PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITY

By Annie Warren



ILLUSTRATED BY BRIAN DUKEHART

A 'HER TV' NOVEL

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PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITY

By Annie Warren

I sat at my desk and fumed. I just learned that Mary MacIndres had gotten promoted into the slot that I had been "grooming" myself for. She was not as qualified as I was, although she was probably sort of reasonably qualified. I knew more, had a better background and was, well, more qualified.

Yet, she had gotten the position and I was left in the dust.

It was not that I was new to the company. I started here 7 years ago and had made great progress, but this was the second time that I had been passed over for a position that I was highly qualified for.

Was I doomed to be a junior executive (that's like glorified paper boy) in this company? There seemed to be no way that I could get into the higher executive tracks. My research into the company and my work in it had not shown that this kind of snag existed, not that I could really identify just what the snag was. I had set my mind on being a personal success in this company by joining its executive 'rulers'. Once I set my mind to a task, I was going to succeed, had to succeed.

I am not a quitter! Never have been!!

When I first entered the university, I had set my goal at graduating with a masters in business in 4 years and had succeeded, had to succeed!

I'm not a perfectionist, I'm just driven. I get what I aim for, and I had aimed for an executive position in this company. Alice, my wife says that I am obsessive, but, well, that's her opinion. I just set goals and then achieve them, that's all.

I sat and fumed for a while and then waited until I cooled off. I knew that a hot temper was not a thing to wave before anyone, much less a superior from whom you want information, or an explanation. So, I cooled down and then decided to go and find out just what was going on.

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Since this was the second time that such a thing had happened, I decided to go to the top. Well, to a vice president was as far as I got, the one in charge of personnel. I wanted to know why I had been passed over.

I got my appointment and went to her office at the time stated.

As I entered, I was confronted with a large roomy office with lots of large, bright windows and a large desk behind which sat Mrs. Wilma Worthington, the Vice President in charge of Personnel. In such a large room, she appeared to be a rather small-

ish, wiry woman with a face that was lined from being out of doors, often. On one wall was a rack of trophies for running. It was clear to me that she was athletic and probably ran daily.

I came in and stood in front of her desk.

She looked me up and down, sat back in her chair, tented her fingers before her, and then said simply, "What can I do for you, Mr. Jansen?"

I explained how disappointed I was with missing my promotion.

She smiled when I said "my" promotion and then replied that it was the way it went.

She then added, "Off the record, Mr. Jansen, one of the prime conditions for rising into the, if you'll pardon the expression, 'elite supervisory level' in this company is to be a woman. If you were a woman," she looked at some papers on her desk, probably my personnel records, "then you would have had a good chance at that promotion; otherwise, you have already risen to the highest level that you can, and quite rapidly, I see. Too bad. You look like you had all kinds of potential."

I bristled, I was flabbergasted. The prime condition that could lead to my advancement was denied to me. I said that I was going to do well in this company and I was, if it were at all possible. This was that trait of mine that Alice had called obsessive. But this was an artificial barrier, AND illegal.

"Mrs. Worthington, Ma'am, isn't that highly illegal?"

Her eyes flashed a bit and then almost immediately took on the calm cool expression I had first seen.

"Hasn't the discrimination in the work place against woman also been illegal? This is merely turnabout and payback time. Oh, and if you should decide to file a claim, then it's your word against mine, and I'm sure we can come up with some reasons for your discontentment or disloyalty or some such," she picked up another sheet from her desk and scanned it very quickly, "yes, I'm *sure* we can, enough to explain this spark of rebellion against the company."

We then went into a discussion of company loyalties, being a "company (wo)man", and such.

After repeating herself about this "pity you are a man", topic later in the conversation, I began to have an idea about what she was aiming at. They apparently liked my work but I just had the wrong body, or image, or whatever.

When I got a break, I put it forth.

"Uh, do you mean that If I were a woman, I would have gotten that promotion?"

"Isn't that what I have been saying all along?"

"But I'm a man. Are you saying that I should quit, or that I would have a chance if I were to become a woman?"

At this "quit or change" question, a twinkle came in her eyes and she smiled.

"I did not say either of those, but I would say they are both options."

"I can't just go home and change my sex. I don't think my wife would like that, anyway."

"There are changes and there are changes, Mr.. Jansen." That twinkle was still there. "And, you could always *ask* your wife."

"Well then, I guess I am going to have to think about this and type up a letter, one way or the other."

"Let me see."

She picked up the sheet of paper that she had been glancing at from her desk. It must have been a synopsis of my records here at the company, the one she had referred to before.

"According to your history, you have been working here for 5 years. Should you need it, you could qualify for and apply for up to a year's, possibly paid, sabbatical leave, or it could be arranged; should you need it. Uh, that is subject to *my* approval."

"Okay, okay, I'll give it some thought and see what I can come up with."

With that I left her office with new ideas but yet precious little hope.

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After work I went home, but Alice was not there. Her job was not a 9 to 5 job and allowed her great freedom.

We met in school where she had started as an Avon Lady.

She had been successful at it, so successful, in fact, that after graduation, actually shortly after we got married, she had been promoted to the local region's executive administration. She managed to run in circles quite above my junior executive level. I think she had more contacts than there are in a computer.

Well, she was out but, from a note I found, due back shortly.

So, I sat and pondered and thought.

When she came in and made noises as to starting dinner, I nixed the idea and said that we were going out to eat.

She looked at me a bit strangely.

Out? On a week day?

But, she put things away, got her purse and away we went.

We went to a small, out of the way, Italian place that had pizza and pasta. We ordered pasta and talked idly until it arrived.

She did not ask and I did not volunteer any information, though I could see her curiosity almost bubbling up to the surface. She knew without asking that something had happened to me at work and that I wanted to discuss it, but she just sat, munched and watched me, knowing that when I was ready I'd open up on it. She knew me well enough by now to know better than to ask and so she didn't.

It was over dessert that I finally broached the subject.

"Alice, do you remember what I said the last time I was passed over for promotion, about my position seeming to be a dead end job? Well, it could be."

"What do you mean 'could be'?"

"I went to see Mrs.. Worthington, she's the Veep of Personnel? Well, she laid it on the line to me, off the record, of course, but said enough to my way of thinking to let me know what `my problem' was. Do you remember, as I believe I told you, that Josie Patterson got promoted over me about a year ago? Well, a Ms. MacIndres has just been promoted over me again. I went today to see Worthington and she just out and out told me the "why", and I'm still mad as a wet hen. It is because I am not a *woman*."

At that point she looked up and into my eyes for a second or two until she crumpled her brow in a frown.

"Because you are what? Or, was that not a what?"

"She said that it was because I was not a *woman!* She followed that statement by saying that if a query would be launched by me, that there would be a host of 'other' reasons found, none of which would do my career any good at all, but that the real reason is that I am a man and not a woman. Now you can see why I'm as mad as a wet hen."

"It seems to me that if you *were* a wet *hen* then there would be no problem, but the whole thing is just too ridiculous! It's basically sexual discrimination! You going to let them get away with that?"

"Like I said, I was told in no uncertain terms that if push came to shove they are ready to back up their choice with other reasons, real, imaginary or trumped up. She cited that men in large corporations have done this type of sexual bullying in the past, but I never thought that I would have any reason to have anything at all to do with it, much less be a victim."

"So, what are you going to do, sue?"

"I have no grounds. Like she said to me, there is just my word against hers, a disgruntled peon against the bastion of the company leadership.

"If I sue and their trumped up charges are found to be that, then what would I have? I will have bitten the hand that fed me and any other company I'd ever want to work for, IF I found work, would be particularly cautious and probably not hire me. I know I'd get no letter of recommendation out of them, probably just the reverse. If I lost, then I am where I am but possibly out of a job with the same prospects for being hired. This is not an age of successful discrimination battles, much less reverse discrimination suits."

She smiled at me.

"Ok, so we beef up your résumé and start a job search, right? And that's the reason for the dinner? Celebrating leaving the. . . "

I'm afraid I gave her a fixed stare that stopped her in mid-sentence.

She had seen that look in my eyes before, that look of cold determination. Her facial muscles relaxed and the smile sort of melted off.

Then and only then did I reply.

"Alice, you know I can't do that. I set out a goal to be an executive in this company and I can't just quit. I have never been able to quit when I have challenged myself to do something. I know what I can and can't do and this is something I know I can do."

"Ah, your compulsive syndrome again, eh? And, uh, just how are you going to do that, Dear? Didn't you just say that you could not advance unless you were a woman?"

"Yes," I said, stroking my chin in thought, "That is a new wrinkle that they have thrown down before me in conquering this challenge. I'm not sure how I can get around it, but I will."

"That's a pretty big hurdle to try and leap with one bound without your tights, jersey and cape on; you know, the jersey with the big letter 'S' on it?"

In spite of my internal anger and turmoil I had to smile.

"Yeah, even Superman would have a problem on this one. And a year's sabbatical wouldn't do him any good either."

"What do you mean a sabbatical?"

"Oh," I smiled at her, the image of Superman in a dress and high heels with his cape fluttering behind him still dancing through my mind, "the Veep said that I could have up to a year's sabbatical if I wanted to make the change. Fat chance; there's got to be another way."

At the mention of a sabbatical, her whole face seemed to light up. There was an instant smile on her face as she did an almost instantaneous "once over" of me.

I had stopped talking when I saw this. I knew she was hatching some sort of plot or plan. Since, after half a day of brainstorming, I had nothing whatever for a plan, I was ready to listen to what she had to say.

Any plan is better than no plan, or it?

"You said they would give you a sabbatical? How long?"

"She said I could have up to a year. Why? What is your scheming little mind working on? Let me in on it. You have a plan?"

"Well, Love, first off it is *not* a little mind and secondly it is not scheming. All I am saying is that if you play it right, you could beat them at their own game; that is, if you *really* wanted to. You are small to medium for a man, just about my size, the perfect stock, so to say, for such a transformation. Why not?"

I turned slightly and looked out the front window into the black parking lot that I knew was there but was more or less invisible this time of night from inside the well lit room. Of course there was nothing to be seen, but it gave me a diversion to do some quick thinking.

Was she going the way of the Veep? What madness had they come up with? Then, not turning, I looked at her out of the corner of my eye.

What the heck was she saying?

"What do you mean beat them at their game? What are you thinking this time?"

"Oh, nothing much. It seems that your Veep has just sent you a loud and clear message on how you can survive in that company, survive and, possibly if not probably, advance. I know that you have an obsessive, unstoppable drive when you put your mind to it. Well, the unstoppable force of your drive has just come up against the immovable barrier of their requirements. What happens when an unstoppable force meets an immovable barrier?"

"Normally the force bounces. It keeps it mass and velocity but changes its vector direction."

If she wanted to tout physical problems at me, then I'd give them back in the same terms.

"But, Honey, you can't bounce; you just said you wouldn't bounce! If your succeeding seems so important to you, then you will have to take the second alternative. If it doesn't bounce, it is absorbed, get it?"

"Meaning?"

"Instead of quitting, you can be absorbed into the company and perhaps become the Veep herself."

It hit me what she was saying.

"Oh come off it, Alice. I can't do that. I'm no woman and am not going to go through any operations to become one. Nor would I want to lose you." I felt a particular warmth towards her surge through my emotions when I said that.

She seemed to read it in my facial expression or body language or whatever. She reached over and put her well manicured hand on mine and smiled again.

"No, Dear. I too would not want to lose you. But 90% of being a woman is in appearances, thoughts and actions. The rest, the internal plumbing and tube work, is secondary unless you want to take the nine month option which neither of us want at this time. You could probably take on the outer appearance of a woman and still be 'all man' underneath it all. Only I would still have to know (and experience) that."

"You can't be serious."

Even as I said this, I could see that she was very serious indeed. Her short speech was not intended to dissuade but to persuade.

"I am a man, have lived all my life as a man. I can't just throw a switch and turn that man side off, can I?"

She smiled when I said that and nodded her head in an energetically positive "yes" motion.

"All right, if you *are* serious, just how do you propose that I make this miraculous change without surgery, or whatever?"

She looked at my hair, ears, face and then down to the edge of what the table allowed her, doing a slow scan, like she was ticking off points and weighing options.

"Well, I guess I did *not* mean *totally* without *any* surgery. Some minor stuff might be required here or there, but you don't have to lose any of the more important parts."

She squeezed my hand.

"Maybe just do a bit of rearranging and enhancement and, well, prettifying." She smiled again. "I think it is eminently very doable!"

"Oh sure. You just wave a magic wand as my fairy godmother and presto I am a woman, right?"

"I did not mean to say it would be easy. It could be hard, a real challenge, possibly greater than any you have ever had before."

There was a twinkle in her eye.

I knew she was setting me up, but, like a starving man with the possibility of a meal, I just had to bite anyway.

"What kind of a challenge?"

I knew she was about to throw my "obsession" up to me. I'm not against challenges, but they do have to be possible and I was thinking this one was impossible.

"Your challenge at work has just doubled. You want to succeed, no, need to, have to succeed. You won't quit your job, so keep the job and take the second challenge that they threw at you! To succeed, you just have to put on this, uh, disguise! Put it on and wear it well and it will give you your chance to succeed. It is sort of a double trouble success!

"Yeah, double trouble."

I looked again at her hand and mine.

Her nails were longer than mine, manicured and flawlessly polished with a deep red nail enamel, but otherwise our hands were similar in size and structure though there was a bit of hair on mine and none to speak of on hers.

We weren't body doubles, but were similar in a good many ways.

As I raised my eyes to her, I sort of did a quick inventory of her, comparing: Great breasts (I had none), smooth creamy chest (well, mine was relatively smooth and pale and reasonably hairless), slender neck (like mine), reddish, kissable, lusciously carmined lips (well, mine were paintable but not as delectable as hers!), perky nose (mine was straight), soft blue eyes (mine were more blue-green) and delicately arched, finely drawn (in the true sense) brows where I had light, shapeless ones. Her hair was a mass of shimmering blonde curls that flowed easily and gorgeously down her back while mine was sort of sandy blond-brown with reddish overtones and just hung down in sort of random waves, of sorts, belying it true length, to just about brush my shoulders.

She was all woman and I was, well, I thought, all man.

Yet, could it be done?

"Don't be disheartened, Dear. If you look at it as a challenge to be conquered, then it won't be so bad, will it? You like challenges and this is a tough one but eminently doable, especially with my help. As for me, I am just about to burst with curiosity, wondering what you would look like as a woman.."

"You mean you want me to go to that woman and request a year's sabbatical and then change myself into a woman?"

"That is what she offered, isn't it?"

"Yes, I believe so, but I never thought of taking her up on it."

"Well, now you have thought about it and have found it to be the proper challenge for you to take and so you have decided to take her offer, right?"

"I'm not convinced, but it would be something to do. Hmmm, and indeed challenging! It would be like a year's paid vacation to make the change, if it would take that long. The only thing is that, if I fail, then I'll be stuck in that lousy position forever in whatever condition I end up in until they change their unwritten policy. That could be messier yet."

"Then, my Dear, you just won't fail; it's as simple as that. I have all the confidence in the world in your abilities. I also have one or two friends in different positions, with different talents, that would probably like to have a hand in the transformation. They are all discreet and have skills that you wouldn't believe. Cosmeticians can do things nowadays that you would not have imagined when I was born. But, that will come when you have gotten that leave and we can start in earnest."

She smiled at me with one of those liquefying smiles that sort of made my insides go squishy (and the toes curl some too. I'll bet, you know the kind).

"Let's say we start next Monday. You can tell them tomorrow that you have decided to take on this additional challenge and accept their offer of a sabbatical, right?"

Her eyes were almost ablaze with twinkling.

"I can see this as being great fun as well as being a challenge to me too. But, we'll work it out; you just wait and see."

"You really think I can do it. Well, I had not counted on your skills while thinking of this. If you'll stand behind me and help me, then I think I can do it; I know I can do it."

I smiled back her. I now knew that I could do it. After all, a dress, some make-up and I'd be on my way, or so I thought.

We closed it with a toast of Italian coffee. Not exactly a traditional toasting medium, but why not?

I had warmed up to the idea and saw that it would be a challenge, an "above and beyond" challenge that I could sink my teeth into, if necessary. I really did not know how much of a challenge it would turn out to be. If I had, I may have swallowed what pride I had and quit and gone elsewhere, drive or no.

But between the two of us, I was now committed to give this new path a try, to face its additional dare. It seemed such a long time, but it could just as well be too short and that was one of the extra problems that I might have to face, that along with a whole raft of others, but we'll get to those as they come.

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Well, gentle readers, that is how it really got started.

I was in a quandary as to what to do and Alice, dear, sweet Alice, just cut through all of the red tape and got to the heart of the problem and solved it.

Well, she gave what seemed to be a doable solution though I had grave doubts as to its efficacy.

The only question I should have asked at that time was about what I had really gotten myself into?

I had the image of the Mummers, or some transvestites I had seen on some Geraldo interview show or other. They looked good. I just did not remember that they were doing it only for a short time, or for a lark. And, there is a great difference between short term and long term in that line of masquerading.

But that was all ahead of me.

Now I had to go and barter for a sabbatical that was illegal in the true respects and given under false pretenses.

Confused?

Well, so was I.

That night as I drifted off to sleep, I wondered how hard it would be to put up such an image and how long it would last and all.

I had watched with special interest as Alice had prepared for bed, wondering how it would feel to do those same actions instead of just bounding into the bedroom, stripping and jumping into my pajamas. Would any of that other stuff be necessary?

It took her a goodly time to remove her make-up, put her hair up and take all of her clothing off including the "specialty" items like the bra which she often substituted with what she called a sleep bra.

Would I have to grow breasts? Seemed ridiculous. Pads would do, women have been wearing falsies for years, why not me?

Maybe it wouldn't be so bad after all. . .

I suppose, yeah, I can do it.

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Business kept me at my desk all of the next day and I did not get to see the vice president. However, I got an appointment to see her on the day after.

When I met her again, nothing seemed to have changed in her attitude toward me until I told her that I would accept the additional challenge starting next Monday.

She smiled, said she thought that I would choose that path and was prepared, calling in the corporate lawyer.

We then spent an hour or so, she, I and the corporate lawyer, who commented, when I asked, that she had seen this choice offered a number of times and that not all

of the candidates, as she called them, had followed through and opted to change. It was a tough decision, and a tougher path to follow. It was enlightening to know that the option had been offered others. I wanted to ask how many had been successful, but time, tide, and paperwork did not let me ask.

We went over a rather complicated and, to me, convoluted set of papers that both bound me to the change and yet seemed to be the epitome of nondiscrimination.

I wasn't signing my life away, but should I change my mind, the company was covered. Should something go wrong, the company was covered. And, should I fail, even there the company was covered. Yeah, whatever happened, the company was covered. What else could I expect when the corporate lawyer is there to cover all of the (company's) corners?

There were no expressed or implied promises of advancement on success in the written contract, of course, but the verbal terms that floated around were full of them, or their implications. It was an enlightening bout of paperwork and signing (and notarizing).

Mrs. Worthington, however, threw in a zinger. She said that my work (up to then) was exemplary (*but not promotable?* I thought to myself) and that they DID want me back.

So, if I were ready to return within 6 months and successful in my new image of femininity and not just a caricature of a woman, then I would receive a half a year's salary as a bonus. I'd in essence get the second half of my sabbatical paid to me above and beyond, so to say. And, that would be a healthy sum.

But, she repeated, it was all based on my being, to her satisfaction, the woman that I was now "contracting" to be.

I was going to have to be a convincing woman, she reiterated, and not some hairy imitation with just a dress, big falsies, and high heels, with no other changes. I pondered this but kept silent. I don't think I really wanted to know what that meant at that point in the game.

"Just ask your wife, Mr. Jansen. She will know what is necessary to being a woman. You are lucky in that you do not have to do it all on your own. You are even luckier in having a wife is knowledgeable in the finer points of being a woman. Some of the candidates without that help failed and ended up in a sort of in between world of neither male, nor female. Alice, your wife, is an expert in these matters and will give you invaluable advice, if you take it."

She smiled again and I sort of had to agree that I had the resources at home.

But, just what was on Alice's mind was yet to be learned, but would be.

When I left there I had a set of papers that said that I was being granted a year's sabbatical leave in order to explore some new techniques that would enhance my value both to myself and my company. It was vague enough that it could fit almost any situation I should want to apply it to, and was not even hinting at what it really meant.

Since I was taking, at Mrs. Worthington's insistence, in essence, pay for no visible return, there was a payback clause. I was bound to the clause by our agreement, When came back, I would be coming back to work at least 5 years. If I left the company before that time, I would have to pay back the prorated pay of this leave. Of course, unwritten in the official documents was that I would return either as a woman to take my chances in the race to the top, or as a man with little (read here "no") hope of advancement.

The paper on which that *was written*, however, did not get filed away in the corporate data banks, nor did I have a copy of it, but it did exist: signed, notarized and secured from my access by Mrs. Worthington and her lawyer.

Did I say or did I need to say that the lawyer was also a woman? Sort of goes without saying, I guess.

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That night I told Alice that it was done. I let her read the papers and she got excited all over again.

We went to the bedroom where I stripped and she started taking measurements and writing them down. It is good that she started on the "outer" measures (you know, arm length, height, etc.) as when she got to the "inner" measures, like inseam length, we got to playing and well, measuring was put off while the bed springs got a good exercising (and we did too, of course).

God, but I love that woman!

My last day or so of work was taken up with turning over my projects to others and sort of doing a one-last-cleaning of my desk. I was planning on not seeing it for a long time. My office was then straightened up and, at the end of the day, I left for one hellaciously long weekend, so to say.

Everyone knew I was going on extended leave, or a sabbatical, but no one knew why I was doing it or how I had wrangled it.

I, of course, was not about to tell them, and so, the rumor mill had it that I was going to get some kind of special training. Well, in a way that's true, but they did not know just how special it was supposed to be. For that fact, neither did I.

As I closed my office and walked out, I thought of what I would wear when I returned.

I had no inkling and let the moment pass.

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At home, I found Alice had been out and about, talking with her contacts and getting "stuff" that she said was going to be necessary for the conversion.

It seemed to me to be a sizable mound of things and I shied away from, "starting there and then". I said that Monday would be soon enough for me, and so I read the evening paper while she made us a light supper.

When I complained after supper that I was still hungry, she said that I had a bit of a paunch and would have to diet it off and so, although I did not want to start on the change, I could and must start on whittling my fat waist down.

Oh come now, 36 inches is fat?

Well, it was to her, and indeed there was true fat there, a small "beer gut" although I did not drink the stuff, and so, I got the diet. From then on, snacks seemed to be carrot sticks or lettuce leaves or celery sticks or some such "healthful" and thinning foods. Any sweets that I found around the house were quickly gobbled up by me and disappeared, not to be replaced.

All through the weekend I would catch her every now and then looking at me with an enigmatic smile. On Sunday afternoon, we played a game; she managed to make it a sexy game, that was called something like, "let's empty the closets and drawers".

You know what came out without me telling you, but I will anyway, as the omissions are just as important as the commissions.

In the course of several hours that actually ran into the evening, we managed to remove all of my male clothing and put it into boxes and cloth bags.

To say all, is a slight misnomer as there was one complete set that was kept out. I had one pair of slacks, one tee shirt, one short sleeved shirt, one pair of under pants, one pair of socks, and one pair of lace up high quarter shoes. The only accessory allowed was a leather belt. I did not wear rings other than my wedding band and that was not even mentioned or other jewelry, and so, there were none. Even my digital watch did not stay out of the bags.

The one outfit that stayed out, stayed out, I'm convinced, because I was wearing it, at least for a while, the while that was necessary when things were being packed away.

That evening at 9;00, there came a knock at the door.

I got back into my last outfit (we had been romping and "playing" before) and opened the door to some of her friends. Almost wordlessly and quite rapidly, they managed to remove all of the boxes and bags from the house. It was only after they were gone that I realized that what I was wearing was all that I now had for clothes, that's how the selection was made.

Well, it was all that I knew of that I had, for that knowledge was going to change.

After they left, it did not take long before we were at it again and soon my last set of male clothes was more or less strewn about the house and we, of course, ended up in bed... where we stayed until the morning.

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I awoke with visions of dancing in my head, of Alice and me dancing naked, both to music from the stereo and to the innate music of our bodies.

But on that early morning we were both somewhat of a mess and she beat me to the bathroom and a shower and all. I lay back and relaxed until she was done and then I got up and did my ablutions to include my shower.

When I came out, I started looking for my clothes, but they were nowhere to be seen. I looked in my drawers; they had not made it back there. I looked in the closet; it was filled with her things but none of mine. With a towel about my middle, I even went out in the living room, looking where I knew I had "lost" at least some of them; nothing. I finally found her in the kitchen and just had to ask.

"Uh, Alice. Where are my clothes?"

"Oh yes, it is that time, isn't it?"

We went back into the bedroom where she looked over at the pile of boxes, bags and clothes that I had been very pointedly ignoring. When she looked, I looked too, and then it hit me.

This was the start of my "new look".

"Ok, let's put a dress on me and get it over with."

She smiled at me.

"Ah, but Dear, what they want is not gotten as simply as putting on a dress. If you just 'put on a dress', then you are a man wearing a dress, right? The contract you mentioned dealt with becoming a woman, not merely a man in dresses. There is a lot to be done to become a woman, a lot to do, and putting on a dress comes later in the process. First we have to prep the body."

I looked down at my body. I thought it was ready and said so.

"Hey, what do you mean? My body is ready as long as the dress fits."

"See? You have the first light of knowledge that is needed, but only the first light. I don't suppose you've noticed that men and women are different, have you?"

I came over to her and put my arms gently around her, forgetting for the moment the towel that made its way to the floor.

"I have noticed your body, Dear, have since the beginning of time, I think."

I kissed her and then kissed her lightly on the side of her neck, but she sort of pushed me away.

"You are insatiable, aren't you? Well, we have to get on. You had a shower to clean the upper skin. Now we have to go deeper."

She produced a bottle of hair remover.

"Women aren't hairy. Let's fix that problem, and then we will look at the hair that we will keep and see what to do about it."

So, it was back the bathroom.

She spread the cool liquid all over my arms and legs, under my arms, on my chest and belly, although I did not have much hair there. None went on my head nor on any of my genital hair although it came right down to the top of it. Otherwise, if there was a hair, it got hit.

She started combing my hair this way and that, trying out looks, it seems, always keeping it out of the goo coating my body.

After what seemed a short while the coolness was beginning to turn to fire. When it started to get uncomfortable, I mentioned it to her and she started the shower.

For the second time that day (already) I was under the shower, this time washing off the whitish stuff that had started to cake. As expected, wherever it had been, I now had no hair. I had expected it but it was still a strange thing to see and stranger to feel. I hadn't been hairy, but I was, for sure, now very hairless.

Not only that, but now my skin had a strangely heightened sensitivity. When I put a towel around my waist, I thought that I could almost feel the individual threads of the nap of the terry cloth when it brushed my legs and thighs. It was stranger than the loss of the hair in some ways.

As I walked out into the bedroom, I saw she had some simple things laid out for me on the bed. Well, simple for her, but most complicated for me. I had seen her put them on, had taken most of their kind off of her many times over, but was now being asked to put them on me, on my virgin (well, in this respect) body. That was an alien action for me, but one I knew I was going to have to learn.

"Time to get dressed, uh... Gee, what can we call your female self? Jan is so masculine." She had pronounced it as I had "trained her to", like John. She had not thought of its spelling.

"Really, Alice, that is the lesser of my problems. It is one I've been up against for years. My Scandinavian roots made my Yan Yansen name so easy to trip off the lips. But, if you separate the two, J-a-n there is John here but pronounced more like the y-o-n of yonder, but J-a-n here is usually short for Janice or Janet and pronounced with the same "a" sound unless you know it is supposed to be said like John. Yeah, I have been fighting that one, it seems, since I could first say it. I wonder if that is why the Veep was always smiling to herself when she was talking to me about my change, thinking that name wise maybe I wouldn't have to make a change?"

She giggled.

"You know, I never thought of it since everyone calls you "John". Ok, then Jan it is, with the short 'a' like in 'cat'. Or, would you like some other name? It could be a bit damaging to your male image."

"My name damaging? Just look at the stuff on the bed that you want me to put on and tell me that my name will be damaging."

Again she giggled as she handed me a lacy pair of soft nylon panties.

"Again you're right. Let's see how these fit. The 'extra' cloth goes in the back."

It never occurred to me how panties went *on*. I had always been more interested in how they came off. But a simple glance showed that what she said was true, and, with her well shaped, beautiful body as an obvious example, easily discernible why.

I stepped into them and started to draw them up my legs and almost stopped, the sensation was almost overwhelmingly electrifying. The lotion had made my legs not only almost slickly smooth but also hypersensitive. I almost cringed at the feelings.

Now don't get me wrong! It wasn't painful, far from it. The cloth was soft and with my heightened sensitivity was more like pulling on a handful of the softest feathers

that were tickling and simultaneously smoothing my legs with sensuous delight. By the time I had pulled them up to my crotch, I had a powerful erection, just from the tactile sensations. Any extra cloth from the back was pulled around in front my the obvious tenting by my rock hard penis.

"Well, you obviously liked the feel and fit of your new panties, but there is more clothing to go. Don't get so excited that you make a mess in your panties or you'll have to change them. You know, since I went on the pill we've had no use for condoms, but we still have some. Let me get one."

She disappeared, almost immediately reappearing opening a package. I carefully pulled the panties down and she rolled the condom on to my now quite firm, erect penis, not losing any of its firmness in the process. I was now "saved" from a general mess.

"If I had known wearing panties could that do to you, I should have started having you wear them long ago."

She gently patted the protruding panties, being careful not to cause any more stimulation.

Meanwhile, I had done nothing more than stare at my penis and the laciness of my panties. They were VERY lacy and, to my way of thinking, QUITE feminine. Even her patting sent lightening bolts up my body. She could be right; we may have missed a good bet. I was still staring as she retrieved a bra from the bed and handed it to me.

"Do I have to? Can't I be just a flat chested woman?"

"Jan, Love. You are not a woman yet. We have to do what we can to disguise the man inside by wrapping him in womankind. This is a really necessary element at this point in time. So, put it on."

I took it and put my arms through the straps, then noticed the label was on the outside and so reversed it. Well, it is not that obvious to a nonuser. I could single-handedly remove one behind her back, could almost do it single fingeredly if I had to. But in my hand to be put on, it was a foreign object as yet...

She watched as my hands flapped for a while behind me, before she showed me how to use my fingers to locate the hook and eye and to then "drag" the hook into the proper eye. Once done, it was real easy, well, relatively so.

With a sort of plop-plop, maybe more of a pfluff-pfluff, she inserted two falsies into the cups and then adjusted the straps.

At that, I lost a bit of view of the floor. I could, nevertheless, see my still bulging panties though some of the bulge seemed to be waning. Just looking at it and thinking about it, however, seemed to do some bolstering to the bulge and it seemed to rise a bit. I really did not understand what was going on with this penis-panties connection. It made no sense but sure was a strong one, whatever it was.

Next I pulled on a long sleeved sweater. Well, it almost went to my wrists, ending just a bit short.

She didn't pull them down but, on the contrary, shoved them up almost but not all the way up to my elbows. It felt strange to feel that soft fluff on my arms and looked even weirder to see a hairless arm, my arm, sticking out in what was in my mind a feminine way of wearing a sweater. Of course, the two mounds in front did nothing to help the image be any more masculine, nor did the constriction at my chest by the bra go unnoticed.

Once the sweater was in place, I pulled on a pair of long slacks with an elastic waist band and, of course no fly. I think, however that my penis was making a long stab at making a fly, but that pressure was eased by the "accident" planned for. I found that I would need to change the condom for a drier one if I was to be comfortable.

I'd like to say that I felt like I was just wearing a sweater and slacks, but my apparently bulging chest, with its constraining bra, the still bulging and most sensuous and feminine panties, and the soft light pants, on top of all of these things playing all kinds of melodies on my overly sensitive skin almost all over, belied the simplicity of my garb.

At this point she stood back and then shook her head.

"Sorry, Jan, but it just isn't quite passable. Maybe in a dark room with someone half blind, maybe then it would be Okay."

"Not good, huh?"

"You look and see."

She took me over to her full length mirror.

What I saw in it was simply myself standing there with slacks that crumpled a bit at my feet, with a three-quarter-sleeve sweater pushed a ways up my arm. I almost didn't even see the breasts until I turned sideways, for the darkness of the sweater, soft though it may be, did not shadow them. Other than the sleeves, the almost female slacks and the bumps on my chest, I was me just as I had always been. Well, admittedly there was also a rather obvious lump in my pants too, even though now after climax it had diminished and then come back.

It looked just like what I was, a guy with tits.

There was no woman to be seen.

"Hmmm, so tits and no hair is not enough. Well, what can we do?"

"Well, we can start you on shoes." She sighed. "I now see that it will take even longer than I had at first thought."

She moved off to one side and looked me over and then looked at my bulging groin.

"There are parts to hide, parts to emphasize and parts to diminish. There is a lot to do. I think we're going to have to step up your dieting. How do you feel about fasting?"

She smiled and then quickly went on before I could respond.

"You have no figure to speak of and all women, all real women want a figure to speak of, to be spoken of again and again."

I looked at her.

"But that's my body you are speaking of."