to stay too long because if someone saw me they would know I had no reason for being there as it was located in an industrial area.

School started again and between school, working in the sandwich shop, and soccer practice I had very little time for my so called "project." Periodically I drove back to the distributing company at different times just to see the personnel coming in and out.

I hit pay dirt just before Thanksgiving when I spotted a well dressed man leaving the office who matched one of the remaining sketches. I followed him to a res-

restaurant and noted the time he entered as well as the time he left, and then I went home.

Sometimes I found it hard to keep focused on school. I managed to keep my grades up but this thing about girl's clothing had me in a real conundrum. My feelings seemed to be getting stronger and stronger. I began spending more and more time on the internet looking at formal apparel sites.

Maria sat down next to me after supper one night. She had a serious look on her face. I had just finished doing the supper dishes. As usual I hated taking off that pink apron and gloves. I was engrossed in watching one of those professional models extolling the virtues of a brand of cosmetics.

"Is anything wrong Juan?" asked my sister.

"No, why do you ask," I replied.

"Well lately you seemed to be more and more distant, almost disconnected from me. I know you are busy with school and work plus you seemed to be away from home more than you used to. Is there anything bothering you?"

"No, I am ok. I just have more to do this year I guess."

"OK. Well I was just a little concerned is all."

"Thanks but I'm ok."

She left it at that. After showering that night I looked at my naked body in the full length mirror on the back of my bedroom door. I could see nothing that might have betrayed my feelings to Maria or anyone else for that matter.

As I stood there I imagined myself in lingerie. A pink bra and panties with ruffles on the back was complimented by a pink garter belt and pink seamed stockings. Stepping close to the mirror I saw myself wearing pink blusher and lipstick. Atop my shoulder

length brown hair was a pink bow just above my forehead. I blinked again and the illusion disappeared. I felt like I wanted to cry.

By the end of the month I had made two more trips to that restaurant and found that the man took his supper at that restaurant every Friday at about six pm. Of course I couldn't account for all the other days but it did give me a line on his Friday habits.

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Two weeks later I entered the restaurant about five thirty pm. The hostess took me to a center booth. I ordered a soft drink and then a meal. The man came in about six pm just as my waitress brought my dinner.

The hostess seated him across the aisle from me in a booth along the wall. I brushed back one of the leaves of the row of ferns that separated the center booths and watched him for a minute then let the leaf go back to its' original position. Now I knew I would have to see the Jamaican woman I had met earlier.

I took sip of my soft drink. Pulling the straw out of the plastic cup and examining it closely an idea came into my head. I blew the excess pop out of the straw into my napkin and then replaced it in the plastic cup. I knew now I would have to see the Jamaican woman I had met earlier.

I ate my meal slowly, finished my drink and then left a tip at the table. I checked my watch at the cashier's desk when paid the bill. It was six forty five. He was still seated in the booth. I left the restaurant and went home.

Lying awake that night I began to formulate a plan. I would see the old Jamaican woman after the holi-

days. I had no doubt she could supply me with what I needed.

We are all creatures of habit in a sense. There is nothing wrong with that of course, except in certain instances it can get you killed. Time will tell I mused as I smiled to myself. I closed my eyes and drifted off to sleep.

It was just after the Christmas holidays that Maria sat down with me again. She had that same serious look on her face. Something was up and I wasn't exactly sure what it might be. We had always gotten along well and I had no clue what this was about.

I had been feeling morose that week, having stopped at the mall with some friends to play video games at the arcade I couldn't get my mind off a red taffeta cocktail dress I had seen in the display window at an upscale women's department store. As a result I hadn't played very well and wound up buying pizza and soft drinks for everybody.

"Look you are almost an adult and what you do on your own time is your business. I don't want to pry into it but I know something is wrong and it does concern me. Please tell me what it is. I want to help you if I can."

I took a deep breath. If I told her the truth about my plans to avenge my father's torture and murder I knew she would disapprove and try to keep me from doing so. My only other option was to tell her my deep dark secret of my love for all things feminine and my surpassed desire to be a girl. So I took a deep breath and chose the lesser of two evils.

I began haltingly. Then everything came out in a rush of words ending with the quinceanera party we had attended. When I finished I sat back on the sofa expecting a blistering torrent of words about how I was a

boy who would soon be a man and that I should purge those thoughts of femininity from my mind entirely. Nothing like that happened as her expression softened and she put her arms around me.

"I understand and I will help you," she said softly.

She let me go and smiled at me.

"Part of my training dealt with transgender people. I want you to relax. Give me some time and I will see to it that you get the help you need."

I was off the next Sunday so I traveled to the address the Jamaican woman had given me. It was a small shop in an out of the way area of Miami. I parked a block down the street and sat there for a minute thinking about what I was about to do.

Finally I got out of the car and walked quickly to the little shop. Once inside I stopped in the doorway. It was relatively dark inside so I waited a minute for my eyes to adjust to the dimness. The place had a musty smell and it was jammed with all kinds of knick knacks and assorted stuff.

Most of the overhead lights were burned out. There was only one bright light and that was the one over the counter near the cash register. I walked over to the counter and was about to ring the bell when an elderly woman came thru the beaded curtain at the rear.

"Can I help you?" she inquired in a soft voice as she looked at me with almost dead eyes.

Her leathery face didn't crack a smile. Her bony hands trembled as she placed them on the counter in front of her. Her red nail polish seemed oddly out of place on this very old woman.

I said the name of the woman from my old neighborhood and then described the item I needed. She nodded her head and without expression.

“Four hundred dollars, come back in a week,” she said.

I took the cash out of my pocket and counted it out in front of her. I had no idea what something like this was going to cost so I had brought most of my savings with me.

With one sweep of her bony fingers my four hundred dollars disappeared. She turned around and walked back thru the beaded curtain. I noticed a very old picture to one side of the curtain but I wasn't going to hang around to ask her about it.

I left the shop and walked quickly back to the car. I wasn't sure if I was going to get what I needed or if I had just been had for four hundred dollars. I started the car with mixed feelings and then drove back home. In a sense I guess I thought I had nothing to loose if I was going to be successful at avenging my father's murder.

That evening after we finished supper and I had done the dishes Maria called me into her bedroom. I had just hung up my pink apron and wondered what she wanted. I had felt guilty in a way that I had poured my heart out to her.

When I walked into her bedroom her quinceanera dress was on the bed and her high heel shoes were on the floor. She smiled as she held up the dress.

“Take off your pants and shirt let's see how you look in a dress.”

I hesitated as my heart began beating wildly. I unbuckled my belt and slid my pants down. I stepped out of them and pulled off my polo shirt. After placing them both on the chair I stepped into the dress. She zipped me up as I began feeling very giddy.

She was taller than I was and a bit broader in the shoulders so the dress sort of hung on me. She let the

front of the dress hang down. She held up one of her old bras and helped me put it on. Placing a cotton sock in each cup she adjusted the straps and then had me pull the dress back up. After zipping me up she had me walk over to the full length mirror on the back of her bedroom door.

As I stood there staring at my reflection in the mirror I felt absolutely ecstatic. It would be more than honest to say I not only felt ecstatic but for the first time in my life I felt normal. I mean I felt like I BELONGED in a dress.

“Step over here and try on the shoes,” said Maria.

I followed her back over to the bed. I stepped into the pink high heel pumps. They were a little big so I took them off and Maria shoved some tissues in the toes. When I put them back on they fit better and I started walking around the room.

“No, you are walking like a boy in high heels not a girl. Now watch me.”

I watched her walk. I changed my gait and when I reached the end of the room I turned around. Walking back to her I felt absolutely wonderful. I was so happy that she had allowed me to do this and was willing to help me even though I am sure she, like other women, had misgivings about this sort of thing.

“Perfect,” Maria said with a smile. She picked up my pants and shirt from the chair and tossed them on the bed. “Now walk over here to the chair, smooth the back of the dress with your hand, and sit down.”

I followed her instructions and after I was seated I crossed my legs like I had seen girls do. Maria giggled.

“That’s pretty good. I can see you will have no trouble behaving like a lady.”

She walked over to her vanity and picked up a pink lipstick. After removing the cap and turning up the base she stood over me.

“Open your mouth wide please,” she asked.

When I did so she pressed the tube of makeup on my lips and moved it around, then pushed the tube once on each cheek.

“Press you lips together,” she ordered as she used a single finger to smooth the makeup over my cheeks for a “blush” look.

“Now go back over to the mirror and look at yourself. Remember to smooth out the skirt of your dress when you stand up and before you begin walking.”

Once again I followed her instructions. In front of the mirror I couldn't believe the image I was seeing. If I had shoulder length hair you would easily mistake me for a girl. I not only FELT pretty I WAS pretty. I felt like a real girl, the girl I wanted to be. More importantly I guess the girl I felt I should be or to be more correctly the girl I should have been.

“Let's go out to the living room and you can practice some more.”

She followed me out the door as I walked in my corrected feminine manner. I began walking around the small living and dining room, holding my skirts up in the proper way as well as alternately sitting down and getting up again in lady like fashion.

It was the most enjoyable time I had ever spent. What was more important to me I guess was that I now knew that this was what I was supposed to be and how I was supposed to behave.

“I think that is enough for today,” said Maria.

I followed her back to the bedroom where she helped me undress and remove the makeup. I felt sad that I had to take it all off. When I put my pants and

polo shirt back on they didn't feel right. I knew then that I didn't belong in pants I belonged in a dress or skirt and high heel shoes.

Using a tape she measured my skull and neck circumference, my bust, waist and hips, my sleeve length, the width of my palm as well as the length and width of my feet. After jotting these numbers down on a clipboard she smiled at me again.

"Just for future reference," she giggled.

The next week when I returned to the little shop the old woman placed a small plastic container in front of me. Inside the little container was a dart about an inch long. The tip of the dart had been stained red.

"Two minutes is all it takes," she said and then she disappeared behind the beaded curtain.

I took another look at the picture next to the beaded curtain before I left. It appeared to be a very old drawing, not a photograph. It had struck a cord with me as I recalled having seen it somewhere before. I just couldn't place where.

Back home I placed the plastic container in my dresser drawer under some socks. It struck me that the same picture had been in the home of the Jamaican woman I had visited with my artist friend. At the time it had meant nothing to either one of us.

With school starting up again my time was severely limited. I managed to go to the restaurant only once in the month of January. I was anxious about what I had planned to do but I also knew that haste makes waste or in this case mistakes and I couldn't afford to make any of those.

Maria told me not to make any plans for the last Sunday in January. I wondered what she had up her sleeve but of course I agreed. I was sure it had some-

thing to do with my cross dressing. I hadn't been able to wear that dress and high heel pumps for some time.

Sunday after lunch I did the dishes and she took me into her bedroom. There was a variety of clothes on the bed and several pairs of shoes on the floor.

"Several of the thrift stores had their after holiday sales so I took advantage of them to get you some girl clothes. It will be a modest wardrobe to start with but we can always add to it later."

I took off my clothes and stood before her in my briefs and t-shirt. She helped me with the stuffed bra again. I tried on several skirts and blouses as well as a half dozen pair of women's flat shoes and one pair of four inch wedgies. From the foam head on her closet shelf she removed a brown, shoulder length wig and put it on my head, then fastened a small pink bow to the front of it just above the bangs.

"Sit at the vanity please," she said.

I took my place in front of the mirror as she set a small black purse down in front of me. She opened it and took out a pink lipstick and a cake of pink blusher.

"This time do your makeup yourself, you need the practice."

My heart beat faster and my hands shook a little as I picked up the tube of pink lipstick. After applying the makeup I pressed my lips together. I replaced the lipstick in the purse then I opened the blusher case and picked up the small brush.

"Start at the center of your cheeks and brush the powder in circles," she instructed.

I did as she told me and then replaced the items in the purse.



"Perfect. Now slip the purse over your arm and come with me."

"Where are we going?" I asked with a touch of fear in my voice.

"To give you some more practice," she said with a giggle.

I followed her out of the bedroom but stopped when she reached the front door.

"I can't go outside," I whined.

"Why not?," she asked me.

"Well walking around the house is one thing but going out in public, I mean I don't know."

"So when are you going to go out? Better to start right now and get used to being in girl's clothes and makeup so you can be seen by the general public who, because you can pass so easily, probably won't look at you twice when they see you."

I thought about what she said. I swallowed hard and followed her out the door to the driveway where her car was parked.

"Remember to smooth your skirt with one hand as you sit down and then swing your legs in, just like a girl would do," she admonished with a giggle.

I did so and fastened my seatbelt as she started the car. Looking over at me she smiled and placed one hand on my left knee.

"You look petrified. Relax and be yourself. Just be the girl you were always meant to be."

She was right. I sat back as she put the car in gear and backed out of the driveway. In about thirty minutes we arrived at a local mall. As she pulled into a parking place she turned to me.

"Now remember to relax. Walk like I taught you. We are just two girls out to do some shopping. For to-

day you will be my niece Juanita. If you see anybody you know just ignore them. Now let's go."

We got out of the car. I walked along side of her in my girlish gait. Inside the mall we stopped in several stores to look at women's clothing. When a clerk approached us Maria told them we were just looking. None of them seemed to notice anything different about me. Apparently I was accepted as a female no matter where we went.

I gained more confidence as we walked the length of the mall. At the end of the mall we stopped in front of the window of one of the two anchor stores to look at a cocktail dress in the window. I wanted more than anything to go inside the store and try it on but for now I could only look and wish.

On the way back we stopped at the café court and had a soft drink. The mall had gotten busier. More and more people were walking around us. Maria had been right. No one, either the sales people or the general public, had paid any attention to me. I was just another female customer. I felt much more relaxed as we sipped our drinks. When we finished Maria put her hand out as I was about to get up.

"Take out your cosmetics and touch up your makeup. It's good for you to do it in full view of the general public. It's a perfectly feminine gesture that you see women do all the time and I want you to get used to doing it as it should become a natural part of you."

I did as she asked me to and she did her own as well. She had been right again of course. No one was paying any particular attention to either one of us. We got up and walked back to the car.

When we arrived back home we went straight to her bedroom where she helped me remove my

makeup. She put the wig back on its' foam head as I undressed and put my male clothes back on again. Once more my male clothing felt out of place, like I didn't belong in them.

It was getting harder and harder to do. I knew at some point this vacillating back and forth was going to be a problem but for now it was something I was just going to have to put up with. After I reimbursed Maria for the wig and wardrobe we ate supper.

School and work dragged on. I had made only one trip to the restaurant but the man I had been watching had always arrived right on time and been taken to his usual booth. I felt my next trip was going to be my last. This too was beginning to take its' toll on me.

Valentines' day was especially joyous. Maria bought me a pink bra and panty set. The bra had white lace trim around the cups and had front hooks. With socks in the cups she helped me adjust the straps. The nylon tricot panties had white leg and waist elastic. Along the back were four rows of white ruffles.

I felt deliciously feminine when I wore them. After school or work I would shower and wear them under a skirt and blouse. On my days off I would wear them all day with makeup. Maria and I would visit various malls and eat lunch in the café court.

I had become quite adept at behaving in my feminine persona. I had my first appointment with a transgender specialist at the end of the month. I wanted to go en femme but Maria said no. Of course I was apprehensive about talking to someone other than Maria about this, even if it was in the confidence of a therapist's office.

Dr. Rosita Ortega and I had a very good talk. I made another appointment for the next month. She seemed to be a compassionate person who, like Maria, was

genuinely interested in helping someone like me. In a way I guess it helped relax me. In fact Maria had commented about how I had changed for the better in the short time since I had first talked to her about my problem.

In April Maria would be gone for a week to a nursing convention in Tallahassee. I saw this as the best chance I would have to take care of number two. As much as I deplored what I was doing I felt it was necessary to avenge my father's death though there would be no way to clear his name since I couldn't prove he hadn't done anything wrong.

After Maria left I bought a blonde wig, a red sleeveless blouse, a black leather mini skirt, a pair of black leather stiletto heel pumps, a large purse and a pair of wild pink sunglasses. Trying on this outfit at home in front of the mirror I could see I was definitely going to attract attention.

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The next Friday I got dressed in my outfit and walked quickly to my car. I didn't want any of the neighbors to see me in this flashy outfit. In the large purse's coin compartment was the plastic tube containing the lethal dart.

I had saved a larger straw from a malted milkshake I had ordered at the café court the week before. I had rinsed it out and made sure it was completely dry inside and out. The normal soda straw I would get with my drink was much smaller in diameter than the one used for milk shakes and I was afraid the dart would not fit well in it or fly well once I blew the dart out.

My heart was beating like crazy as I parked just a block down the street from the restaurant. At four

thirty I took a deep breath and got out of the car. I walked slowly in a girly manner to the restaurant and went inside.

I took a booth in the center, opposite where this man usually sat. I was hoping that being a creature of habit that he was he too would want the same booth. I tried to remain calm as the waitress brought me my soft drink and took my order.

Eating slowly I couldn't wait for him to show up and I could get this over with. It was just after five when he walked in and sat down in the booth on the other side of the aisle from me. I had just finished my meal and ordered a refill of my soda.

I put my purse on the right side of the table and opened it up. I took a sip of my soft drink and removed my makeup items. I looked around and brushed the leaf to my right aside to see the man talking to the waitress. I let go of the leaf and applied fresh makeup.

Looking around again I replaced the makeup items in my purse and removed the larger straw and the small plastic container. I took out the dart and slipped it in the large straw. After placing the small container back in my purse I took another drink of my soda. The coast seemed to be clear.

After leaving a tip on the table took a last sip of my soft drink. I brushed the leaf aside with my left hand and put the larger straw to my lips with the other. I had a clear shot of the man as he studied the menu. I blew hard and quickly let go of the leaf as I placed the straw back in my purse.

I got up quickly and walked to the ladies room. I went inside one of the dividers and closed the door. I opened my purse and took out the brown wig to replace the blonde one I was wearing. I reversed the red blouse which was black on the other side. I slipped out

of the black mini skirt, reversed it to show the red side and put it back on. I walked quickly back out to the cashier and paid my bill. I caught a glance of the man slumped over the table but he hadn't caught the attention of anyone yet.

Walking out the door I wanted to run but instead I continue to walk in a lady like manner. I got in my car and fastened my seatbelt. I had just pulled into traffic when I heard sirens' approaching. I kept on driving until I got home.

Despite the fact that I had just killed a man I found myself to be quite calm and relaxed. I drank a full glass of my sisters' wine and then refilled it. After changing clothes and putting the wigs on their respective foam heads I stuffed my "flashy" costume in a brown bag and put it in the back of my closet. I took off my makeup and put on a plain blouse and skirt.

I retrieved the glass of wine from the kitchen and went into the living room to watch the news. Maria would be back tomorrow. As much as I enjoyed having the place to myself for a week it would be nice to have her back again. I washed out my glass and put it back in the refrigerator.

I felt pretty good all things considered. Two down and two to go plus whoever was responsible for ordering my father's torture and death. I knew I had my work cut out for me. I also knew that I had been very careful and so far could think of nothing that would connect me to the deaths of the first two men.

Maria returned a bit exhausted from the convention looking a bit exhausted. When I asked how it was she just shook her head.

"Much ado about nothing," she replied.

The only thing on the news had been that a man had collapsed at a restaurant. I watched the obituaries and

found the name of Roberto Gonzales. The man had no family but had been employed by South Florida Distributing Co. So far that business had been the only connection between the two men and my fathers' abduction and death.

On a hunch I parked near the funeral home on the day of the funeral. I recognized the two pall bearers in front as the other two men that matched the sketches at home. The next step was to find out more about these two men and in addition this would hopefully lead me to the man behind my fathers' murder.

After the procession went to the cemetery I walked to the funeral home. I acted out of breath and told the receptionist I was from out of town. She explained the hearse and procession had just left. I filled out a card and put a dollar in the envelope then signed a false name. She gave me a booklet from the service and directions to the cemetery.

Sitting in the car I looked at the names of the six pallbearers. Two of them had the same last name. When I got home I checked the phone book first but none of the six were listed. In the age of cell phones I guess it was a fool's errand anyway. Using the internet I couldn't come up with anything either. For awhile anyway the rest of my "project" would be put on hold.

My second and third meetings with Dr. Ortega were very productive. She started me on female hormones. I would be getting both shots and pills. When I asked about castration she informed me that the hormone blockers would work for awhile but I should wait until I was eighteen.

That night after my shower I stood in front of my full length mirror and with both hands pushed up under my nipples. I tried to imagine what it would be like to have breasts. I wondered what it would feel like to

have their weight in my bra instead of a rolled up cotton sock.

I read a considerable amount of information off the internet about inter sexed and transgender children. It was helpful to a degree I guess but of course information about anything doesn't make the problem go away or help you solve it.

Over the next several months I kept checking the area around my nipples but the hormones didn't seem to have much effect. When I turned eighteen I took some time off from work and Dr. Ortega castrated me.

As much as I would had loved to have children of my own at a later date I was concerned about whatever was in my genes that had given me this "condition" would not be passed on to the next or any future generation.

I healed up quickly and was quite happy about the fact that my empty scrotum would no longer provide the testosterone that once had been coursing thru my body. I had stopped taking the hormone blockers and now only received a monthly shot. I was no longer feeling anxious about my "condition" and at least according to Maria I had become more relaxed and care-free.

The summer passed quickly. I could see a slight change in my skin tone but no other differences. I decided not to continue playing soccer as I was concerned about showering afterward and the other guys noticing the changes that would eventually become more pronounced though there had yet to be a noticeable "rise" in my nipple area. In addition I began electrolysis treatments.

By October I finally had found time to cruise around some more. I had now confined my search to the areas around South Florida Distributing. I failed to

see either of the two men until one Saturday evening just at dark. I had left the sandwich shop at seven and parked near the company to wait an hour or so.

I couldn't believe my luck as I saw the two men get into a black Cadillac and drive off at high speed. I followed them at a distance and saw them pull to the curb about a mile or so down the road. They had parked in front of a jiggle joint and were just getting out of their car as I drove past them.

Driving two more blocks I pulled over and parked. I walked back to the club and went inside. A very large man asked me for an ID. I showed him my driver's license and he waved me in. I guess I was surprised that I looked young enough to be carded. Especially in a place like this where the drinks were over priced and the girl's dancing with a pole were working for tips.

I bought a drink and glanced around the room but didn't see the two men. I had another beer. One of the girls began wiggling in front of me so I reached up and stuffed a ten dollar bill in her garter. She smiled as she continued to gyrate.

The two men came out of the back room and walked past me. I waited a few minutes until they had left. I held up another ten and as I slipped it in her garter I smiled at her.

"Do you know those two men and do they come here often?" I asked.

Her face suddenly froze as she shook her head. After a few more gyrations she moved away. I finished my beer and left the night club. The black Cadillac was gone as I walked quickly back to my car. I looked behind me twice to see if anyone had come out of the club to watch me but none did.

That night at home I looked over the sketches of the two men. I now knew they had some connection to the

jiggle joint. Since they weren't at the bar when I walked in and had come out of the office I could only assume that they knew the manager or owner or perhaps were part owners of the club. Judging by the terrified look on the dancer's face when I asked her about them they were some tough hombres.

It was hard getting to sleep that night. Even in the dim light of the club I could see their grim faces as they left. I wondered how I was going to find the means and the opportunity to complete the next step in my plan to avenge my father's murder. Finally I dozed off to sleep.

When I opened my eyes I saw the two men standing against a concrete wall. I had an AK-47 in my hands and heard myself say "This is for my father" as I squeezed the trigger. I watched as the bodies twitched and jerked from the impact of the high velocity bullets. When the last round was fired I could hear an alarm bell ringing in place of the sound of gunshots. I woke up, soaked with sweat and shut off my alarm clock.

I went into the bathroom and washed. Putting my sweat soaked clothes over the chair I got dressed and went into the kitchen to make breakfast. Maria wasn't home yet from her night shift. I was still a bit shaken over the dream. It had been a very real dream right down to the sound of the gun and the jerking, blood spattered bodies as they crumpled in front of me.

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To be honest if that opportunity had presented itself I wasn't sure if I could do what I had done in my dream. But then again I had managed to do it twice already in the name of my father's death and I guess there was no point in mulling over doing it again. The

only matter now at hand was how, where, and when I was going to do it.

School seemed to drag on. My visits to Dr. Ortega were a welcome spot on my calendar. I enjoyed my en femme shopping trips with Maria. I had begun to feel more than just relaxed. I felt freer, like some restricting burden had been lifted from my shoulders.

Without saying anything to Maria I bought a couple of sexy, girlie outfits and matching high heel shoes. I would go en femme to the club to ask for a job as a dancer. I felt by getting into the club I could get more of a line on the two men as well as possibly getting a lead on the man who had ordered my fathers' murder. I knew it was a long shot but it was a chance I was prepared to take.

The police hadn't had much to go on to begin with and of course we hadn't heard from them since they had opened the investigation. I knew they had their hands full with abductions and murders being a relatively common occurrence now a days.

I took my flashy outfit out of the back of the closet and put it on to go to the club. I walked in and asked to see the manager or owner about dancing there. I was surprised to see a large Hispanic woman come out of the office and introduce herself as Carmen Lorenza.

She invited me over to a table and we sat down. I gave her a sob story about a bad boyfriend and having no money for school just yet. Whether or not she bought was hard to say as I had no doubt she probably had heard all kinds of stories from the girls who come in to a place like this.

After she went over everything I agreed to the terms. I followed her back to her office and she wrote up a schedule for me to work. We went into the dressing room and she gave me a locker number.