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MY AMERICAN COUSIN

By Bea

I can't fault my mother, or anyone else for my childhood. Can't blame my father, he was dead. As far as I can tell, I was spoiled more than anything else. Things just seemed to happen of their own volition. Human nature just taking over I guess – although Sandra may have been the catalyst that set everything in motion.

To say that I grew up as the "Lord of the Manor" is an absolute lie – I wasn't the lord of anything.

We were quite well off though and to the best of my recollection I wanted for nothing. Lived in a rather large house in a in Scotland, where I ruled the roost over my mother, Melanie her maid/companion, and Elsie the cook. I was a fairly studious boy so at times we had various lady tutors during the school sessions – our house was too far from anything for me to attend the local schools. Also, my mother believed that they were probably too 'rough' for me. So I led a fairly lonely existence, broken in the summer now and then by summer visitors who lived in other parts of the United Kingdom, but would reside close by for a month or two.

As my mother also felt that having an adult male about the house might look improper - plus as she never really cared too much for the male sex, she would have some local male contractors come in and do some heavy work around our gardens and suchlike only when it was absolutely needed. Otherwise, I was the sole representative of that gender around the house except when some nasty work needed doing. I remember watching the local artisans at work though – and shuddering. In Scotland, the weather can be inclement on a regular basis and I can still see myself peering from behind curtains in the dry warmth of our house as men toiled mightily in the dirt and rain to unclog a major sewer or something else equally nasty. It makes sense, therefore, to think that doing male work did NOT appeal to me. Maybe THAT was an example of why I grew up the way I did.

Looking back, I see that I said that I ruled the roost. This is probably a lie of sorts. I was *tolerated* is probably more of the truth. Certainly, I was the only male except for the occasional workers I just mentioned, but apart from Elsie? The rest of the household seemed to believe that the male sex was an unfortunate appendage to the human race. Every so often I'd probably do something wrong or stupid – just as the child of either sex will do - but all the women would invariably sigh, look at each other, then exclaim. "Ah men! What can you do?" I therefore had an imbued feeling that I suffered from some sort of unfortunate malady! (Not to be trusted perhaps?)

Yes, there were a few indications that I didn't fit exactly into that particular mold. Elsie was broad and bustling and proud of the fact that she had a 'Good Scot's tongue in her heid!' Once or twice she'd tell me to hold my wrists firmer or to watch how I held my arms when I ran or threw things, but I never quite understood what she was getting at. Mother didn't like television at all and liked to knit in the evenings. I sensed from the way the Elsie sniffed - and Melanie grinned quietly – that there was something a little 'off' with me learning to knit as well, but I found it an excellent break from reading or working on my stamps and a pleasant way of passing a warm night in the study with the wind and rain beating on the windows. I distinctly remember one rather attractive tutor I had for a short time. I heard her jokingly refer to me - to my mother of all people – as his ladyship! She was gone very quickly. I had actually liked her quite a lot and asked mummy where my tutor had gone, but she just looked at me stonily and I didn't press the issue.

So, my childhood passed quietly and I wandered into my teens. If sexuality played a part? I honestly have no remembrance of it. Of course I masturbated, but from veiled inferences that mummy made, I felt it to be shameful some how. It didn't *stop* me, but I don't think that I was normal in that regard also. Another thing makes me think now. Makes me wonder.

For the life of me, I don't remember what I fantasized about – if anything. All I can remember is a sort of pleasurable rubbing for a while then, after a few humiliations, grabbing myself to stop from making a mess, running for the bathroom and cleaning myself up later – with my eyes feeling awfully heavy.

So sexually, I was an immature nitwit, when Dorothy arrived at a neighboring farm. She was somewhat larger than me, a sultry, blonde with bored eyes who seemed to feel that I should be captivated by her. I wasn't. I think she felt that I should fall over myself when she'd hint at giving me a kiss – or strangely? Talk about playing 'doctor' or some such rubbish.

But we tolerated each other I suppose – boredom being a major component that drew us together. She had TV at her place and I saw it now and then, but the reception on the Scottish moors leaves a lot to be desired. On top of that, all she wanted to do was watch soppy reruns of what passes for soap operas and get all dreamy eyed and talk about so and so being SUCH a dreamboat. That kind of stuff. Drove me absolutely out of my mind!

It was probably the third time that Dorothy had visited us. She hadn't come in successive years by as she being slightly older than me - but I remember one night being told that she and her mother were back. I was glad in some ways, stupefied in others. Wondered what I'd find to do with her THIS year. The first day that we got together didn't do anything to dispel my thoughts of boredom and if her obvious displeasure and rolling of the eyes didn't indicate what she thought of me, I don't know. But we went walking anyway – about the only relaxation that the surrounding countryside offered. So any dreams I'd had about that summer being different disappeared quickly. But then, that very night, mummy blinked at me over her knitting.

"Oh Alan dear? I may have done something unforgivable. To be honest, I've absolutely no idea why I did. Though I must admit that I thought you'd get the benefit. Now? I've no idea of what I was thinking of." She shook her head. "Honestly! I must be getting old or something."

I may have only been a teen and an idiot in the sexual way of the world, but that didn't make me an idiot altogether. I put my own knitting in my lap for a moment.

"Old? Don't be silly mummy! Now *what* have you been up to?"

She giggled a little at my reassurance and took a sip of her tea. "I don't have ANY idea of what got into me – but I've offered this place to Sandra as a place to live for a while – she's an American cousin of yours *and* her companion – Alicia I think her name is. I'm really sorry. Maybe I should have asked you, but I was thinking that you'd enjoy the company."

I was shocked, though somewhat excited. Naturally, I didn't want to show this so had to put on a little of an act. I laughed. "Good GRIEF mummy! Don't you think I have enough women to contend with around here as it is?" Then a new thought struck me. "Age, mommy?"

She shrugged. "Oh grief! I never thought to ask! But my feeling is that Sandra and her friend are only coming here because they've spent most of their money. From that? Not much I agree, but I have the strongest feeling that they're both quite young. Early twenties perhaps?" "Well?" I ruminated. "At least they're not some old fuddy-duddy's. Looked at her pointedly. "Like SOME people seem to think they are!"

She knew I was kidding and was flattered enough that she preened a little. "No. Now that I think on it, I spoke to Sandra. Had the feeling that she was very aggressive. Reminded me more of my mother – a REAL tartar - than of her own mother who was rather sweet."

"That your cousin that run off with the American soldier?"

"The very same. A nice girl – but it was a long time ago and I'm afraid we haven't been in contact much. Never did see eye to eye."

"How come I've never heard of her before? Some scandal that I've never heard about?"

"None of your business!" She added tartly, but with a smile. "Just one of those silly family squabbles. High time it was mended – so I want you to show your cousin complete hospitality!" She smiled gently. "Not that you wouldn't of course. You're turning into the perfect gentleman, Alan."

"But if she's the daughter of your cousin? What does that make the relationship between her and I?"

"Oh, I don't KNOW!" Mother said, sounding a little cross. "I was never into this genealogy muck – so let's just call her your cousin. Okay?"

I shrugged. It was no skin off my back.

Sandra and Alicia arrived about two days later in the afternoon without any further warning – not something that my mummy would normally suffer, though it dawned on me later that I never heard a complaint cross her lips. Sandra won her heart immediately and completely - as my first exposure to her should have warned me.

I had just returned from unsuccessfully hunting for bird eggs when a venerable Rolls Royce drove into the broad driveway and parked in front of the house. From one or two encounters, I knew it to be the only taxi within miles, operating from the only village where the train stopped. Angus, was the driver – a cantankerous old Scot, humorless beyond question. Tolerated simply because he was the only one with a taxi – a monopoly of sorts.

I wasn't expecting a passenger to exit from beside the driver, but a red haired girl did so – with what seemed excessive energy – smiling as she looked around her with a sort of awed acceptance and making some sort of humorous remark into Angus as she did so.

Then, simultaneously, a girl let herself out of the passenger side and Angus slowly got out from the driver position. She looked quite nice, I thought. Tired, but nice. The thing that took my intention immediately was the fact that Angus was SMILING! Then he actually laughed at something the red haired girl said.

Then she bounded to the back of the car and without waiting for Angus, opened it up and started hauling a prodigious amount of battered suitcases onto the ground. Quickly unloaded the car before either of her companions did a thing. Then she stunned me even more! I heard her low voice with the strange accent ask Angus. "How much?"

"Ach weel?" he said, suddenly sober. "I think that Thirty five pound should cover it!" She straightened up and I got my first experience of her glare. "Angus! Do you think I'm MADE of money? You're being RIDICULOUS – and you know it! If I paid you that much you'd lose all respect for me. Now stop joking around and tell me how much!"

To my amazement he tried to look astounded, but suddenly grinned. "Well lass? Seeing it's you. How's about thirty?"

She cocked her head. "Twenty five?"

"Ach then. Alright!" He actually GIGGLED! Then took the money from Alicia! Then he got into the car and took off – actually waving goodbye – and never saying a word to me or Alicia the whole time.

I moved towards them, just as mother and Melanie came out from the front door and down the steps. "Yo!" Sandra yowled and bounded up the stairs to meet mummy. "Hi auntie!" she yowled – and *embraced* my mummy! I think that Melanie and I actually gaped as this happened, but when mummy was released she actually seemed pleased! This was NOT her usual behavior.

Then the three of them worked their way back down the stairs as introductions were made all around. Finally, it was my turn. A pair of hazel searchlights turned towards me. "Aha! You must be Alan!" Sandra approached me with her hand outstretched.

I smiled and in the deepest possible voice I could manage, said, as I held my own hand out. "Hi there Sandra! What a pleasure!"

Nearly fainted as my grip crumpled beneath hers. My goodness – she was strong! I think that she was just as surprised as I – expected a much more masculine grip from me – possibly from that deep voice? But she was nice enough to immediately cut back on the force of her grip without any change of facial expression.

She gave off such vitality that I was surprised to see that we were extremely close in size. Inwardly, I knew that where she was fit and rangy, I was soft and somewhat flabby. I pulled in my stomach muscles as well as I could but can't say that I felt any better. Then I had to meet Alicia, and it wasn't so bad.

Again ,she was sizes with me, but more to my build, certainly not muscular in any way. Blonde, round faced, with pale blue eyes. A MUCH softer grip as we met. A sweet smile. "Sandra's a little pushy." She whispered, "but don't let it put you off her, she's a real sweetheart - honestly!" I believe you." I whispered back.

"Alan? Be a dear and help those young things in with their luggage, will you?" Mummy spoke to me then addressed the newcomers. Melanie will show you to your rooms – I hope that you'll forgive me. I have a phone call I need to make." Then she paused. "You *look* very fresh, both of you. We're having a lady and her daughter over for dinner tonight. She and Alan are great pals." (I wondered for a second who she could have been talking about, then realized with a grin that it was Dorothy and her mother that she had to be referring to.) "Anyway?" She continued. "You can join us for dinner if you wish – or I can have a tray sent up to your rooms if you'd rather go to bed early?"

Sandra grinned. "Aunt? It sounds like a FREE meal and though Alicia here is too nicely mannered to say it? I'm starving! You don't need to make any fuss over us. If you don't mind? We'll be at dinner with bells on. What time is best?" "Seven for a drop of wine?" Mummy asked. Then. "You ARE old enough?"

"Of COURSE!" Sandra laughed, then added. "Well – we're not REALLY – but I promise that we'll both behave! Shy and ladylike!"

"Wonderful!" Mummy said. "I have my doubts as to how shy you are Sandra – but love convivial company – and you have no intention of driving anywhere tonight – correct?"

"Absolutely not!" Sandra laughed.

"Right then." Mummy said and disappeared back into the house. Just from her back and walk, I could tell that she was delighted by our new guest.

"Right then!" Sandra said, taking charge immediately. "Let's get this stuff up immediately then, shall we? I'm BURSTING for a shower! If you'll take one of those big cases Alan? Alicia can take that small one."

Melanie and I started for the group of cases together, but Sandra smiled at her. "No offense dear – but we're all younger than you and can manage. If you'll lead the way?"

"Melanie smiled and headed up the stairs. I took the handle of one case, Alicia took a smaller one – and Sandra took two big ones. I was going to protest this – then I felt the weight of the one I had picked. Knew I was in trouble with just this one. Red faced with embarrassment – and exertion – I followed the women into the house, then up the inside stairs. With dismay, I saw them all disappear ahead of me. Puffing and panting, rested the bottom of the case on the stairs for a short rest.

The thought of Sandra coming back and taking the case was bad enough – but what happened was even

WORSE! *Alicia* came from around a bend and appeared at the top of the stairs. "Heavy buggers, aren't they?" She asked, coming down the stairs towards me.

"Whew! That's heavy!" I said, agreeing – but to my horror, she simply bumped me aside and took the handle of the case in her own hands, and started up the stairs. "You're just not used to them!" She made excuse for me, seeing my face. "We've hauled those cases all over Europe. Don't be upset!"

"Oh!" Was all I managed in protest, my masculine pride hurt, but I was too late to do anything. By the time I'd recovered, she was on the hallway at the top of the stairs, leaving me no choice but to trail behind her into the rooms that had been assigned to them, where Melanie and Sandra were standing awaiting us – I was SO embarrassed entering the room empty handed! This wasn't helped in the slightest when Sandra came to me and put an arm around my shoulder. "Don't be embarrassed Alan. Alicia's a lot stronger than she looks. I should have known better than ask you to carry a big heavy case like that."

I was speechless, but then she continued. "Actually Alan. I've a BIG favor to ask you. Do you mind?"

"Of course not! Anything!" I managed gallantly.

"Like I said? I'm starving and . ."

"Want me to get you and Alicia something? I'd be only to glad to ask Elsie." I broke in.

"That'd be lovely." She answered, but if you wouldn't mind? Melanie has offered to show me a bit more of the house and I'd really like to meet Elsie and see if I can bum something to eat from her."

"Oh. That's fine." I said, but what's this favor you want?"

"She smiled kindly at me. "Would you be a real dear and help Alicia unpack the cases? It's not my favorite thing to do and I'd dodge it if I can – yet at the same time, I'd really like to give my clothes a chance to get hung up as soon as I can. Get the creases out – you know?"

It was rather deflating to be asked to do the kind of thing that Melanie would do for mummy, but I couldn't see a way out of it now. I tried to escape it though. "I'm kind of clumsy." I said. "Not sure I could . . ."

"I don't believe that!" She laughed. "And anyway? Alice will help you out if you have any questions."

"Okay then." I said, trying not to appear too unwilling.

"Perfect!" She beamed. "Come on Melanie before he changes his mind!"

With that, the two of them left the room, leaving Alicia and I staring at each other.

"She's rotten!" Alicia laughed. "Absolutely hates to pack or unpack and will do just about anything to get out of it." She smiled sympathetically. "I think you just got conned Alan." She shrugged. "Always trying to get me to do hers. I've learned to tell her NO! Dislike packing or unpacking myself, but I suppose that we may as well get on with it – right?"

"I guess so." I said unwillingly.

I could NOT believe the filmy, feminine, garments that were in Sandra's suitcase. I mean, it was embarrassing to take out, then shake, then refold and pack intimate ladies undergarments in a chest of drawers, but that's what Alicia swore was required. Finally I just had to speak. "Those don't really look like they belong to Sandra. Are you sure that they're hers?"

"Oh, *that* stuff?" Alicia laughed. "They're hers alright. It's just her mum. Bound and determined that Sandra's gonna be a proper girl – all dainty and pretty."

"She's certainly not! Even I can see that!" I laughed.

"Her mom worked hard at putting both of us on this trip and bought Sandra a whole mess of wardrobe. Sandy just didn't have the heart to say she didn't want it, so we've lugged it all over the world. I know that Sandy's a bit worried about taking a bunch of stuff that's never been used back home – but she'll think of something. I'm *sure* of that."

"Sure of *what*?" A mumbled voice came from the door. I turned around, and it was Sandra with a plate of cold chicken and a half glass of milk in her hands, and a mouthful of chicken that made her mumble.

"FOOD!" Alicia gushed. "Can I have some?"

"Course! Brought you some – though you'll have to share the milk. Elsie offered me a tray, but I didn't want to put her to any trouble." She smiled at me. "That Elsie! A real character – and a doll to boot!"

"A doll?" I laughed. "Elsie?"

"Had no problem looking something for us to eat after I explained how we were two starved children! A lovely woman." She took another munch of her chicken and held the plate out to Alicia, who promptly grabbed a piece.

Sandra sat on the edge of the bed and surveyed what I was doing. "Not BAD Alan! You do nice work."

"Glad you like it Sandra." I said, laying down a dress that I'd been in the process of hanging up.

"Hey! Don't quit now! My hands are all greasy with this chicken. Don't be a spoilsport!" She was laughing at me.

"I TOLD him how you hate packing and unpacking." Alicia mumbled as she ate chicken,

"Some friend SHE is!" Sandra said, though contentedly. "But c'mon Alan. Please don't quit now."

"Alright." I said and picked up the dress again.

"Say Alan?" Sandra said. "I was asking Elsie what you guys wore to dinner at night."

I shrugged. "Nothing special, but with company coming tonight, a wee bit more formal than usual. I would guess . . "

"That's right! Elsie said you'd probably wear a skirt. That right?"

"A WHAT? What on earth are you . ." Then it dawned on me. I laughed. "Not a *skirt* Sandra – a KILT! Us Scots wear them all the time."

She shrugged. "Skirt – kilt. I don't see any difference. Kilt? Looks like a skirt to me. I don't see any need to get embarrassed about it all. I wear pants – like lots of women. You want to wear a skirt? I think you'd look good in one."

I blushed. "Sandra . ."

"Matter of fact Alan? I'm out of decent pants and shirts and was going to see if I could borrow some from you for tonight. We're both the same size and it would only be until I did my laundry. Just dawned on me. If you wanted? You could borrow that dress. Bet you'd look stunning in it! That way it would be a fair swap. What do you think?"

I looked at the silvery, sequined dress in my hands, then at her. "I don't think . ."

"Sandy dear? Stop embarrassing the poor boy!" Alicia giggled beside her. "Look at how red he is!"

Sandra was looking at me, all humor gone from her face now. "Alan? I don't CARE what you want to call them – but I think that you're a sissy boy that wears skirts. Now, I happen to enjoy sissy boys – that do as I tell them – very much. But when they get disobedient? I can get quite angry at them. I really hate disciplining them, but I will if I have to. Now HOLD that dress up against yourself Alan!"

"But I . ." "ALAN?"

I licked my lips and held the dress up against me, the way I'd seen mummy do when buying a dress.

Sandra smiled at Alicia. "See? Alan may not have really known that he enjoys doing as he's told, but I have the feeling that he'll be a NICE little boy before we leave." Then she smiled a sweet smile at me. "You won't be naughty now, will you?"

"No Sandra," I said through dry lips and started to put the dress down.

"I wasn't finished yet. Pull your dress back up please. Stick your leg out."

I did as she said and she grinned at Alicia. "Think the dress would fit him?"

"Oh Sandy!" Alicia laughed. "You are terrible! I don't know how you do it. I thought Alan was just a nice boy, but now you have him practically trying a dress on. Here, let me look." With that, she came over to where I stood and looked at me and the dress closely. "You'd have to pad him about the bust a little, but otherwise? I think that the dress would fit like a glove." She smiled at me and shook her head slightly. "Sandy's nice. But if I were you? I'd stay on her good side. She can get mean with sissies – honest."

I HAD to lick my lips. "Sandra? Let me explain. I think there's been a misunderstanding. I'm not . . ." She held up a hand to stop me,

"Alan dear? I'm sorry if I read you wrong." She looked at me with calm eyes. "You can hang the dress up now dear – and maybe go on with the rest of the unpacking?"

I sighed with a kind of relief. Knew that I wasn't going to argue.

"Alan dear?" Now it was Alicia. She shook her head. "I seem to have got my fingers all greasy from that chicken as well. I'm nearly finished with my unpacking. Think you could finish mine up for me?"

The two women were looking at me, their eyes wide open and innocent – and amused. I knew that I was being tested, but also felt that I wasn't going to fight in any way. My jaws felt funny, but I managed to say. "Makes perfect sense to me! both of you ladies look as if you need a rest! Lie back and enjoy your chicken."

Alicia and Sandra shot looks of pure confident enjoyment at each other. Sandra even raised her eyebrows and she grinned even wider as they laid back on the bed and fluffed pillows under their heads as they watched me, purely contented, as I become a maid for them. They breathed loudly through their noses in satisfaction as I became even more and more conscious of their interest as I performed the feminine duties.

"Ever help Melanie?" Sandra drawled as I was finishing up.

"Help Melanie?" What on earth *for*?" I asked in honest bewilderment.

The girls looked at each other. "So modest!" Alicia stated.

"I honestly think he doesn't realize how big a help he's been! Anyone that good must enjoy it!" Sandra laughed.

"Maybe he just comes by it naturally?" Alicia said, as if thinking out loud.

"Think we should reward him? Alicia said.

I wasn't sure what she meant, but could feel a sort of fright course through my bones. "No reward necessary ladies! Glad to do it!" I said, trying hard to project bonhomie.

I don't think that it worked. "Alan? I'm the boss here, but if Alicia says something? I really think you should listen to her." Sandra smiled gently at me and sidled over on the bed so that there was a gap between her and Alicia. "Now I happen to agree with her that you deserve a reward, so come over here and lie down between us – would you please?"

Now I was truly scared. "But you two are GUESTS! I'm supposed to make you feel at home! Honest!"

"Alan?"

"Okay. Okay. Okay." I gave in and went over to the bed. Both girls smiled invitingly, so I had no other choice. Sat on the gap between their feet, worked my way up the bed a bit, then lay back down. Some adjustment, and I was lying there between two girls, both of whom had raised themselves onto their sides.

"Tell me Alan. Do any of the ladies here know of your sissy tendencies?"

"But Sandra? I'm not . ."

"Hush." She was quite firm as she patted my cheek. "Does your mother know? Melanie? Elsie?" She looked at Alicia. "Can you believe that he's hid that from them for any length of time?"

Alicia shook her head. "Not really. Maybe his mom turns a blind eye? Bias and all that? Melanie may not spend any time. But Elsie? I'd almost bet on it."

"I think Alicia is saying exactly what I think. Elsie never spank you? Anything like that?"

"No Sandra. Nothing." Then a thought struck me. "She does 'suggest'; that I walk – or throw things differently now and then."

"And what do you do about that?"

"Nothing. I've no idea what she's been talking about."

Sandra laughed. "My goodness. Probably throws like a girl – we'll have to check that out Alicia."

"I don't see how the way I throw has anything to do with anything." I said huffily.

"Don't be throwing any little hissy fits now!" Sandra said soothingly. "You've given me some clue as to what's been going on. Now lets you and us get down to business." She patted my cheek again.

"Get down to business? I don't understand." I said.

"That's all right. All you have to understand is this. We WILL be nice to you – most times anyway. But when we ask you to do something? We'll expect it done. No arguments at all. Just be a sweet little obedient boy? Okay?"

I was lying on my back staring up at two girls who were looking down at me with kind – if grinning faces. They were bending over towards me now, their eyes staring deep into mine – and suddenly, both laid a hand on my erection!

"Hey! Oh! I say! What are you girls doing . ." I yelped, but they were stroking me.

"Please stop. . .please?" I whimpered, but my own flesh was betraying me.

"I think he likes this!" Alicia giggled.

"Told him we were going to reward him – didn't we?" Sandra added. "But I don't think that he's . . "

I never knew what she was going to say as I started pumping semen into my underpants, letting out a small scream as I did so. I tried to put a hand down to grab a hold of my penis and stop the pumping, but Sandra read my mind. "Never mind dear!" she said, taking my hand inn hers and stopping me as I made a mess of myself.

Then, as I blearily looked into the two pairs of amused eyes, Sandra leaned over and kissed me. "That nice?" She asked me when she finished. "I think you'd better go and freshen up before dinner. That reminds me. Are you going to wear a skirt?"

"It's a KILT!" I said weakly.

"Dear? To ME it's a skirt! Now I won't call it that normally amongst other people. But when we're together? It's a SKIRT! Now darling. Are you wearing a skirt tonight?"

"Yes."

"How many skirts do you have?"

"Four – in different tartans."

"That's better!" She looked at Alicia dreamily. "I really enjoy thinking of my sweet little boys wearing skirts for me." She chucked me under the chin. "You going to be my very own, sweet little boy in a skirt tonight?

"Yes." I mumbled. "Can I go and get cleaned up now Sandra?"

She backed away from me on the bed. "Of COURSE you can darling. Now run along and make yourself pretty for me tonight!" She spoke to Alicia. "See? Nice and docile already!" Then she spoke to me again – "Off you go then."

I heard both girls giggle as I hobbled out of the room, my penis sore – but trying to walk normally and not display the mess my front was in was extremely difficult. Somehow or another though, I made it.

It was early enough in the day that I had time for a much-needed nap after I skulked to my room then got rid of my messed up clothes. Some sort of local girl came by twice a week to do the laundry and I wondered what she might think. To be honest I was too tired to care very much, but I rinsed my shorts and underwear in my bathroom sink and hoped they'd dry before one of her days. Fell onto my bed and fell asleep.

I woke up in plenty of time. Found myself thinking about Sandra. The events earlier on made me think.

Was I *really* effeminate? She seemed to think so and I didn't seem to have the strength of character to disprove her thinking. All of a sudden I saw the lack of hair on my face as a potential sign. Lots of males that I'd heard of seemed to have started shaving LONG ago, but living in a house of women I'd never thought much of it – had this affected my thinking? In any way, I found myself taking more care in my appearance than normally was the case. It wasn't a formal dinner by any means, but I took a lot of care in picking out my shirt and long socks. Found myself somewhat embarrassed when picking out what kilt I'd wear that evening. I had the curious feeling that I was getting ready for *her*. Rather enjoyable to tell the truth – but that didn't stop me from feeling strange.

* * *

Mother was in the sitting room when I arrived, very elegant in a polka dress sheath with a pale pink coral necklace and matching earrings and bracelet. She had a good size drink of her favorite single malt whisky in her hand.

"My! Aren't we formal tonight?" I asked with a laugh.

She looked a little embarrassed, but laughed. "I could make the case that I'm dressed for Emily (Dorothy's mother) and Dorothy – but you and I both know that I want to put on the dog a wee bit for our American relatives." She gave me an arch look. "You look pretty respectable yourself young man. One of your better kilts if I'm not mistaken. Do I detect a little interest in Sandra? She's quite a person, isn't she?"