

BEWITCHING

By Annie Warren



ILLUSTRATED BY BRIAN DUKEHART

A 'NEW WOMAN' NOVEL

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Reluctant Press TG Publishers

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WHICH WITCH IS WHICH?

or

THE CURSE OF LEARNING

By Annie Warren

Chapter 1: The Search for Knowledge

I have to make a decision. The time has finally come, and, since my sabbatical leave from the University is about to expire, I have to decide what I am going to do. From my studies made during this leave of absence from the university, my mind has been filled with knowledge that I'd never even dreamed of when this 'extracurricular' project had started. But now is the time for decision. My mind is in a frenzy on how to decide!

Maybe, if I try to reconstruct my thoughts at the start of the project and review what has happened, then perhaps I can decide, for the decision is not to be taken lightly. It is an all encompassing 'all or nothing' question. I must answer it but don't know what to say. . .

. . .

So, back to the roots of it all, before any of this arose.

To begin with, who am I?

I am reasonably sure that I am still Professor Kevin Evans, professor of psychology at the University. I did my doctoral dissertation in parapsychology and the paranormal. For 2 years I've had tenure at the University, no small task in itself. Now, as a professor in psychology, I teach mostly the run-of-the mill psychology courses but still do my research in the area of my doctoral.

Although I learned to listen to subjects in studies and cases when I was a student myself, one of the things that I have also learned is to listen to my students and what they say. Not many professors do this, nowadays. I mean I listen to what they say above and beyond just their questions on the lecture material. Actually, I've found that most people don't really listen to you when you talk with them. They are more preoccupied with their own problems and lives to listen with more than half an ear to what you are saying, unless it really involves them closely.

Listening to students can be done both directly and indirectly. Some tell me things and others just sort of say things that are interesting, like passing on the stories of other students while talking perhaps on an entirely different subject. You have to learn to listen and listen well. Many of my students come to beg for answers to burning

questions (like “what are you going to be asking on the next exam”), while others come to ask for some of the finer points on lecture material and end up “chatting”, as it were on other things too. Anyway, they are not always the ones to ask all of the questions, if you know what I mean about picking up information!

In this case, some rumors had led me to carry out an investigation. For often rumors like the myths of old have somewhere in them the grains of truth that can lead to further knowledge, especially in the paranormal. My investigations, however, turned out to get “hot”, requiring me to do a proper follow up; that is why I took the sabbatical leave that I've been on for the past year. Now, as I said, it is running out and I must make a decision on which my career, my whole life will depend. What should I do?

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The whole affair actually began well over a year ago. I was slightly upset when one of the male faculty underwent a sex change operation and then, as a woman, had been accepted back into the faculty. He, now she, was sure to have large classes until the novelty wore off. I suppose that perhaps there was a tinge of jealousy? Of course there was; most of the male faculty was jealous of anyone getting “instantaneous” notoriety and the large classes that went with it. but none of them would take such a drastic step to do it. Notoriety of this variety comes quickly while the rest of us usually have to slog, work, research and publish in hopes of a tenth of that sort of fame. But, most importantly to me was that to my ears came murmurs and “comments”, and rumors that all that had gone on had not been medical.

In listening to rumors one must be able to sift for usefulness and the possibility purely of truth, even if bizarre. Almost all rumors are useless for my purposes, but what I was hearing smacked of the paranormal. It turned out that in this case, the rumors involving the transsexual had been false, but I found that out only later after investigating. To me, at the time that I first heard the rumors, it seemed very likely to me to have some flavor of the paranormal; after all, that a man would want to become a woman in the first place I found to be incredible if not ludicrous. The fact that some form of paranormal could actually have been involved seemed to be likely, at least to *my* way of thinking, and so my curiosity was piqued, enough to follow up. Thus I decided to investigate; such rumors have to be checked out. As a first step, I went to see the “new” professor and interviewed him/her, ostensibly on the basis of the psychological and, of course, any possible internal parapsychologicals too.

Actually s/he was not that bad looking, was soft spoken and quite open, all things considered. From the very start, s/he denied categorically any and all links to any form of paranormal activity such as ESP, witchcraft, ethereal voices, or even the Hand of God, well, other than His making a mistake in her/his original case, a mistake that s/he had now corrected. I had not known him before her “conversion”, other than having seen him occasionally on campus. But the “she” that I now saw both looked and acted totally the part of a woman. I know it was silly of me, but I took a malicious sort of a joy in stroking my short beard as I talked to her. She, of course, took no notice of it.

I learned all I could from her. Actually, some interesting data that I collected could possibly lie on the periphery of the paranormal, but only slightly, not being enough to do any follow up or research on. When I left, I almost sighed in relief to be free from her. Because of her crossing the sex/gender boundary I felt that she was weird in some way, but, on the other hand, on the whole, she was an altogether nice person, just one that I was not overly anxious to know any better. Besides, as with most men outside of the overly macho, I'm sure, she shook the foundations of my own masculinity, not a terribly hard thing to do.

You see, those foundations were easily shaken since I was smallish in stature, almost delicate. My hair was long but I did have my beard, sparse though it may have been. A great deal of effort and a lot of time had been put into growing and nurturing it. I was 28 and single. No one, it seems, ever took me seriously sexually. Refusals were legion. I could get used to being small, but not to being refused so often. At least in psychology, I was in a "contact discipline", that is, a person oriented scientific field wherein I met many people. I was not a lecher or a dirty old man; I was just more lonely than a loner.

Well, the interview had panned out badly in terms of getting any leads or information to further my studies. The rumor mill, when turned properly with casual, sometimes flippant or even sometimes obtuse manipulation, had also turned up a name and even an address in connection with the transsexual that I would also have to check out, even though she had denied any such connections. Sometimes, as is so often the case, as I said before, in rumors is often a grain of truth. The truth may have nothing to do with the rumor directly but can have a bearing on other questions that need answering. Some people may call it prying, I just call it intense investigative manipulation (yeah, prying). Casual but very pointed questions to the unsuspecting can often reveal a lot more than that person may have been willing to give up. Beating about a bush can flush a bird, you know, and if you beat the right bush, it may flush more than one bird and the second bird may be the one you are looking for!

The question of parapsychology in this case boiled down to the question as to whether or not the occult was involved in any way in the wo/man's life and conversion. Some said that s/he had been influenced by or helped (warped?) by occult, citing witchcraft as the force that had been involved in the sex change, which again had been thoroughly denied. Even more usefully, however, there was the citing the *who* that had been responsible, the (alleged) witch herself.

My interview with the transsexual had yielded a personal history, spotty though it was, of the person from early childhood into manhood (and then womanhood?). There were no so such manipulations as far as I could see, and so I put the question in respect to him/her out of my mind. But, the person cited in the rumor was a person who just might have those other talents and/or that special knowledge that I could capitalize on, if there was any trace of truth in the rumor. She too would have to be investigated, researched to find if there was truth in it or if it was just some person's way of trying to "get even" with someone else by slander and malicious, detracting, rumor mongering (also another form of "truth" to be found in rumors though not usually useful). It could turn out to be a false name, a false address, or, if these were accurate, it could just be some housewife who's only witching had to do with putting Witch Hazel

on poison ivy rashes for her children, or some other such “normal” person. But, as the saying goes, “Leads is Leads”, and I'd have to at least go look.

I should probably say at this point that my original dissertation had been on a form of testing for telekinesis. If you don't know that term, it means moving objects by mental energy alone, not touching them. But, once you have that magic sheep's skin with the Ph.D.. letters on it, you don't have to limit yourself to that one area of research but can do other things that are related (or not, if your college or university will allow it). I felt that I had more or less exhausted the telekinetic field (or had lost the driving interest) and had branched out into other areas of the paranormal to include some delvings into occult and occult related studies. I was always learning and never seemed to learn enough. Here was the possibility of a new tack, looking at another phase of that broad field, new to me, that is, if there was any basis of truth in the rumor.

Chapter 2: The Meeting and Greeting of Minds

I don't have any special first time impressions of the house at the 'rumored' address since I spent so much time there, and, besides, there was nothing particular to set it apart from any or all of the other houses on that block. No, it did not have gingerbread trimming, nor did it have a besom parked just outside the door (or inside the door, for that fact). Only when you went up the short flight of steps and got to the front door and saw the small plaque that said “**M. Pat Hurley, Services**” was there any notable difference — and then only when you got *way* up close, so to say. Even when I was asked in and saw the interior, there was nothing out of place for any average home.

Pat, herself, was not a remarkable or overly unique person either. There was nothing in the cool “normal” facade that I saw to hint about what went on underneath — good, bad or otherwise. She had met me at the door when I knocked and had invited me in when she learned that I was from the university. She had also bristled noticeably when I mentioned the rumor. I explained how I was researching such phenomena that deal with the paranormal as it was a part of my academic specialty. I did not say more than that nor what my inner thoughts were on the source of the rumor, the transsexual professor, and she did not pry. To her, I was taking an opportunity to pursue my research as I had said — a normal enough thing for a university professor to do. Although she had bristled at the rumor, it turned out that it was because it was a rumor that she was annoyed. But then, when I queried about the content; that is, if it was perhaps not a rumor, she became defensive and elusive, neither wholly denying it nor admitting that it was the truth. We started a small, verbal fencing match.

She became edgy at the question of paranormal. When I asked what she did, what were the services indicated on the door, she also hedged and tried to be evasive. I could see in her face and in particular, due to her steady eye contact, in her eyes that she was parrying my questions but it seemed that there was some sort of debate going on within herself while at the same time she was sizing me up.

To sidetrack the question at least for a bit, she offered me coffee which I accepted, knowing that it was a diversion, but knowing it would also give me more time to ask

questions. When she went off to the kitchen, I looked around the room and saw nothing out of place for a modern home. There was a TV, a boombox type stereo and a VCR. A small book case had a number of mystery novels, a dictionary and number of other references common to the home. When she came back, she placed a cup and saucer in front of me and she resumed her seat opposite me and looked at me with the same intensity as before.

The coffee was delicious and allowed for more bantering as we both drank it. When she plied me with questions about my position and interest in the occult, a sort of odd thing to do as I just repeated myself, I asked back my questions. It was like back to square one. However, while we sipped the coffee almost to the bottom of the cup, there seemed to be an almost physical snap as she apparently came to an answer to her inner turmoil and suddenly started answering my questions in a straightforward manner. When it came to her connection with the paranormal, she still hedged, but only long enough to get assurances of anonymity in my researches, a condition that I readily agreed to, saying that it was standard practice with such researches, unless she, herself, specifically released me to use her name. At the term "release", she smiled and became agreeable beyond what I had hoped. The last dregs of the coffee were forgotten.

Gradually what came out in the course of the interview was that yes, she was a form of witch, sort of a modern day shaman, a dealer in potions, spells, certain limited precognitive and post cognitive talents, and, perhaps best said for my research, a god-send in an area that was then out of my range of specific knowledge; I would be able to expand my knowledge and perhaps that of parapsychology at the same time. One curious thing, though, when I asked that she be an object for me to study, she agreed but only if I too could become an object for her to study. To anyone in the field of scientific endeavor, such reciprocal agreements are common when there is an actual cross-purposed range of knowledge in the two individuals, be they persons or institutions. The only bars to that lie often in professional jealousies over conflicting research interests. Here, however, was a dealer in a branch of the occult and paranormal who wanted to know more about me and what I knew, or so I thought. I saw no problem.

We parted that first day without really learning much about each other or each other's fields, but we had an appointment to meet the next evening when, as she put it, "we can begin our researches". I left the house in good spirits. My grumbles with the university were behind me. As a horse with the bit in his teeth, I had a project that would increase my knowledge, expand my consciousness. Even from my youngest days I had been imbued by my parents with this drive to expand my horizons, an almost insatiable desire to learn. My middle name must have really been Curiosity. Before going home, I stopped at the university library and got a handful of books dealing specifically with the topic of witchcraft. I had never browsed there as I had always been too busy elsewhere. Now I had a reason and I pursued it. On our next meeting I would not be totally unknowledgeable.

The books, it turned out, said very little, only nibbling at the periphery of the subject. It was akin to a worm trying to make a serious dent on this countries national forest reserves. They felt the outline of the subject but only speculated on the contents, the inner heart and lore of the subject. The more I read, the more curious I became. If I could learn more, I could perhaps publish articles, increasing the realms of

scientific knowledge as well as appeasing the university's insatiable demands that the professors constantly publish. Of course, there was also that little bird chirping the fact that I might even make a name for myself. If I went on sabbatical, I would be spared the university's demand but could nonetheless publish, if the feeling and knowledge were there. The problem would be getting the data without upsetting her. That might prove to be a trick.

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At the appointed time, I was again knocking at her door. She opened it and let me in. Again she was "normal". When I commented on this, she laughed, saying that these were modern times. Her trade did not have any special uniform except when teaching, learning or for some specified high rituals. For normal activities, there were no peaked hats nor long, black flowing robes. Furthermore, the brooms in her closets were strictly for sweeping, . . . most of the time. She wouldn't comment on the rest of the time, evading the question with an irrepressible twinkle in her eye.

Perhaps I should pause here to explain something about the two of us that will make future developments clearer. We were roughly the same size, I being perhaps a couple of inches taller than she. Since I was small for a man, she was about the right size for a woman. Her hair was like mine, raven black and straight, only hers was longer. Mine rested easily on my shoulders or a bit longer, a practice of mine that more than once got me called an "educated hippie left over from the 60's", despite my young age. Hers was a marvelous stream that fell well down her back. It was the only thing that detracted from the "frumpy housewife" image, well, not frumpy, she was plain but in a pretty way and her skirt, blouse, hose and mid heeled shoes were very tasteful. No, frumpy would be a true misnomer in her case though she did have an image that no doubt was designed to fit in with the rest of the women in the suburban area in which she lived. I doubt that I would have fit into that neighborhood, for I, of course, had my beard, worn with some sort of macho pride. I was also wearing the standard professorial uniform required by the university protocol: suit and tie. Like I said, she was dressed in a comfortable skirt and blouse combination, looking for all the world like suburban housewife; only she wasn't.

We talked of many things that evening over at least two pots of tea. She, however, kept evading my pointed questions by answering in general, answering with, information that I could have (or had) gotten from the books in the library. As I pressed more, showing more and more interest, her attitude began to change. Fewer were the vague answers with the laughs or smiles. Finally, fairly late into the evening, she fixed me with a cool stare instead of answering a question on the teaching of witchcraft to neophytes.

"Well, Kevin, you have shown an above average, far above average interest in witches and witchcraft. In term of learning the ins and outs of the trade, are you really interested in how one learns the trade?"

"Isn't that what I just asked?"

She smiled, not breaking the fixed stare. “Not exactly. You asked about teaching, not learning. I asked back if you were that interested in learning the trade. Do you really want to find out how one learns to be a practicing witch?”

I noted the subtle change in the question. I did want to learn more about it, but was she offering to teach *me*? I had to follow up on this one for sure. “Yes, I am most interested in learning all I can about the trade.”

“You must realize that there are certain dangers and modifications that would have to be faced and made to learn it. Would you want to face them and overcome them and, at the same time, learn the trade?”

Here was an opportunity that I had not even dared to hope for. She had spent all evening evading my questions and now was making a complete turnaround, saying that if I wanted to, I could learn the *whole trade, learn all there was to be learned or at least as much as she could teach me!* In a flash my mind soared as I pondered the scope of the knowledge I could learn, the papers I could publish. Played right, I could even wrangle a professorship out of this, maybe move to one of the really prestigious universities instead of the state university that I now taught at. It was a unique opportunity that I simply could not pass up.

“If you are willing to teach me, I am willing to try to learn.”

At this, her face broke into a wide grin and her eyes sparkled with mirth. “all right, Kevin, you can become my apprentice. Let's seal it with a special tea.”

She arose and got a really small pot, about the size for one cup. She put hot water into it and placed it on a sideboard near the kitchen over a single candle heater that would eventually bring it almost to a boil. Into it she then placed various leaves from a number of jars and bottles from a conveniently placed spice rack, stirring them in gently while mumbling quietly to herself. When it was finished, she brought it over to me, pouring it into my almost empty cup. The aroma was delicious. It smelled of cinnamon and mint. It tasted as marvelously as it smelled too, about one of the finest herbal teas I had ever had. I offered her some, but she said that I had made the decision, so I would be allowed to celebrate.

As she sipped her tea in a toast, our eyes met over the rims of the cups. Hers were softer now, but still sparkling and twinkling with an inner mirth that I did not understand at the time. As for me, I was in a sort of seventh heaven. I was to be afforded a most unique opportunity. No one had ever published such data before. I was almost assured of fame and fortune in the field of occult and parapsychology. I could not believe my luck. Only, at that time, I was not really aware of what my total luck really was.

As the evening closed, she bade me good night, telling me to be there the next day at am sharp. I agreed, saying that I hoped I would be able to make it that early. She only smiled, knowingly, saying that I would have no problem.

Chapter 3: The Beginnings

In the morning I was somewhat surprised when I awoke before the alarm. Also, I noticed that I seemed to be quite alert. Instead of the normal moan and groan to rise, I got readily out of bed and did my morning toilet, dressed and had breakfast way before the time I was due to show up. It was an unusual experience that I chocked up to my eagerness to get started on the new study project. I knew I wanted to learn and was eager to start but hadn't thought that I was *that* eager!

With this eagerness and earliness, there was absolutely no problem in being, exactly on the dot at her door. She opened immediately to my knock and smiled warmly at me and welcomed me into the vestibule, commenting on how the call spell never failed. I, of course, was a bit taken aback by this. There was a spell? When was it made? I asked her this as I followed her into her living room. She said she had made it while brewing the novice potion. Potion? What novice potion? I suddenly realized that in a way I had been had. The tea was not a tea but a potion. That and the spell she had cast were working on me even as I listened to her explain in detail the words of the spell and the desired action of the potion. Her only comment on it being a “mint tea” had been added to the potion on a sort of “a little bit of sugar helps the medicine go down” explanation. I couldn't argue as it had been very tasty indeed!

She closed with “and the spell is similar in a way to asking a Jinni as a first wish to have unlimited continued wishes. Only, since you now know it and of it, you can break it with no ill affects, but it would take some conscious effort on your part. The casual soul would not think of breaking it and the truly weak soul could not without help or a counter spell. I knew when I first saw you that you have a good, strong aura and that you could easily counter it.”

I had to ponder that one. The call spell was simple if not a bit long. The potion had ensured that I would have a more open mind than usual — she did not really have to use it — but it was still an open question.

You will note here, Gentle Reader, that I did not repeat the spell to you. I know it now by heart, it and probably a thousand more. But in my current state, I cannot write down one word of the spell. I found that out that evening when I tried to. The pen scratched but nothing would come of it. But more on this later; suffice it to say that neither the spells used and their explanations nor any of the contents of the potions are to be found in this narrative for a multitude of reasons. If you are reading this to learn them, then read no farther as there are none here.

After we had discussed the spell and the potion, she then got up and got what I had thought looked like a regular spice rack. She then put it on the table and began brewing another “tea” while intoning another spell. She told me not to interrupt her, that she would explain it after it was completed. When it was done, she offered me the cup. I, of course, had to ask what it was, a question that she was expecting.

“This is the second potion for the initiate with an added spell for continuance. You have to be told this at this time so that you can make a decision. The spell is on the potion and will be transferred to whomever takes the potion and drinks it with free will and knowledge of its workings. Without this knowledge, it is but a cup of tea.

“If you decide to continue, then this will bind you to continue and will aid in your learning the potions, spells and rituals necessary to become a witch. If you decide not to continue, then that which you have learned will be taken away, erased as if you had seen nothing and heard nothing. You can then leave in the same state of knowledge that you arrived here in the first case.” She smiled a most friendly smile. “If you continue, you will learn more.”

So, what had I come there for in the first place but to learn more. I raised the cup, giving her a short salute before downing the potion. Again, it was actually quite tasty. I did not know then what went into it as the containers in her rack did not have any labels on them, and they all looked uniformly dark. I knew that at least one of them must be mint!

Now, having drunk the potion with the additional spell on it, there was no sudden flood of hidden, arcane knowledge that suddenly welled up in my brain. It felt just like one feels when one drinks a tasty cup of freshly brewed tea. The throat was warmed, the whistle whetted and the thirst satisfied. When I put the cup down, she smiled again and welcomed me as a new novice. She then rose and taking my hand led me into a room and bade me to change clothes.

On a hanger was a light blue robe of nylon. It had full sleeves, a cowl and a wrap-around belt. I was admonished that I should take *all* of my clothes off, including at this time even my watch, before I put it on. I was, she said, to have no other garment or adornment other than the robe, not shoes nor socks nor any underwear. She left and I stripped and put it on. It was delightfully cool to the skin. Being full length, it played easily if not a bit noisily about my bare legs. It seemed strange then to look down and see my bare feet poking out from under the robe. Except for the color and cloth, it was not unlike a monk's robe; however, one never sees a monk with a bright blue robe on, especially one that also glistens and shines, catching all of the light. Of course, I just had to put the cowl hood up and look at myself in a mirror. It was a pleasing sight; it piqued my sense of mystery and also of the mystique of what it was I was about to embark on. I felt a shiver go through my body, but I don't know if it was the cloth, the robe, the excitement, the anticipation or just what. But I felt ready, about as ready as a dry sponge thrown in the sea, ready to soak it ALL up!

Just as I finished “playing” around, she came in clad similarly only she wore some sort of shoes and, visible where it draped over her body, I could see the imprint of other garments under her robe. The robe itself was opaque and black; the color, was intense. It seemed to absorb light like velvet but was not velvet, only *really* black!

We went to her kitchen where she began teaching me simple spells and simple potions. I began to learn just what *was* in some of those bottles, how to recognize it and, most importantly, how to get it. And no, she did not have eye of newt nor tongue of wasp nor scale of dragon. But, for the life of me, I cannot tell you what they were, even the ones that you can get at your local, well, your local stores. Darn, can't even tell you that! But, it isn't important, anyway. Oh yes, one I can surely tell. As I said before, one was mint, for flavoring!

She also explained that the blue of my robe was symbolic of the blue of a clear sky, which is open and uncluttered, the state of my mind to the teachings I was receiving.

Before I left, she made some potions that she did not explain at that time, giving them to me to drink. I know that I should have hesitated, but I did not. I returned to the room, changed clothes and, after some more talk, left.

At that point, I knew that I was onto something, and it was something BIG!. I had prepped the department as to the possibility but now knew it was for real. I went to the chairman and arranged for an immediate sabbatical for one year. I had to explain that I had some research to do that could not wait, could not be delayed and which I was not at liberty to explain. This last one was the easiest since when I actually tried to give some side particulars about my "course" I found that I got totally tongue-tied. This was strange for me as I generally was rather glib and could usually talk easily about most anything, . . . at length. When I hesitated and mumbled on this last point of what it was, he also hesitated, but it was granted, and I knew I had a clear path for my learning. I couldn't wait to the end of the year to write it all up; I was in a bit of a hurry to go home and start on my notes, notes that never got written as I explained before.

That first day with Pat set a sort of pattern for all of my visits. There was a short, informal kind of talk on anything other than the lessons, "tea" (sometimes *really* tea), change clothes, lessons, potion (which she never explained at the time), change back, more 'parting' talk, and finally departure. The pattern for our meetings was rarely broken. I met with her on an almost daily basis during the week. Although the length and contents of the lessons varied quite a bit, I was slowly amassing a good bit of knowledge of the arts of being a witch.

Then, after about a month wearing the soft, light blue gown, the robe was changed to deep green to symbolize the growing plants, just as I was growing in knowledge and body. Again, I was given the chance to quit, always given as a free choice. I meant to ask what "in body" meant, but for some reason did not, just as I did not ask for freedom. I did measure myself when I got home only to find that I had not grown an inch. So much for "growing in body". If anything, I may have lost an inch. However, it had been a long time since I had even thought of measuring myself, much less done it; so, I just ignored the small difference, figuring the 'growth' must be in some other, more symbolic way. No, I did not even know my hat size so that measure would have been totally useless.

In the first week in the green period, one of the potions brewed was for hair or more exactly for hair removal. She demonstrated it on me by having me drink it. She then deliberately pulled on my beard. To my surprise, there was absolutely no pain, and with apparently no effort on her part, it just came out as if it had been stuck on with a cheap, nonstick adhesive. Several minutes were spent by her in removing it all. It felt odd to have a supremely smooth, bald chin after such a long time both in growing the beard and in showing it off to my colleagues. While she was at it, she also worked on my eyebrows. Again, I could have resisted but did not. Then, as a last move she went around behind me and carefully "cleaned" the back of my neck. I did not see any of what was done until I went to change over an hour later at the end of our session. The face was familiar, but it was one that I had not seen for a long, long time, long ago it seemed. But the eyebrows were now thin lines arching expressively over my eyes. It gave me what I thought was a dashing look. I did not even miss the hair at all. She

had cleaned my lip and my chin all the way up to the top of my ears, almost. I was also amazed at how much younger I looked, almost like a teenager.

In our chat that day, she gave me the ingredients for the mix and told me to do the same with my body hair, and since the potion lasts one hour or so, I had to be very careful not to touch any of the hair on my head. It was an interesting experience to see the hair on my body disappear with such a simple action as wiping it off with a dry washcloth. Again there was absolutely no pain or even a pulling sensation as one would expect. I had intended to leave only the hair on my head as she had suggested, but did leave some elsewhere. The hair under my arms, however went easily. It was a marvel to see as it came out by the gentlest of pulls.

There had been no verbal command, but I never knew what went into some of the spells she made and did not explain. Thus, on my head all I had left was my eyebrows and the hair on the very top down to the top of my neck, just what she had left.

As I was “cleaning” my stomach, I stopped short at the bottom just above my genitalia, leaving my pubic hair almost totally intact. For some reason, I just sort of leveled it off at the top. One odd thing, however, was that my penis seemed to be sexually inert, it gave no reaction to any sort of stimulation. However, as I pulled the hairs from my chest, I discovered that it was now much more sensitive and that my nipples extended out a ways, forming small pointed cones. They too were much more sensitive, giving a very pleasant feeling. I knew it was from a potion (or several) but was inwardly pleased with it for some reason. After wiping the hair from my arms and legs, I stood before my full length mirror and looked at my whole self. Now, even more than before I looked like a teenager. Except for the lushness of hair on my head and the bush at my loins, I was almost like a preteen. When I raised my arm, there was nothing under it, all was clean and hairless, more so than if I had shaved. Shaved? Somehow I knew that I would have no further use for any of my shaving gear unless I wanted to attack a peach or something. . .

All that evening and into the next day, my skin felt different, stimulated and sensitive. I felt the odd, heightened feelings when I got up and all the way to her house as I walked to my lesson. The hairlessness somehow seemed to let my clothing come 'closer' to my skin, and I clearly felt the cloth of my pants as it rubbed and 'crashed' against my more sensitive skin. It was not all that pleasant. All of my clothing seemed to rub me oddly and harshly. On the other hand, I was swept over by pleasant sensations when I slipped into my soft green robe, especially since I was wearing nothing under it!

Once my lesson for the day had been completed and I had changed back into my street clothes and was chatting with her, I remarked on the changes in sensitivity of my skin, how it had suddenly become harsh to wear what I had considered my 'normal' clothing. She said that it was a part of the process of becoming a witch and that the simplest solution would be for me to just change my clothing style. She arose, left the room and then came back almost immediately, carrying a medium sized bag. She told me that 'these' would be alternatives that I could try. I looked into the bag and found what appeared to be nylon clothes of some kind. I didn't want to drag them out and look at them there — she already knew what they were — so, I thanked her and, with the bag under my arm, left.

At home I opened the bag and emptied it to see what she had given me. What I removed from it turned out to be some sort of underclothing, but what underclothing it was! It consisted of a pair of pettipants or pants liners, a pair of lacy panties and a sort of a chemise, all of them in satin or nylon or whatever; only, to the touch they were soft and really elegant, even if an odd sort of bright yet soft pastel red? Whatever. I immediately stripped, tossing my own underwear unceremoniously in the corner of my room to be forgotten and leisurely put these on new additions to my wardrobe.

The ongoing of those clothes had absolutely nothing in common with the off-going of my old underwear other than that both did, sort of, cover my body, well, the new did more than the old ever then. Pulling up the pettipants was like being tickled by thousands of soft feathers all the way up. The panties that preceded them were just measured in hundreds of feathers, of course. The chemise was also a cloud of softness as it seemed to drift about my torso. No tee shirt ever felt like this. I just had to move about and rub my body and my legs with my hands to stimulate the electricity of my nerves as they drank in the sensuousness of those simple underclothes.

I almost didn't want to but finally redressed, covering these glories to the senses and muting them somewhat. It was no longer the softness of the feathers but was nonetheless stimulating! The difference in feeling from my old, to this new improved underwear was immeasurable. It did not occur to me to question why women's clothing felt so good. There was the sensation of the nylon against my very sensitive skin, and that was all that I needed for relief from the rough scratchiness that I had all morning. Wow! What an improvement!!

After lessons the next day, while again extolling the feeling (I had also raved a bit that morning), Pat suggested that I go and get some more, giving me the address of a shop that would have such, and giving me the name of a clerk there who would be willing and quite able to help me with more understanding than I would have expected. The reason was that the clerk had been one of her former students, a charming woman who would thus be aware of my *special* needs. I wasn't too sure that I should really go, especially when she put such an emphasis on "special", but after mulling it over, I decided to go to the shop and pick up just a couple of things on my way home. After all, one set would not last me forever, and I was enamored (if that is the right term) with the feelings that these underpinnings gave me. The terms 'yummy' and 'darling' kept coming to my mind as I thought of them and the new sensations they were lavishing on my young and now overly sensitive body.

Chapter 4: Growth and Knowledge

That afternoon I went to the shop, which turned out not so surprisingly to be a "ladies boutique", and asked for Honey. She came out and was what I had expected with that name. She was impeccably dressed with flawless make-up. Her skin was sort of a deep tan and her face gave just hints of some African or perhaps Polynesian relations somewhere way back in her past. Her fined brows framed tastefully shadowed eyes with lots of mascara. Those deep, dark eyes twinkled merrily when she saw me. Her "may I help you" came from highly glossed red lips that also had the fullness again

hinting of some ancient non-caucasian heritage. Her hair, however, wasn't as black as mine but was probably about as long as Pat's, woven in waves about her head in an alluring and artistic manner. She had on a simple dress that easily expressed and put quite an emphasis on a really exquisite, dynamite figure. She was just the image of a person that I would expect to find selling in a boutique, the epitome of beauty and femininity!

When I mentioned Pat and thus why I wanted to see her, if anything, the twinkling in her eyes became more intense and her smile seemed to warm up even more as she said that she fully understood. She took my hand in hers and drew me into the back of the boutique and then into a changing booth, away from prying eyes, where I was asked to strip. I blushed 7 shades of red and stammered, trying to think of some reason not to. She, however, would not take no for an answer and simply started unbuttoning my shirt. When she had it partly open, I realized that I was, not too sure of what she *really* wanted as she quickly stroked my hairless chest softly with her hand. Her fingernails were almost an inch long and were colored a brilliant red like her lips and lightly brushed my skin in a rather pleasant way in that quick gesture. Then, just as quickly, she unbuttoned some more. When the chemise came into view, she smiled and cooed, saying she *really* understood how good that felt. When I tried to back away, I found I was up against the wall of the booth.

"Don't be frightened, Dear," she almost purred, "I've helped lots of her students. Just relax and put yourself in my hands and we'll have you fixed up with what you need in no time at all. But, to do it, I have to take some measurements, and that requires these old clothes to be off, ok?"

I acquiesced and, simply, let her strip me. She did not rush but oohed and ahed over the pettipants when they came into view. When I finally stood there clad only in pettipants and chemise, she stood back for a bit just appreciating it all. She then took off my shoes and pulled down the pettipants, again oohing and ahing at the laciness of the panties that did little to hide my genitalia which had somehow become roused by the proximity of such a beautiful woman at such close quarters. Last night I couldn't, but in this situation she could! Strange! Even the strangeness of the situation did not "bring down the house", so to say. She, however, seemed to totally ignore the unsightly, anomalous bulge, feeling more the lace, usually over the most sensitive areas over my hips, not even coming close to the bulge. It was a strange experience and I'm not sure I am doing justice to describing what happened (and didn't happen).

As I stood there more or less riveted to the spot, she first patted and caressed and then took a measuring tape and took all kinds of measurements from my body, legs, arms, even feet. She then scooped up my clothes, leaving the pettipants, and opened the door. Just before she zipped out, she smiled and said, "This is to ensure that you don't decide to depart before we're done."

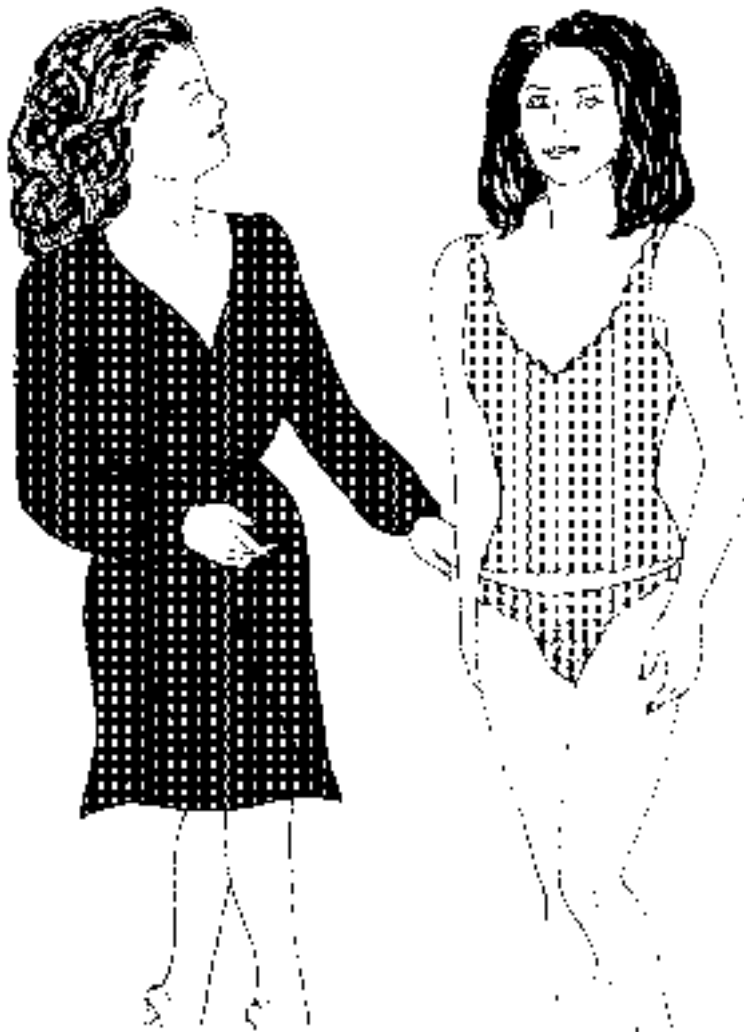
No way was I going anywhere dressed, or more aptly described, undressed like that. It had suddenly occurred to me that I was in a women's boutique wearing women's underwear. At home this underwear was not out of place, was comfortable and right. Out on the street it was "under cover" and was of no concern to anyone else as I wasn't about to do a strip in the middle of the street! Here, in a changing booth in an intimate ladies wear shop, I was feeling terribly self conscious and totally out of place! It did not

occur to me just then exactly how feminine I looked at the time with no hair on my body and with long hair, thin eyebrows and a baby smooth chin. Later I would realize it, but that was yet a long ways off. At that time I'm sure the innate paranoia of the situation was ruling all that I was thinking!

When she returned, she had several boxes and a whole bundle of clothing. Nowhere among them were my original pants and shirt, the clothing that I had come in with. What happened the next hour or so is even harder to describe. She had me try on a myriad of women's clothes from bras to dresses to slips to hose to high heels to even a mammoth wig. She said she wanted to try it on me, not that I would ever need it or get it since my original hair was adequate and quite pretty (her words). I was sort of like her captive for this mini-clothes-a-rama. She did not explain why she was trying them on me and I didn't ask. I was embarrassed most of the time and every time she went out for more, she always left me wearing some sort of skirt with no blouse, or blouse and lacy slip with no skirt, and so forth.

It could have been a piece of hell in there, except, well... except that those clothes, they, uh... they felt good! They looked ridiculous to my eyes, but the feelings that they played out on the sensitivities of my skin were indescribable. Most "evilly", so to say, is that Honey seemed to know just what to do to elicit those feelings and so, while embarrassed and reddened with repeated blushes, I was nonetheless being wrapped and draped and smothered with just seas of the most delicious of feelings and sensations! Like I say, I can't describe it, there are not enough nor appropriate words that have such descriptive powers to do justice to the sensualities that I wandered through in that little booth. Honey was the sculptor and I was the clay. But she could easily see how readily I got out of the skirts and slips and dresses and so did not push them any more than just a sort of "For the fun of it, let's see what this looks like", an often repeated phrase.

When all was done, I ended up in a pair of hose hooked to a tight waist cincher. Over this I had a pair of satiny slacks. The shoes were a sort of mid-heel pump that



looked like loafers. The shirt was black like the pants but was of a very soft cloth, buttoning, of course, on the wrong side. What else would you expect in a woman's boutique? As promised, they were playing a full symphony on my skin. I had the same panties and chemise to help the music, but my original clothing never did reappear. When asked, Honey replied that they would be sent to my house with some other "things", if I really wanted them, but that for now, I was free to go.

I was hesitant until I looked in a mirror. The person I saw was myself, only I was strangely androgynous if not outright effeminate. It wasn't even all that obvious that I was wearing a blouse unless you looked closely, but the rest of it had no "macho" in it anywhere. The person I had known in my mirrors so often before was not to be seen. Yet, it oddly did not seem so strange as I think it should have. It had not looked right when she had me try on those *other* women's clothing, but now . . . It did not occur to me at the time that it could have been some sort of a spell and potion working not only on my mind but also my body, but that was a different question altogether.

There was some nervousness as with anything new, but I did leave after paying for the clothes and thanking Honey. She smiled again that same warm smile that she had been lavishing on me all the time I was there, saying that she *really did* understand and that when I needed more, to just come and see her.

As I walked home, I felt a spring in my step that I had not had for years.

I hesitated only briefly when a colleague from the university almost ran me down on the sidewalk. He apologized profusely for having bumped me, but gave absolutely no indication of any sort of recognition. It was strange indeed, for I knew him fairly well. Obviously, my lack of beard and change of clothing did wonders for my image that I had not been aware of. It ended up adding even more to that spring to my already elastic step. I was learning and moving in that knowledge in ways that I would not have suspected. I could practice what I was learning without fear of recognition even by my colleagues. Nonetheless, I knew that I would still have to worry about my graduate students; they knew me better and would not be fooled by the change in clothes and absence of beard.

At home I gave myself over to my more base desires and patted and felt the cloth and the mutual feelings on the skin beneath it. This was a sea of sensations I had not dreamed existed. Later that afternoon, shortly before dinner time, a small truck pulled in and unloaded a large pile of boxes from the boutique. The bill for the clothing was not inconsequential, but I paid it, knowing full well that more sensuous clothes were included in the boxes. Honey had not stated to me what I had ordered... only that I would receive according to my needs.

I set about to put the things away. When I came to my male clothing and the pett-pants, I put the pett-pants in my lingerie drawer, but the cotton pants and shirt sort of got tossed into the rag bin on top of the rest of my old underclothes, rather unceremoniously. I knew what the new clothing would do and so, as long as I was in a new environment, so to say, I was going to revel in it and leave those things of the old behind when not necessary. And this harsh, male type clothing was definitely unnecessary!

The next day Pat smiled at me when I showed up in my new, smooth clothing, hose and low heels instead of my male clothing. I expressed the fear of recognition that re-

mained in me. Her answer was relatively simple. During my lessons she cast another spell and gave me another very high powered potion as the object of my lesson. It's result was, for a very short time, to make the skin of my face and even some of my facial bones not only flexible but pliable. While they were in this condition, she molded my face as a sculptor would mold clay. She raised my cheek bones and narrowed and softened my jaw line. She also reshaped my nose into a perky, slightly uptilted button instead of the small beak I had originally had. It was an odd sensation to have her press on my chin and soften the lines that my maleness had needed and have it stay that way. The image in the mirror now had a somewhat vague likeness to my former self, sort of like I was a relative of mine. Despite my real years, however, I looked much younger in an odd but not unpleasant sort of way. I could plainly see that if I had had any breasts, then, without a doubt, it would have been the image of a woman, somewhat plain and not overly pretty, but quite pleasant to look on...

The "I" that I had started out with in this "course of study" had just been submersed a bit more. This was not just hair, but the actual skin and bone! If I had doubted her power before, I certainly did not now!

Chapter 5: A New Image is Fulfilled

The slacks that Honey had sold me were now my standard clothing on the street. After the "facial", I had no need to fear recognition. It was like being a new person. Some of the sensations of being hairless waned, but my chest remained sensitive. In fact, it seemed to be expanding.

I did not remember my chest before I started the lessons. Who does? When they say... *"know as well as the back of your hand"*, pause a minute and think... how well *DO* you know the back of *YOUR* hand? Probably not all that well, really; I know that I don't. In this day and age when so little work is done by hand, we seem to lose such familiarities. Anyway, I did not remember how my chest looked before this fracas started. Oh, I had seen the hairy stretch innumerable times, but, since it was now devoid of hair, (not that was all that important), I was not sure of how it looked. I sensed that it was now different but couldn't tell you in detail just how though some differences were quite apparent. The most startling of these changes was that I was sure my nipples were now larger. They also protruded, something I'm sure that my old chest had not done, or had it? Frankly I wasn't sure, but there was something new. The clincher was a flatish, round plateau kind of hardness underneath them that seemed to be pushing them and my chest out. In other words, it seemed that I was growing *breasts*.

As the weeks passed, my knowledge of spells and potions increased by leaps and bounds. It never ceased to cause me wonder that all of the potions and spells, some of which were long and involved, could be remembered to such detail. Even when I got to the teaching and learning spells, I was still somewhat in awe. It gave me pause to remember, however, when she explained that this knowledge was imparted with the aid of a spell and thus could be removed with a spell. It was also mildly frustrating that I could not commit anything to paper or even tape. SHE could pass it on but I couldn't.

On the other hand, I had stopped trying a while back and so it was only mildly frustrating.

Meanwhile, the expansion of my chest seemed to go on unabated. They grew out so fast that I was soon sporting small but undeniable breasts that pushed the soft fabric of my various blouses out in definite, small cones of flesh. Honey had put a bra in with that marvelous set of clothing and lingerie that I had bought, but it was so large that I knew it had been added just as a reminder for whom the clothing had really been designed. Now as I blossomed out, I began to wonder if she had not had a secondary reason for including it? Another puzzle was that I was not panic stricken by such physical changes. It just seemed to be “normal”.

Five months into my program of study, I had progressed to yet another new robe, a warm golden yellow. It symbolized the time of summer when the fruits develop and ripen just as my knowledge was expanding and growing, ready to bear fruit by my own skills. I could believe it in other ways too, as my breasts had now also become quite prominent. If I were to dig into my old clothing in the basement and pull out and wear a tee shirt, they would be shamelessly evident and indistinguishable without the assistance of an Ace bandage (which I wasn't about to do as it was not necessary during this period of learning). My nipples had also grown with them and were now also just as exceedingly large to my eyes and tented the fabric of whatever blouse I wore. I had mentioned this to Pat many times, but all she ever said was that it was only fitting and proper for a witch. Finally, after the eleventy eleventh time, she then stated that if the image bothered me, then I could always go back to Honey who would gladly give me an outfit that would make my image more “compatible”. I felt I knew what that image would be and questioned if I were ready for such. Pat only said that when my mirror told me to change, then I should change. That evening I looked into my mirror and realized that it was indeed time for a change.

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At the boutique Honie welcomed me very warmly with a hug and a light, friendly kiss on the cheek. Then, as before, she led me back to the changing booth. Knowing what she wanted, whether for measuring or not, I took off my blouse. But I did it slowly knowing that it would tease her. Her eyes hungrily drank in the mounds that pushed out the chemise I wore under the blouse. The moment the pants were off and she saw my sleek, lacy panties, I thought she would drool. My manhood by now no longer made a large lump under them, seemingly lost in the triangle of my pubic hair that was clearly outlined under the sheerness and lace of my panties. She should like them, she had selected them for me on my last visit. When the chemise came off, she smiled warmly and very gently reached out and hefted one of my breasts and then just as gently let it fall back with a light quivering action. I could not help but smile at her action to which she smiled back as in reply.

“Well, Kevin, I see that Pat is working wonders with your image. Now you are here to complete it, eh?”

“She told me that when my mirror told me it was time to change, that I should again come to see you. So... here I am. Let's change it.”