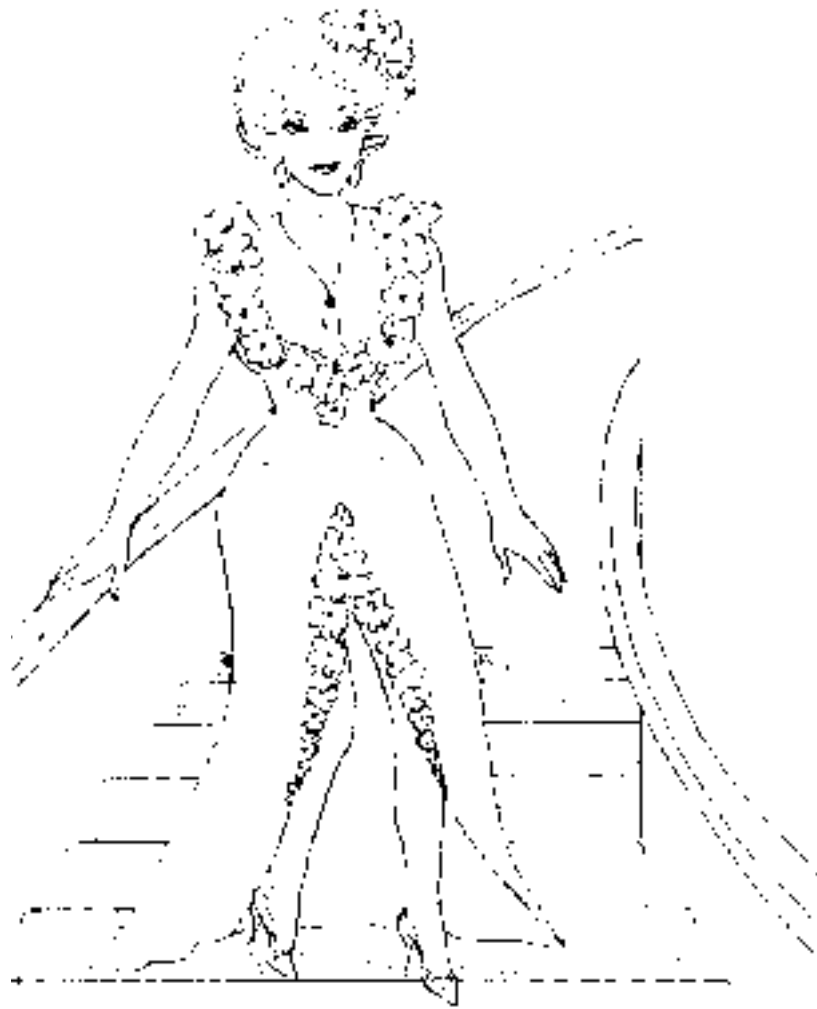


# TO BE A WOMAN

*By Geri Becken*



*ILLUSTRATED BY BRIAN DUKEHART*

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**A 'NEW WOMAN' NOVEL**

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## **MAID OF HONOR**

**By Geri Becken**

A bright light invaded my closed eyes. I had been sleeping soundly, my dream. was shattered before I could even remember it.

"Lance asked me to marry him!" Came the voice of Becky, my room mate. "I am engaged! Isn't that just wonderful."

I was almost awake. I normally didn't wake up well.

"Isn't this ring just the most beautiful ring you have ever seen?!" Becky continued to bombard me with her excitement.

By now, sleep wasn't possible. Becky was my best friend in the whole world. We had done everything together since birth. Besides, I was excited for her as well.

I sat up in bed and asked, "Let's see the rock?"

Becky showed me the ring on her hand.

"It is lovely!" I exclaimed examining the ring. "Did you know he was going to ask you?"

"No. He caught me totally by surprise. You could have knocked me over with a feather when he asked me," she responded.

"Tell me about it. Where did he ask you?"

"It was so romantic. We were at dinner, you know at The Garden. The meal was much like the other dates we have been on. We had a late dinner, after seeing the show. Anyway, he was acting sort of strange during dinner, you know that sort of secret strange most men do when they are waiting for something to happen."

I shook my head 'Yes'.

"Anyway, we finished dinner and were ordering dessert. I ordered a piece of mud pie. When the waiter brought out my dessert, there was this box instead of the mud pie on the plate. I looked at the box. Before I could ask the waiter about it, he just left. I turned to Lance. He smiled and suggested, 'Why don't you open it?' So I did. Inside was the ring."

"How romantic," I replied to her story.

Becky had been dating Lance almost since we arrived in the big city just over a year ago.

I was often jealous of her ability to have someone to date. I hadn't been so lucky.

"When is the wedding?" I asked, bringing myself back to Becky's happy moment.

"Next June," she announced, "I always wanted to be a June bride."

"June!" I exclaimed in surprise, "That is ten months away! Can you wait that long?"

"I don't know. He is sooo sexy; if you know what I mean."

I nodded my head 'Yes'. I knew what she meant.

Lance was a tall, handsome, athletic young professional. Almost every girl we knew would have gladly traded places with Becky.

I knew that Becky had not yet 'done it' with Lance. We kept no secrets from each other. We had never kept secrets. Since birth, we had been best friends.

"Lance wants a formal wedding. His family always likes to have big weddings. You will help me plan the wedding, won't you? It is the bride's family responsibility to plan the wedding. And you are all the 'family' I have."

I shook my head 'Yes'. She didn't really need to ask. I would do anything for Becky. We had left Podunkville to come here to the big city together. We roomed together.

We shared everything. I guess I was her 'family'...

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Some 22 years ago our fathers received orders to report to their military reserve unit. They had been best friends and had married best friends about six months earlier. Nine months to the day after they reported to the military our mothers were in the town's 'hospital'.

Podunkville was a small town. There were only about 30 families, most having five or six kids. Our high school class, one of the largest in the history of the town, graduated 6. The population of the town numbered less than 150. The nearest town was over 45 minutes drive away.

Ol' Doc Brown was beside himself. Having one child born a month was a busy month for him. Here he had two women in his only hospital room (his guest room), both about ready to give birth. As he told the story, years later, he had our mothers lying side by side so he could work on whomever gave birth first. He ended up catching me with his right hand and Becky with his left. Our birth certificates said we were born at the same time, 2:17 in the afternoon.

Our fathers never returned from the 'police action' that they had been called up for. Both died bravely, or so the citations that came with their medals said. Our mothers were awarded a small subsistence from the military survivors for dependent children; Becky and I. Most of the Survivors benefits went into a trust fund to supplement Social Security payments. They managed to make ends meet by raising a lot of vegetables and some animals on the small tract of land that they shared.

All through school, we did everything together. There was not much to do for excitement in this town of less than 150. Most young people either left right after high school, or took over the family farm. Becky and I set a first. About one graduate in twenty went on to college. Becky and I were both accepted to business college. Last year we had graduated each with an associated degree in office management.

Neither Becky nor I seemed to develop friends very well. In school, we knew many of the students, but were not really closer than a first name basis with any of them. Our Christmas card list was small, each other. Our Mothers had both been killed during the tornado that had destroyed the entire town while we were in college. Over half of the population had died. The rest sort of scattered. The bank, rather than the farmers, had owned most of the farms in the area. It was cheaper for the farmers to walk away. In the entire world we had only each other. Well, Becky now had Lance as well.

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We both knew that neither of us would get back to sleep that night. We sat around out small 'dinning room' table, in our robes. We made a pot of coffee to help keep us awake.

"What plans have you and Lance made for the wedding?" I asked, sipping my coffee. It was very early Saturday morning, so we didn't have to get up to go to work. "And, who is going to pay for this formal wedding?"

"Lance's father knows that I am an orphan, and all that, so he is taking on some of the bills," she answered with a little shrug. "Lance has already come up with his Best Man, and a half dozen or so he wants to be Grooms Men."

"Do you know half dozen women to be Bride's Maids?" I asked Becky.

"Lance has a sister who could be one Bride's Maid, and she has friends," she said. "Maybe one of the girls from the office would also be able to be a Bride's Maid." She paused before continuing. "It will not be easy to get them. Lance wants the wedding to be at his folk's house."

"They live two thousand miles away! You aren't going to find anyone to be a Bride's Maid from here. Let alone a Maid of Honor," I responded.

"I had sort of hoped you would be my Maid of Honor."

"Me!" I almost squeaked. "I can't be your Maid of Honor! I am a guy!"

"There is no one else who I could ask. I need someone to help me plan the wedding, to work with me picking out my dress, and a hundred other things that need to be done with me. I need someone who knows me better than I do. Who else could do this?"

She had me there. I knew Becky at least as well as she knew herself. There was really no one else who knew her as well as I did.

"But how can I do this?" I asked.

Becky had no idea how I could do this.

Well, at least I would help her get ready. That was the least I could do for her. I had no idea at that time what this would mean to me.

Besides being the best friends in the world, we were both about the same size, Becky was tall for a woman, while I was short and slight of built for a man. Starting as youths, we had shared clothes on more than one occasion. We could still share some clothes.

We had slept over at each others house about an average of slightly more than once a week from the time we were 4 years old. We left for college together and roomed together from the start; sharing an apartment. At our first apartment, the landlady thought we were both girls. Otherwise; she wouldn't have let us share the apartment. We were able to live there the first semester.

To this day, I doubted she knew that I was not a girl. At least once a week, I would dress up as a girl to be seen by her. Fortunately, she was far from watchful; otherwise she would have noticed.

Our second apartment was with a landlady who didn't care what we did, just as long as we didn't bother the neighbors. We never saw the neighbors and the apartment was in Becky's name. We stayed there until we finished school; after three semesters and two summer sessions.

Our present apartment was in Becky's name as well; as the owner wanted only girls in the apartment. The agent who rented the place didn't care who lived there as long as the owner didn't get on her back.

The agent, Angel, was nice to us. She was a strange looking woman, standing over 6'1" tall and was built more like a line backer than a woman. She stopped by the New Years Eve party we held the first year in the apartment. She was the only one to do so. She stayed longer than she had planned and had drank more than she should have. Before she left, she confided to me that she was a transsexual, a person born male, but had a sex change operation last year; after living as a woman for ten years. "Best move I ever made." she said. "Sex is soooo much better this way."

I wasn't so sure about her statement, but didn't intend to find out.

Early plans for the wedding were going well. The first month passed. Becky was going to alter her mother's wedding dress and wearing a padded bra, nylons and heels, to provide a 'dress-maker's dummy' for Becky, I found myself modeling the dress for her as she worked on some alterations.

I was so dressed one evening when Angel stopped by.

"I heard about your upcoming wedding, Becky. I stopped by to offer my congratulations; and to offer any help I can give," Angel announced as Becky let her into our small apartment consisting of two bedrooms a common living room and dining room, a small kitchen, and a single bathroom.

"My, my don't you look pretty like that," Angel exclaimed seeing me in the wedding dress. "You would make a very pretty bride."

"Why thank you Ma'am," I joked in a falsetto voice followed by a curtsy.

"I tried to talk **her** into being my Maid of Honor," Becky said suddenly to Angel. "I think **she** would make a real pretty Maid of Honor, don't you"

"**She** would be very pretty," Angel agreed with equal emphasis upon my supposed feminine gender. "Although, I am not too sure if you would want **her** to be your Maid of Honor, Becky." Before I could thank her for supporting me, she continued, "**she** is almost too pretty and might out shine the Bride."

"Not funny," was all I could think to say.

Angel and Becky continued to treat me as a woman for the rest of the evening; even after I changed back into my clothes.

At last Angel left. Her parting comment didn't help either. "I know some people who can help you with appearing more female. Let me know if you want their help."

"Thanks loads, Angel," I countered sarcastically as she left.

"I bet you could do it," Becky countered. "Why won't you try? I need you as my Maid of Honor. You said you would do anything for me. Don't you remember in third grade?" Becky asked, not playing fair.

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The summer after third grade Mother had planned to send me off to summer camp. I really didn't want to go as I wouldn't know anyone there.

"But Mom," I had complained, "I don't know anyone at camp. Why can't I just stay here this summer?"

"You need to get out more, young man. You need to see things from beyond the farm."

Later that day I told Becky of my going to camp. "Mom is making me go to camp this year. I would rather stay here with you this summer."

"You are lucky. Summer camp can be so much fun. Pat really enjoyed summer camp last summer. I wish I could go to camp," Becky replied wistfully, remembering Pat's comments about summer camp. Pat was a year ahead of us in school.

"Wouldn't it be great if we could go to the same camp?" I wished out loud.

"It would be, but you are being sent to a boy's only camp."

"Yea. Still, I'd like the camp much more if you were there with me."

"Me too," Becky agreed.

"I have an idea," I said suddenly with the bright idea. "Why don't you pretend to be a guy and come to camp with me?"

"I don't know," Becky started to say.

"You aren't *chicken* are you?"

"I'm not chicken."

"Well then, why not come to camp with me? I won't forget the favor."

Becky agreed to go with me as a guy. We talked our parents into the idea. We shared a tent and managed to hide her true sex from everyone there. She swam and did everything else the boys did, as a boy did. She even managed to go topless without appearing too concerned.

I had promised her that I would return the favor anytime she needed me to.

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"Okay." I finally gave in. "If I can pass as a girl, I will do this for you."

Becky gave me a great hug. "I knew you would help me. You are my best friend."

The next day Angel came back to the apartment.

"I know that you have dressed as a girl from time to time to fool your landlady, or such; but, passing yourself off as a woman full time is something else. It will not be all that easy for you to pass, but I know how we can arrange it so that no one will be able to detect your *secret*. I have several items you can have. I don't need them anymore. However; there are several other things you will need to do to pass. Just put yourself in my hands and I guarantee that you will be undetectable by the wedding."

I wonder if I made a mistake when I told her 'yes' I would put myself in her hands to get me ready for the wedding.

That fall and winter, I spent every free moment I could undergoing a training and conditioning program that Angel laid out for me. Electrolysis removed most of my body hair and beard. I even let her shape my eyebrows. I let my already long men's hair style grow longer. I exercised and ate 'just right' to best help me pass. I took voice lessons and charm school. I learned to walk, sit, stand, talk, act, write, and even think like a woman.

During this time, the real estate company that Becky and I worked for was undergoing some hard times. Several people were let go. Others were 'down—graded'. Groups were combined. People were moved from one department to another in different office buildings about the city.

In six months I found myself working for six different bosses in three different groups. Each of my assignments was like the 'kiss of death' to the boss and/or the group. Less than five of the people I had worked with were still with the company, all in my last group.

Spring was almost upon us, it was now mid—March. The person looking back at me from the mirror was a much changed person. She was almost pretty. I had lost about 20 pounds of weight, my waist was trimmed by exercise and binding, and my hair was at least four inches longer than I had ever worn it. I doubted that I could appear any more female.

I was wrong.

Friday night Angel brought over a box of soft plastic items. She brought out a pair of plastic 'panties' that were designed to simulate a female lower body. It looked like real skin on the outside and it even felt like real skin. The inside felt like that glue you always get these days on products that come in the mail. You know the stuff, sticky but allows the object to be removed. The inside felt like that glue, only not quite as sticky.

I was embarrassed as Angel helped me into the 'panties'.

"This can be hard to do by yourself," she observed helping me, ignoring my sex, or the difference in our sex. One tube was carefully fed into my male organ. A second and bigger tube was shoved way up my anus. A third tube, almost as big as the second was stiffer and was pushed deep inside me in a way I couldn't understand.



Once I had this panty pulled on I noticed the extra padding in the seat, rounding out my 'fanny' and hips; while pulling my already narrow waist in even more.

She made some minor adjustments to the garment then pronounced it, "Perfect." She then took out a tube of something and laid a bead of the goop around the inside of the 'panty's' legs and waist.

"It will dry quickly," Angel explained as she folded the flaps down, blending them into my skin.

She next took out a plastic top complete with a set of firm, real looking breasts. The top was as tight as the 'panties' had been. I wiggled and fought my way into the top. Once Angel was satisfied, she used a second tube of goop, this time around the top's neck line, waist line and arm holes.

My 'top' was now at least C—Cup size. The breasts seemed to bounce as if they had a mind of their own.

"Those look really real!" Becky exclaimed seeing my breasts. Touching them she said, "And they feel real too!"

Angel then explained. "I had more dollars than sense when I bought those. They are expensive, but I have no further need of them. They are the top of the line 'Sen—Sor—Met—Ric' brand. You will notice that you will soon be able to feel the touch on them as if they were regular skin.

"In fact, I lost my virginity wearing a set just like those, but not as good. The guy never notice anything different about me. It was great!" Angel bragged only to continue with a knowing wink, "well, **girls**, I guess you had better get ready for bed. You will have a busy day tomorrow."

I was almost afraid of what tomorrow would bring. I did not think to ask how Angel had a set of these skin tight in my size. She was several sizes bigger than either Becky or I. I brushed my hair, then put it up in rollers. I did my skin care beauty ritual.

Finally, I slipped into a shortie night gown and a pair of panties. It felt somewhat odd not to wear all of the extra garments (like a panty girdle and bra) as I climbed into bed and started the tape that Angel had brought over several months back. I would learn while I slept. I was quickly asleep.

I woke, like I normally did, suddenly and wide awake. I made my morning trip to the bathroom where I was greeted by my new female form. The new me functioned perfectly, if not surprisingly. I joined Becky for coffee.

"Morning sleepy head," she greeted as I entered the kitchen. "I see you managed to get caught up on your beauty sleep." She poured me a cup of coffee; black with two sugars.

"Morning your self," I answered in my well trained falsetto voice. "What do you have planned for me today?"

"Besides a short stop at a doctor's office, just spending the rest of day as a girl."

Becky and I both had a week off from work. Half of the company was shut down for the week, our half. During these nine days, I was to make an effort to live as a woman.

I sat and waited.

The doctor all but burst into the room. "Good Morning. How are we doing this morning?"

"Fine," I answered in my husky falsetto.

"Great. Let me see, you are here for a minor operation on your throat. But first I need to examine your throat. If all is okay, then we will go next door to my surgi--center where I will complete the operation in a couple of minutes."

He approached and said, "Open wide."

He shined a light down my throat and used a tongue depressor to hold the tongue out of the way. "Looks okay." He looked some more. "Yes. Everything is fine. Okay, let us go to the room next door."

There was a chair that reminded me much of a dentist's chair.

"Please sit down in the chair. I will have to put you 'under' so as to ensure you don't move during the operation. You will only be out for a short time."

"Here put on this bib. We wouldn't want to get anything on your pretty sweater, now would we?"

I shook my head 'no' and put on the bib.

"Breathe deeply," he ordered putting a breathing mask over my mouth and nose. "That is good. Breathe deeply and count slowly from ten to zero. Let us count. Ten."

"Ten." I said out loud.

"Good. Nine."

"Nine."

"Eight," his voice suggested from a long way away.

I tried to say something but couldn't. I was groggy. My throat felt numb.

The nurse was in the room with me. "Welcome back Ms. Jennings. The doctor is finished with you. You will feel groggy for a few more minutes, but it will soon pass. Your throat will feel numb for another couple of hours. Don't talk while it is numb. Later tonight it might hurt. If it does, take two of these. Don't take more than six today and four tomorrow. If it still hurts after tomorrow, then call the doctor's service. The receptionist will give you the number. Feeling better now?"

I was. I shook my head, 'Yes'.

"Good. It would be best if you didn't talk much at all today. Let us try standing up."

I stood up. The room made a half hearted attempt to spin but never really got started. My head cleared.

Becky was waiting for me in the waiting room. She picked up the instructions from the receptionist and led me to the bus stop. "How does it feel?" she asked as we waited for the bus.

I shrugged my shoulders.

"Not supposed to talk right?"

I shook my head, 'Yes'.

"Let's see what the instructions say," she suggested before she read the instructions she had picked up for me from the receptionist. "No food for lunch. No talking. Pain pills. Should be fine tomorrow." She read down the list. "Isn't modern medicine wonderful?"

Instead of lunch, Becky took me to a beauty parlor. Here we had our hair cut and styled, and our nails done up real fancy.

My throat was no longer numb and I looked quite different when we left the beauty parlor. My hair was colored more toward the reds than the simple brown it had been. "It matches your lovely green eyes," the beautician had said. The green eyes were another gift from Angel, new contact lenses that colored my eyes. I still needed glasses, but now only for prolonged periods of reading.

We did some window shopping after leaving the beauty parlor. I still didn't talk, even though my throat was not sore or numb. It was nearly five when we returned home. Becky whipped up a batch of her 'home made' (from a can) soup. Although it was the first meal of the day, it was more than enough to fill me.

Lance came over to 'watch some TV' with Becky. He knew what was to have happened to me. Still he was very surprised to see how feminine I looked. I went to bed early. There was nothing really interesting on TV. Besides; Lance and Becky had some 'talking' to do and 'three's a crowd'.

My second morning equipped as a female began as had the first. This morning, I had agreed to join Becky and Lance at church. I was up before Becky, so I started the coffee.

Becky stumbled into the kitchen about ten minutes later. She was never perky in the morning after she and Lance 'talked' well into the night. "Coffee," she managed to mumble.

I handed her a cup and said, "Good Morning, sleepy head." My voice came out a strong, sweet, and sexy soprano. "I guess the doctor really does know his stuff," I observed, still marveling in my new voice. "Sounds sort of nice, doesn't it. Sort of matches my new body and everything. It really sounds nice." I added, half delighted by my new voice, while half wondering what I was going to do when I returned to work.

"Nice doesn't describe it," Becky agreed after a big sip of coffee. "I am jealous. It sounds heavenly."

"Do you really think so?" I asked honestly. "Or are you just saying so." Then before she could answer, I continued. "No. Don't answer. I prefer to think you really mean it."

Changing the subject I asked in a concerned voice, "do you think that I will be able to pull this off. I am so worried that someone will discover my secret. What if these suddenly fall off?" My hands were on my breasts. "What if..."

"Now listen here young lady. Fishing for compliments is one thing, but this will never do. From what little I have seen, there is no chance that anyone would ever notice anything out of the ordinary about you. You are a pretty, but otherwise typical

single, white, female, age 21.” She paused, then said, “you had better start getting dressed; Lance will be here before too long to take us to church.”

“Thanks Becky. You are the best friend a girl could have.” I gave her a sisterly hug, a peck on the cheek, and headed to my bedroom to dress.

Once in my bedroom, I removed my night gown and admired myself in the mirror. *“Not a bad looking body. No sag in the breasts yet.”*

I then started to dress, putting on my bra. My make up was simple, a light base of foundation, mascara and eye shadow, some powder for my cheeks, and lipstick. I brushed my hair removing the tangles. I talked to myself as I did each step of getting ready. I enjoyed the sound of my voice, it sounded so pretty and feminine.

The auburn color did look good with my eyes. I put on my nylons and slip. Finally I put on my dress. It was a three quarter sleeved, V-necked dress with a full skirt. I slipped into my heels and added my jewelry; two finger rings, ear rings, a simple necklace, and my watch. I was ready; and in only an hour. Not bad.

Lance arrived on time. He was always on time. Becky was still getting ready. It normally took her only a little more time to get ready than it did me, but she was always getting side tracked. Thus, I was normally ready first.

“Coffee, Lance?” I asked him, my new voice almost sounding normal to me, offering a cup of coffee. “Becky will be ready in a bit.” I didn't wait for his answer, just poured him a cup. We were going to turn off the pot and neither of us liked cold coffee. Becky could wash the cup. “The day looks so pretty. Is it warming up?”

“Yes. It is a little warmer than yesterday.”

“Have you and Becky decided where you are going on your Honeymoon yet?” I asked just to keep the conversation going. I knew they hadn't.

“No. Not yet.”

I had never been able to get Lance to say much. We didn't have much in common. Today he wasn't making it any easier on me.

Five more minutes of my asking questions to get him to talk and his short answers passed before Becky appeared.

Lance stood and smiled at Becky, his eyes saying a lot more. “You are lovely, Honey. We had better go.”

Lance opened both Becky's and my door for us at his car. The church wasn't very far away; but we were going to brunch afterwards.

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I was into my second week with my new body and it felt like I had always had this shape. Over the last week, Becky and I had visited just about every clothing store in town. We had tried on mountains of clothes. Most just won't do. Both Becky and I were ‘Talls’ and most stores didn't admit that a woman could be over 5' 7" tall. Over half of **my** wardrobe was ordered from J. C. Penny's Tall Woman catalog.

I was nervous about tomorrow, my first day with a new department half way across town.

Lance, who worked in personnel had changed my personnel files observing that with my new appearance as a woman, no one remaining in the firm would even guess who I was, once my name was altered. So Lance, changed my name from Robert to Robin, and my sex from male to female. Since many staff assistants accepted jobs as secretaries instead of losing their jobs because jobs were tight everywhere. Lance decided that I would become just one more, in a long line of **women**, who accepted a down—grade to keep her job. According to Lance, my new boss had lost both his staff assistant and secretary, and could only replace the secretary.

On Monday morning, I arrived at work early. It was a habit that Becky and I had developed in college and continued to do so. I found the coffee on and a light on in the office of my new boss.

I knocked upon his door.

“Enter,” he ordered in a deep husky voice.

I entered.

“Yes. May I help you?”

“My name is Robin Jennings and I am your new secretary,” I said without offering my hand.

“Welcome aboard this sinking ship, Robin. My name is J. Joseph Jamenson, just call me Joe. I understand you were a staff assistant. I really need a staff assistant. Most of your duties will be as before. The group is losing people at the rate of two a week and we are down to 15 people. Two weeks ago we reorganized to consolidate from the remains of three groups of that size. I will introduce you later, we have a staff meeting at 8:30; most of the people will be in by then. Grab yourself a cup of coffee and get settled into your `office`.

My first day, much like the next couple of weeks went slowly. About a third of my time was spent helping others with their resumes. Another third was spent doing staff assistant type work: writing reports, tracking budgets, and analyzing data. The last third was spent trying to look busy.

We had one `going away party` each week; normally Friday lunch until quitting time. Most groups were doing the same; the company didn't seem to care.

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Planning for Becky's wedding was going real well. We got fitted for our gowns. Invitations were sent, flowers ordered, guest list firmed, and thousands of other things.

The middle of April we flew with Lance to spend a week with his folks. Becky had met Lance's folks before. I hadn't. We had to finish some planning with his folks and I got to meet everyone. To our surprise Angel was able to join us, because she wanted to visit in a nearby town some dear friends, and the doctor that provided her sex reassignment surgery. She would be staying with a friend that she had known for years,

who was a paramedic with the local volunteer fire department. She had been a volunteer before her surgery...

*Life is weird...*

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Lance's father looked to be a slightly older version of his son; gray-haired but otherwise quite handsome. His name was Mark.

Lance's mother at first confused me. She seemed to be just a pretty air head.

"Hi. My name is Buffy." she said giving me a big hug. "You must be Robin, Becky's mysterious roommate? She has not told me much about you. How was the trip here? You must be tired. I am always tired after a long trip. Of course, we don't go on long trips much any more. Still, when we do, I am tired afterwards. You work with Becky and Lance, don't you? It must be fun to work outside the home. I don't get to get out much. Let me show you to your room. You and Becky need to share a room, you don't mind, do you? Your room is right upstairs. We don't have many bedrooms. We didn't have the money when the kids were younger and since they moved out, we don't need the rooms very often. Here we are."

She paused to let me speak. "Yes, I am, the trip was fine. Yes, all of us work for the same company. No, I don't mind sharing a room with Becky."

She smiled at me, then giggled.

"I guess I do tend to ramble on when I am excited. Later we will have to talk, woman to woman, when I am less excited."

We had a snack, instead of dinner. We had been traveling all day and were more tired than hungry. Becky and Lance disappeared to 'talk', leaving me alone with Lance's folks.

His father asked one or two questions, more to be polite.

Buffy asked a lot more questions, this time allowing me to answer them.

We talked about the wedding plans.

Becky and I shared a full sized bed that night. It is not uncommon for two women to share a bed when beds are in short supply. We had done so, starting as children. All we had ever done was sleep, or talk. Talk, not like Becky and Lance did, for Becky was my 'sister'.

The next morning we got the grand tour of the house and neighborhood. Lance's parents had bought an older two story house that sat on what had been a small farm. The land had been allowed to go wild. There were horse trails throughout the land. Buffy loved horses. I got to meet her horses. She had three of her own and boarded one for her daughter, Gwen.

Gwen was a few years younger than Lance. She was just a couple of months older than Becky and I. I met her for the first time at dinner that night. She was home from college for 'Spring Break'. She was studying engineering, the only girl in her class. After dinner Gwen told me that she and Lance were named after Sir Lancelot and Queen

Guinevere. She had gone by Gwen since she started school. It was easy to spell and did not get her teased by classmates.

I allowed myself to be talked into going for a horse ride with Buffy and Gwen. I had never been on a horse before. After a brief lesson we were off. My mount was an old, calm mare, named Queenie. After the first half hour, I found I enjoyed the ride. I began to relax and enjoy the company.

Suddenly, Queenie stumbled and I found myself flying. Before I could react to my situation, all went black.

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I awoke in a bed. I didn't recognize the room. I was in a hospital of some sort. My head hurt, really bad. And I was a mummy!

Well, really, I was flat on my back with my: face bandaged; neck in a brace, chest covered with some kind of cage, arms bandaged, lower body in some sort of cast, and legs raised and apart tied to metal frame. Tubes, monitors, and such attached from head to foot. And God, how I hurt!

Becky was beside my bed.

"Did you get the number of that truck?" I tried to make a joke, but the tube in my mouth was really too much for talking.

"You're awake!" Becky exclaimed continuing in one breath, "How do you feel? Do you feel a lot of pain. So much has happened, Robin. The doctor wants to talk to you as soon as you are awake. Should I get him?"

"Slow down. It is hard for me to keep up with you. I have a real bad headache and some other pains; otherwise, I feel okay. When will I be let out of here?"

"The doctor said you were to spend a couple of weeks here, for observation while the bones heal. I will go get the nurse and let the doctor know. She said when you woke to let her know." A much excited Becky was back in a couple of minutes followed by a woman in a white uniform.

"I'll bet your head hurts big time."

"Does it ever!"

"The doctor said you could have two of these when you woke. They will help with the pain. You are a lucky woman. You managed to land in a tree after the horse threw you over the cliff; otherwise, you could have easily broken a lot more bones." *'Like your neck'*, she left unsaid. She fed me the two pills while holding a glass of water for me to sip from a straw.

My thoughts blurred. I passed into sleep. I awoke to a lot of pain, but my head was much better.

"Ah, I hoped I could catch you awake during my regular rounds," a man in surgical greens stated as he lowered his face mask to reveal a neatly trimmed old fashioned mutton chop styled beard, a beak like nose, and smiling brown eyes. "I am Doctor Dutton," he continued, causing me to remember that Angel had mentioned his name.

*He was her doctor. Why was he here? What had they done? Why did I hurt so?*

Almost as if he read my mind he took my hand in his to hold it while the nurse emerged from the shadows to give me an injection.

“That should ease the pain a little. But, soon you will have to be a brave little girl. We don't want you to become an addict,” he observed patting my head as if I was a child, or a puppy. “While you drift off into Puff The Magic Dragon Land, I will fill you in with what has happened to you.”

A warm glow stifled the pain and I drifted away to the sound of his voice...

“The horse stopped in order to avoid jumping off a cliff into a deep gully. As a result, you flew over her head and did a swan dive into the crown of a tree some thirty feet below. If you had missed the tree, you would have fallen about ninety feet to land on gravel and boulders,” he began. “Lucky you.”

*Damned lucky!*

“The paramedics undressed you to get at your bleeding on the way into our hospital. Luckily, Angel, was with them to lend a hand,” he continued from a great distance in a whisper thin voice while I bathed in the warm sea—like glow that reminded me of the dog days when I swam in a soup—like ocean... “Your silicone bust pad served as a chest protector and was torn by a branch that may well have stabbed you in the heart. The panty was not as well padded, and your groin took the full impact against a broken limb, breaking your pelvic bone in two places with other trauma...”

*What is he trying to tell me?* My mind tried to reach the surface of the warm sea, but I couldn't reach it, and I was thinking about that awful joke about the Devil in a motorboat.

“Angel told them that you weren't some sort of queer. That you were a pre—op transsexual. And that was why you were dressed in the strange bra and panty. Since we do reassignment surgery here the emergency room intern called me in to help in the necessary reconstruction work,” he continued, “Simply stated, while our trauma team managed to keep you alive, a plastic surgeon fixed your broken nose, shaved your larynx, and handled your breast implants. As I said, you had several punctures from broken branches thrust into your stomach and pelvic region. We worked in two stages. One, was a sort of tummy tuck to handle the stab wounds, and the second was sexual reassignment reconstruction and a transplant...We will know if our surgery was a success when you have your first period....”

I was floating now (the Devil had gone by) and I wondered if the doctor was trying to tell me a joke. I was a woman?

*Sure, and pigs fly...*

I spent three weeks in the hospital. I had the pleasure (?) of using a bed pan for the first time, and I could see and feel for myself that it was no joke. Especially when I had to turn the plug in my new vagina while sitting on a miniature inner tube to ease other pains.

The doctor said I was a perfectly healthy woman when he checked me out of the hospital. Because of all of the emergency nature of my hospital visit, the physical



trauma involved, and the experimental nature of my reassignment surgery my insurance and the hospital would cover the bill.

Becky and Buffy came to get me.

Buffy was beside herself with grief.

"Queenie is normally such a calm horse. She just stumbled at the wrong time and you must have been leaning just wrong. You fell down a cliff and didn't move when you landed. At first I thought you were dead. I had no idea what to do. I am just so glad you are okay. You probably hate me for taking you riding."

"No Buffy, I don't hate you. I enjoyed the ride; well all but the last part." I laughed. "However; I heard a slightly different version of the story. According to the doctor, you and Gwen were able to rig a sling and get me back to your house to call the ambulance. The doctor said I was twice lucky. First, because I wasn't killed; and second because you were there to take care of me. He thinks a lot of your abilities. Thanks." I gave her a peck on the cheek.

I took things easy for the next two days. Buffy wanted to wait on me hand and foot. Despite the pain I did ride Queenie twice more before I left; but not near any cliffs this time.

I had a chance to meet Justin the night before we left. He was to be Lance's best man. He was a lot like Lance; tall, athletic, and sexy. There was something about him that caused my insides to twist in knots. I didn't tell anyone about it.

That night for dinner, I sat across from Justin. I have no idea what Buffy served for dinner. My mind was on Justin. I have no idea why. Justin was in my dreams that night as well.

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We arrived back in our apartment late Sunday night. Monday morning, bright and early we left for work. Well, the time was early and the sun was bright. I am not sure how bright we were.

Joe was not in his office when I arrived, so I started the pot of coffee. Joe arrived just before the staff meeting was to start. He started off the staff meeting with a real bombshell.

"To put an end to the rumors, I shall let you know right up front. I have been offered a job with another company and am going to accept. This will be my last week."

The staff meeting sort of broke up after his announcement.

After the staff meeting Joe asked me to, "Stop in my office."

I did.

"Robin." He began. "You are both a good secretary and staff assistant. I could use someone like you working for me. If you want, I am sure I could arrange for you to be hired."

"Thank you, Joe; but no. I am not yet ready to change jobs. I have to worry about my roommate's wedding in June. Maybe after the wedding, I will start thinking about a new job."

"Well, give me a call. I will see what I can do about getting you a job." He then changed the subject. "Randy will be in charge for a while."

I must have made a face. I didn't think much of Randy. He whined too much. I knew he was by far the most senior person left in the group, but he was not much of a boss.

"Randy?" I asked, as politely as I could.

"I know you don't think much of him. He is the only one the company will allow to fill the job until they can replace me. It will be tougher on you because you will really be running the group, but Randy will get the credit," Joe apologized.

Becky's wedding was rapidly approaching.

I had become totally comfortable with the female version of myself. The real estate company for which Becky and I worked had been bought out by another holding company. Records were transferred to the new corporate headquarters and were there just long enough to be unpacked and entered into the computer before the company was sold again. This time the computer version of the records were transferred to the new company and the hard copy files sent to storage. Barely had the records been downloaded when the company that had bought us, sub—divided into five smaller companies. Becky and I were with the same sub—division of the original company.

In two months things at work had changed so much we had no idea who owned the company. About three quarters of the remaining staff was moved to different companies and new people moved in to take over their offices.

I was bounced to three different sales groups during that time, and despite the company's problems I managed to enter home sales with an excellent track record and mounting commissions.

In the middle of all of this confusion, I was helping plan Becky's wedding and I had my first two periods. I had a real bad case of PMS both times. I knew that I had become a real woman.

Finally came the time for us to leave for Lance's folks house to get ready for the wedding. We had a long week there before the wedding. I was taking my last two weeks of vacation (which included four days of `comp time'). We caught the `red eye' flight out of town.

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The first day at Lance's folks house was a bit of a nightmare. We underwent final fittings of the gowns, finalized flowers and cakes, discussed seating and menu, and what seemed like a hundred other things. I had not managed to get any sleep on the flight. I fell asleep about 10 that evening, thinking *`Tomorrow has got to be better.'*

I was wrong.