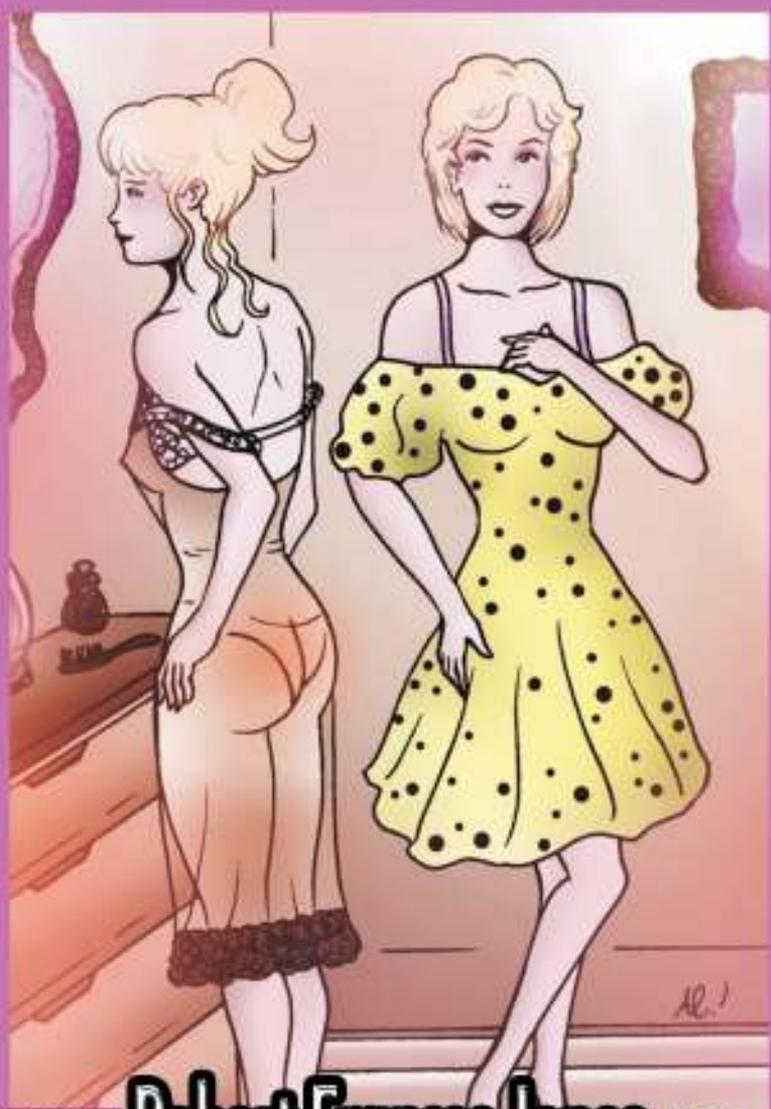


Tales of Anzelia



Robert Frances Jones

A "Her TV" Novel



Reluctant Press TV/TS Publishers

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TALES OF ANZELIA

by Robert Frances Jones

Chapter I

I sat in the living room waiting for Julie. I felt very confident about going out in public. My intense rose colored silky dress fit like a dream. The black belt and low heeled black patent shoes matched perfectly. I had on a pink woven nylon slip, which looked good under the translucent nylon dress. I liked the way the skirts tickled around my legs.

I caught a glimpse of Julie in her satin slip and patent leather t-strap shoes. She was fussing with her hair.

Julie and I had been going out together, with me dressed as a woman, since we were in college. At first it was only to places where there were other crossdressers, or to an occasional “safe” party. Concerned about someone recognizing us, Julie and I drove many miles from home. Then, like something growing and getting stronger, I started becoming more and more bold.

Tonight, as I was putting on my dress, I mused that the San Francisco Bay Area was a big place and I didn’t have to worry about being recognized.

Julie finally came out of the bedroom and we held each other. We ran our hands over each other's hips and gently kissed each other. She had put on a blue linen dress with a white collar. It looked good on her. Julie was a slim, statuesque, light brown haired beauty. Her five feet nine inches made her right at kissing height when she wore high heels.

"Let me look you over sweetheart." She adjusted my makeup and tweezed out a couple of hairs on my neck. She replaced my earrings. "These will look better," she remarked. Finally a light kiss.

"I think you better get your coat on," she smiled. "We have reservations for eight, remember?"

The beautiful analyst too. She would always be on time and never miss an appointment. She had two B's in her graduate work so far and the rest A's.

We made a stunning couple. My rose nylon Qiana dress flowed as I walked. The shoes weren't *high drag*, but I moved gracefully. I wondered how many looks we were going to get.

The restaurant was delightful. It was one of those "word of mouth" places. You might see anything from blue jeans to a tux. The waiters and waitresses wore jeans and sneakers. If anyone suspected anything about me, they didn't show it.

I did get the feeling that the waiter might have read me. He gave me the wine list and suggested to me a French Blanc de Blanc. He mentioned that the monkfish was a good choice. It was a "fins and scales" restaurant which did not normally serve things like lobster. Julie decided on the blackened salmon. I finally said in my least masculine voice,

"I'll have the monkfish with a baked potato."

(My voice was naturally a high tenor, and in that department I had little trouble.)

"What kind of dressing ma'am?"

"Blue cheese."

"And you ma'am?"

Julie replied with her order.

“You ladies enjoy your dinner,” the waiter said matter of factly.

“One of my problems,” said Julie, “is that school fills me to the brim with all this heavy duty theory and I feel like I have so little experience in the real world. Sometimes I feel like working for a while.”

“I know, school is okay for a while, but I sure have found out about the real world in the past few years. Maybe you need a diversion and work for a while and then go back and finish up. Anyhow, it sure is wonderful just being here with you right now.”

Our conversation broke off and she said,

“Robert, thanks for a wonderful you.”

I replied, “Thanks for a wonderful you, too.”

I had to go to the rest room, and one of the cardinal rules is that if you are out in public dressed up in lady things, you will go to the ladies room. It is the point of no return so to speak. I was a bit nervous, but it turned out to be an anticlimax. An older lady, who looked like she had had a couple too many was the only other patron in the lady’s room and she paid me scant attention.

The check was reasonable for champagne and dinner. Julie took care of it while I was gone. That way there would be no problem with “Robert F. Jones” being on the American Express receipt.

Julie and I threaded our way out through the restaurant to the front door. Nobody paid any particular attention to us; and, I was beginning to feel proud of an experience well done.

Then the roof fell in. We were face to face with my boss!

If I had been alone, I would have likely passed by unrecognized. With Julie along, all the circuits connected. Bill’s look was one of incredulity. Jessica, his wife, went from stark unbelief to being totally speechless.

I stared back, (what else was there to do?), tried a nonchalant smile and we just left. Julie drove home and it was several minutes before we spoke.

Julie finally began, “Robert, you knew it could have happened anytime. Hey, honey, I love you and have never thought of you as being someone ordinary. But why expect the worst? Bill likes you a lot. Why would he fire you just for taking your favorite lady out to dinner?”

“I’m scared. I know it’s going to be all over Monday,” I stammered.

“Yes, that is possible and some homophobic asshole may pick up on it and try to hassle you. Your attitude, however, is going to make all the difference in the world. I find the chopstick Jello technique to be just wonderful,” Julie replied.

“The what?” I asked.

“Ever tried to eat warm Jello with a pair of chopsticks? Here let’s play a little game. You are the homophobic asshole. I am a guy in the office, who has been found out. Your name is ‘Rodney’. Okay give me hell.”

Well, I come up and wiggle my hips. I say, “Hey I hear you are a guy in skirts.”

“You look cute when you wiggle your hips. Have you ever thought about going on stage?” Julie replied.

“And all the while I thought you were a real man.”

“I sure am not in your league Rodney. I have only slept with 38 women. I’ll bet you have had hundreds.”

“Do you wear your dresses around them to impress them?”

“Only when they want me to.”

Suddenly we were both laughing.

When we got home I drank a glass of wine, and on top of the wine at dinner the edge started to go away. I put on a nightgown and slipped into a dreamless sleep.

Next I knew, it was 10 Saturday morning. Looking idly at the ceiling I finally said, “Jesus Christ, why did that have to happen?”

“You are going to have to check with JC on that one. Maybe JC is interested in your problems after all,” Julie replied with a smile.

She drew me to her and kissed me. She had on a pink satin gown. She ran her hands over my waist and I felt her satin covered hips.

I held her and ran my hands through her hair. I became aware of her stroking my penis through the satin of my gown. I felt her clit and she responded with that wonderful look of pleasure on her face.

“Come here sister,” she whispered as she drew my face next to her vagina. “I want to feel my sister’s tongue.”

I spread her labia slightly and her clit stood up like the pistil of a wonderful flower. I placed my tongue on it.

“Oh my God!” she said as I felt my lips get wet.

“Easy does it, not too fast. Oh Robert, I love this.”

She placed her hands around my head and backed me off for a few seconds and then brought me back to her. Her clit was marvelous and firm and I wrapped my tongue around it and stroked it. She was very wet by now.

She moaned, “More Robert, more, Oh God. More ...”

She yelled out, pushed me away and laid back for a moment.

After she rested for a minute she lifted my gown and placed my penis next to her wet and warm receptive vagina. My penis started to go in and she gently kept pulling me closer to her. Suddenly I was her lover again. She was going to make me always wear beautiful lingerie and be her obedient lover. The rhythm increased and I looked into her half closed eyes. She pulled me even closer and my penis seemed to be a part of her.

“I am insisting that you wear pretty lingerie always from now on.” Julie whispered. “You are my eunuch love slave. My slave must always look nice.”

Then in bit more commanding tone of voice, "Faster Robert! Mommy wants all you can give her." I came in her.

Julie's grip tightened, she let out that wonderful little yell women do when then come. "Oh Robert, Robert, oh my God, my wonderful Robert!"

She had a look of ecstasy on her face. I was overwhelmed and a wave of pleasure permeated my entire being. Orgasm is one of the most wonderful feelings in the world. We held each other with me still in her.

"Oh Julie. I love you. So much.."

We relaxed. Minutes later she kissed me tenderly on the forehead. She smiled and said, "That was fabulous. I love you too. An awfully lot."

The morning coffee tasted good and I had almost forgotten about last night. Then it started coming back and I started to get scared again.

This time Julie's mood hardened. She sat down, held my hands and began to speak like an older sister.

"Look Robert, I am getting tired as hell of this head trip. If you want to mope around all day, you can count me out. If push comes to shove and you lose your job, you will just look for another one. Or maybe you will want to go back to school yourself. Anyhow, this 'poor is me bullshit' is getting on my nerves."

The weekend passed and there was the reality of Monday morning. With a butterfly or two, I walked into the office. The big logo, "CEN", was on the building. The company was formerly called, 'Computer Engineering and Networking'. It was now officially just the initials, CEN. (Each letter pronounced separately.)

The receptionist looked up and said a quick, "Good morning Bob," and went on with her work. (At work I was usually called Bob.)

Jeannette, one of our better programmers, nodded a quick, "good morning"; and, it was just another Monday. Jeannette was one of those people everyone turned to when they had a problem. How to fill out an expense report or how to properly fill out a time

sheet. (She knew Ada and virtually every other programming language of consequence.)

I liked Jeannette a lot when I first met her during my interview. She had a little pixie look in her eye like a cat who had just eaten the canary. Julie sometimes called her "the little pussycat", because somehow you always knew when she was around. She was five feet five inches, just a tad on the buxom side. Five pounds less and she would be a knockout in a bathing suit. She had a round face and long dark brown hair which she usually wore straight. It came down to the middle of her back.

I paused at Linda's work station.

Linda was also a very good friend. She was our artificial intelligence (AI) guru. I had hired Linda in an unusual way. Her resume crossed my desk one day and I decided to call her. During the interview, I had the feeling I knew her somehow. Linda turned out to be Dick Goldberg, one of the better AI types from Stanford. She decided to become a transsexual (TS) and Golden Gate Aerospace laid her off. She was looking for work. Dick and I had been at conferences together; and, Linda and I hit it right off.

The people in the office knew about her being a TS before she first reported for work. Since everyone "knew," the matter of truly passing hadn't ever come up. It might have been different if she had been read after she was on the job. She was a bit on the macho side and occasionally came off like a Jewish boy from the Bronx, in a dress. She was so good at her job, however, that no one particularly cared. Up until Friday night, she had been the only person in the office to know about Robertta.

"How was your weekend?" Linda asked with a smile and a cup of coffee.

"Marvelous," I replied in casual tones, accepting the hot cup from her, "Julie and I ran into Bill and Jessica at the 'Fisherman's Catch' Friday night."

"How is the old dear?" she asked dryly.

Jessica hadn't liked Linda from the beginning. She just could not deal with Linda being a TS, plus some natural personality differences thrown in. Bill was a black man married to a German blond. It is interest-

ing how minorities are intolerant of other minorities, especially when they would not be accepted themselves in a lot of places.

“Oh just fine I guess,” I replied, “At least she could have commented on my new dress. Didn’t say a word at all.”

“Oh, good grief, Bob. Are you putting me on?”

“No, `fraid not. I may be job hunting shortly.”

“Oh come on. So you got read by your boss when you were out to dinner. Computer people are all a little bit crazy. The good one’s anyway. This is San Mateo County, California, not the deep South. Besides, Bill and Jessica are hardly your ordinary couple themselves. What was Bill doing with Jessica that last year he was married to his other lady, playing tidily winks? And what about Jeannette and that woman she is seeing? Everyone knows they are more than just `good friends’. See what happens. Probably nothing will.”

The week passed uneventfully. Bill made his usual rounds and it was business as usual. Finally it was Friday.

The secretary came in and said Bill Clements wanted to see me at noon.

Well, this is probably it, I thought to myself.

When I walked into his office, he motioned me to sit down as he was on the phone. Covering the phone, he asked the secretary to get some sandwiches and coffee. It was all business as usual.

I waited patiently as he finally got off the phone.

“Bob,” he began, “have you ever heard of Anzelia?” (He pronounced it `ann ZAY lee uh’.)

“No, should I?”

“Not particularly. It is a small country that most people have never have heard of. Roughly the size of Oregon and Washington together, surrounded by mountains. Located in central Africa. Small, but rich. They have some of the best heavy metal mines in the world. You know, platinum, gold, that sort of thing. They are coming into the 20th century; and, we have

a chance at some good business. Last year they spent a bundle on a new telephone system and now they want someone to computerize their mining operations. We are hoping for several million dollars worth of business follow-on over the next few years. Currently, we have a small contract to automate one of their mines. Our Boston office wrote the proposal and I realize you haven't seen it."

He waited for some reaction and went on.

"I have a particular reason for wanting you involved. They are a theocracy with a twist. Women hold all important positions in the church and government. One of the reasons why we are in a unique position to do this contract aside from our technical expertise."

"What is that?" I asked absolutely dumbfounded.

"Oh, they don't allow ordinary male consultants into the country."

At first what he said didn't hit me. Then I blushed. I looked over at him.

"Actually, until Friday night we were in a bit of a jam," he paused to flash an amused grin, and then went on, "It seems that you don't have to be a genetic woman, but you do have to look the part. I had in mind sending yourself, Linda, and Jeannette."

Still blushing I mumbled that it sounded interesting.

"I also need somebody with your wife's background, should it interest Julie to live over there for a year and postpone her MBA." There was silence for a long minute as he let the whole thing sink in. For the next hour he explained the technical details of the project.

We would be setting up the automated mining control system.

"Okay," I finally agreed, feeling just a bit like Michael Caine, in one of those British spy movies being gently 'blackmailed' into going against my will on foreign assignment. "Let me get with Linda and Jeannette and we can go over the proposal and discuss the technical details. Julie and I will discuss those other things."

Bill added out of the blue, as he handed me the work proposal, "By the way, out of curiosity, does anyone around here know you crossdress?"

With some consternation I replied, "Linda does. I will figure out how to tell Jeannette. She will probably be shocked at first, but I am sure she will accept it in the end."

"Fine," he noted with a nod of his head, before he closed the meeting with a discussion of a few benefits that I might receive for going in skirts to Africa; while, I wondered if de Conte, spymaster of Louis XV, was just as blase, when he sent d'Eon in skirts, to be a reader for the Empress of Russia.

After a call to Linda, (who I filled in on Bill's gentle 'blackmail') and Jeannette, we spent the afternoon reading the proposal and discussing it. Linda felt it could be done technically. Jeannette just didn't know about all the computer code to be written. I didn't mention about my dressing as Robertta. Linda agreed afterwards, in private, to take Jeannette to dinner and explain that aspect.

I called Julie and told her that there was a big important contract she might want to become involved with.

When I got home, I explained everything to Julie. She finally remarked that it sounded like a real adventure and it might be worth suspending graduate school.

Julie listened and finally said, "You know, Robert, or should I say, 'Robertta', there is a lot more to being a girl than you think. For starters you said, did you not, that Bill is setting up an expense account to get Robertta in shape? I believe we need to do some shopping tomorrow. Robertta has some rough edges to hone down. It is one thing to get spiffed up, go to dinner and be able to revert to Robert when it is over. This is for real."

Chapter II

It was the middle of April and Bill agreed to let Julie finish out the quarter. During the month there was a lot of preparation for the assignment. CEN had agreed to have us on site in Anzelia by the first of July. The whole group would go to Boston in late May, or early June. We would work there for three weeks and then proceed to Anzelia. I had a month to look good enough to pass in the Boston office.

An unpleasant thing about the whole arrangement was the hour of electrolysis every day. I already had about 40 hours, and 20 more would somewhat take care of my beard, which was light to begin with. My electrologist, a pleasant German lady, used a blend procedure which wasn't as painful as some of the other methods, but it still took some discipline on my part.

The company retained a woman consultant, Mrs. Timmons, who ran a charm school. She was used, from time to time, to smooth off the rough edges on certain mid-level managers being considered for departmental managers, or equivalent staff positions. (Technical types, male and female, not involved with customers, tend to get fairly casual about appearances and such.) My schedule was hectic. Every morning after my customary run for the 'wall', I came home and got ready. Then to the electrologist, then to the charm school, finally to work. Sometimes Julie, as well, worked with helping 'Robertta' in the evening.

Mrs. Timmons was a stickler. She put me through the basics of charm school, which was the first 70 hours of a basic fashion modeling course.

Julie would accompany me to charm school when I was Robertta: to soothe my concerns about going totally in public; and, to make certain that I followed up my daily lessons with thorough practice sessions. And, we would then catch lunch afterward. I would change at home, and then I would go to work.

With Julie's and Mrs. Timmon's help I was starting to come off well. I wore my hair long to begin with and a weekly trip to the beauty shop made a lot of improvement. My nails were about as long as I could get

away with at work. Now I could color them with polish.

As my transformation and skills improved it, became clear that I would need to remain dressed continuously, so CEN put us off into a corner of the lab building, which was mostly unused. That way I didn't have to mingle with too many others.

At work I passed some of my former coworkers in the hall, who didn't recognize me at first. When one of them did, I just explained that I was on an assignment where I had to work as a woman. Once the word got out, people would find excuses to come over to the lab.

No real trouble though.

One guy tried to give me a hard time on one occasion, but Bill explained the advantages to him of leaving me alone. He then just tried to avoid me if at all possible. When the boss is a black man married to a white lady, there is little room in the company for bigotry.

April passed and it was already well into May.

We would be spending some time in Boston prior to going to Anzelia. We got ready for the trip.

My hair was perfect and so was my makeup. For the trip, I chose a charcoal gray suit with a pink silk blouse. I decided to go easy on my feet and chose a pair of black flats. Besides they were in style in Boston. Gold earrings and a gold bracelet completed the ensemble.

We met Jeannette and Linda at the airport. The airline ticket agent was very matter of fact, "Checking two bags, ma'am?"

I felt like a real lady inside. In the airport restaurant we had breakfast. Four women, for all anyone knew or cared. We blended into the crowd. Even the trip to the ladies room elicited nothing more than a casual glance by a couple of little girls.

The plane trip to Boston was uneventful.

For the three weeks in Boston, we rented a furnished apartment. The company provided us with a car. We were starting to work as a team and realized that for the next several months our lives would be much different.

For my first day at work I wore a blue suit with a blue silky blouse and blue leather pumps. I had a blue satin lacy slip, which I liked and this was a good excuse to wear it. My turquoise jewelry went well with the outfit. I felt feminine all over.

We were simply ignored in the office beyond the usual amenities. Linda passed very well and I passed adequately.

Everyone was quite friendly and helpful. If they knew anything about us, they didn't let on.

CEN's customer was a company called, 'International Heavy Metals, Ltd'. Based in London, it was Anzelia's interface to the outside world. The company was wholly owned by the government of Anzelia. This office advised us that English was the language used for all business transactions, and all the educated people in Anzelia spoke English, as their second language. Anzelian, because of the country's pollinational cultural history, was a sort of Esperanto and an African version of Urdu (a generalized trans Islamic tongue spoken primarily by the military). And, although, in Anzelia, the larger cities might have a computer store. That was about as high tech as you could get. Everything had to come for the most part either from Boston Mass. or Silicon Valley California.

In Boston, we mostly worked around the clock five days a week and Saturday morning. We had to get our technical act together in an amazingly short length of time.

We did find time to visit the Tiffany Club (a local place for crossdressers and TS's to gather) and some people wanted to know how Linda liked the doctor who did her operation. Post-ops successful in their professions are always looked up to by the pre-ops. It was an ego boost for Linda and gave her the opportunity to give the initiates some good pointers.

We managed to eat in some good seafood restaurants and took a cruise which allowed us to spend a few hours in Provincetown over on the Cape. Julie liked that because there was one candy store in particular she liked on Commercial Street.

Time passed quickly. Julie did an almost superhuman job of making sure all our computer gear was properly packed and accounted for. She was frequently on the phone to vendors. She wanted a project where she could have some real management responsibility. She certainly found one.

After considerable discussion, we decided to use two mini Vax computers. They packed a lot of power in a small space and had a good software base. We took along three IBM PS/2's, and also a Sun workstation under Unix for Linda's primary use. Julie wouldn't know what to do without her lap top machine. Jeannette brushed up on the C programming language and Vax assembly code.

I was getting to like Jeannette. She could work under pressure without getting rattled. I suspected that she had broken off with her girlfriend and this assignment was fortuitous from that standpoint. I also guessed that she was going through some process to discover whether she was truly a lesbian. I noted idly that she went out with a couple of guys while we were in Boston. Something she hadn't done to my knowledge in California.

Finally the day came to depart.

From Boston we flew direct to Heatherow.

I spent a few days going to another charm school in London, recommended by the famous crossdressing group, the Beaumont Club. I put on some more finishing touches. It was exciting since I was doing something I had always wanted to do and was getting paid for it to boot. The school wasn't easy. My nails had to be perfect and also my hair. Everything had to match. Boy, was I ever dressed down the day my slip showed. I thought I was good at applying makeup. I learned several things I didn't know.

We did have a couple of days to take in the sights. The evenings were pleasant as we shopped, dined,

and got to see a bit of London. People treated me just like any other woman.

Linda liked this assignment as well. She seemed to have some personal things that were now far away and more easily forgotten.

As for Julie, she was in manager's heaven. Her meticulous mind was being put to good use.

We were excited about finally making the trip to Anzelia. The company plane was a converted British BAC 125, series 800. Anzelia was about 4,000 air miles from London. We would be going by way of Athens. Because of international tensions, we had a certain corridor we had to stay within.

For the trip I put on a gray pin stripe suit with a sheath skirt and a white blouse, despite Julie's advice that I should wear slacks like she did.. I had a good makeup job and messed with my hair like any other woman. A pair of medium heel dark gray shoes completed the ensemble with a matching purse. I had worn only women's clothes for almost two months. It was wonderful to put a slip on every morning, to look at my legs in hose and feel a silky blouse gracing my shoulders. I wondered if I would ever want to go back to living as a man again.

Jeannette was quite impressed when she saw me and came over and gave me kiss on the cheek.

"Oh Robertta, you look wonderful. I still can't believe you are the 'Bob' I used to work with back in California."

Her body felt good against mine. Good thing I was wearing a girdle, otherwise I might have been embarrassed. (One of the Beaumont sisters explained why the Scotchman always wore his purse where he did, for just what happened when Jeannette kissed me.) Some things about being male weren't so bad after all.

"Flattery will get you absolutely anything you want." I replied. "By the way, you look beautiful yourself."

The cab driver simply said, "Where to ladies?" with no expression other than it was another routine fare.

"Heatherow, air freight area," Julie replied.

International and some other companies maintained a small waiting room and office in the air freight area of the airport. There was an ancient coffee pot and a pot of hot water for tea.

When we arrived, three other people were waiting. We had half an hour before flight time.

A woman in a tweed suit approached us and greeted, "Well, you must be the computer folks. I'm Marty Schultz, I'm to serve as a sort of semiofficial gofer and tourist guide for International while you are in Anzelia."

We introduced ourselves around and finally Marty looked at me.

"So you are Robertta. Let me look you over. Wow, you look better than most of my girlfriends. Has anyone read you here in London?"

"No, well not to my knowledge," I replied a bit timidly with my natural voice after all that charm school and daily use as a woman. "Will I have a problem in Anzelia?"

"No, you have had some good preparation. You won't have any problem in Anzelia at all."

Our pilots were two young women, Diane James and Nancy Jacobs. They both looked very professional in their blue uniforms and the board stripes on their shoulders.

I found out later that Diane had received her Airline Transport Rating in graduate school. She was an aeronautical engineer and a pilot as well. She was a three striper with "Anzelian National Airlines". Flew the BAC and copiloted 737's part of the time. Nancy was in her mid twenties and had flown bush pilot jobs around the world. She moved to some minor airlines in South America and finally got on at International Heavy Metals.

Once we were on board I saw that the plane had eight seats in the front and the rest of the plane converted to carry freight, other than two small "steward seats". One thing Julie and I had to do was check to see that our computer gear was all there. My skirt was constricting and I wished I had worn pants.

“How does it feel to be a girl going through these packing crates in a skirt and heels?” Julie quipped.

“Okay wise guy, you made your point.”

The front seats were arranged facing “club four”. This allowed people to converse more easily.

After we were airborne, Diane stood in the cockpit doorway and started to chat.

“I was quite lucky to get on with International. Normally it is difficult for a woman to get into jets. But, then, you know about Anzelia. We should have a smooth flight most of the way. Relax and enjoy yourselves. Marty has some snacks for you.”

Marty was the head gofer. She had a lot of connections and could get almost anything done. But, on the aircraft, she was the stewardess. She served us some coffee and a light snack. I napped through most of the flight.

The flight to Athens was a bit under three hours. We arrived mid morning.

During lunch, while the plane was being refueled, we had a chance to chat with Marty, Diane and Nancy.

I began, “I know something about Anzelia, but not very much. Can you give us some more information?”

Marty played travel agent.

“Anzelia is bizarre. Like something out of the Arabian Nights and a Tarzan book. Well, where to begin. The people have been around for centuries. Legend has it that King Solomon at one point visited the land and brought in people to show them how to mine. For a share of the profits, no doubt. Anyhow, they observe some Jewish customs even though their religion is a distant cousin of Judaism at best. They have a much more reasonable way to deal with men and women. It is a land that has made the Equal Rights Amendment obsolete. You will like that, I think.

“Afterwards we find Hellenic, Roman, and Arabic, trade and settlements, until the native stock has become fairly hybrid despite the country’s relative isolation in central Africa.

“We need to get underway,” Diane broke in. “It’s a six hour flight.”

After we were again airborne, I made a note to be sure and come back to Athens for a visit when we had more time. From there we flew south to Anzelia. I was a bit nervous as we had to fly in a very specific corridor. The nations in that part of the world occasionally shot down a plane for sport.

Marty had flown it several times and seemed unconcerned. She assured us that as long as we stayed in our assigned air space we would be fine. She then continued with her story about Anzelia.

“About 250 years ago they had a series of wars as various neighbors wanted control of their mines. Then gold was of primary interest. They lost most of their male population in the process. When all seemed lost, in the late eighteenth century, a woman by the name of Molliana (MOW lee ANN uh) arose as a prophet called by God.

“She mobilized the few remaining men and about twenty thousand women. The enemy army didn’t take them very seriously and committed a tactical error.

“As you know, the country is just under 220,000 square miles shaped roughly triangular. Mountains surround the country and there are only a couple of ways into it by land. One entrance is the northern point of the triangle. The enemy commander marched all his men into the northern valley expecting little resistance from a bunch of women. What he didn’t reckon with was that these women had placed in the surrounding forest, straw bales saturated with oil. At the southern end of the valley was most of the Anzelian army.

“It is said that when the enemy army was completely in the valley, Molliana drew a sword and commanded the south wind to blow to the north. At that point the valley was set afire. When the Anzelian army at the northern rim saw the fire, they set off blasting powder which closed the entrance. They torched off the valley with the invading army entrapped. Much of the invading army perished and the fate of the survivors wasn’t much better. Molliana ordered that any weak survivors were to be immedi-

ately killed. The stronger and smarter one's were made to sleep with the Anzelian women to improve the gene pool. Then they castrated them. Those who survived the ordeal of castration were made into slaves.

"To this day, the valley is referred to as the 'Valley of Fire and Blood'.

"No doubt, Molliana's cultural views were influenced by Greco-Roman Amazonian legends, but Islamic history is replete with several cases of female dominated states, often the result of massive male destruction via holy wars and the need to preserve the state at home by a female army. However, after the battle Molliana decreed that the country was to be ruled by women and that any foreign man entering the country was to be first used for breeding, to mix the gene pool, then castrated and enslaved."

I instinctively put my hand down over my genitals and winced as she said that.

"That is some story," Linda said wide eyed. She laughed and looked my direction, "well at least I'm safe."

Marty lit a cigarette, poured us some champagne and went on, "the rules have been modified as time has gone on. After Molliana died in the early 1800's her successor was chosen. They serve for life like the Pope. The present Chief Priestess, the fifth, is 'Molliana the Wise', otherwise known as 'Helena'. She is in her 80's and I suspect things will change even more after she dies.

"Today, a man can come into the country, if he dresses and acts like a woman. However, There are a few places where a man can get into trouble. For example they don't want men in the Inner part of the Temple. That should not affect us."

I was getting drowsy from the champagne and slept again. The next thing I knew it was late afternoon. We were starting our descent and Diane turned on the seat belt sign.

Marty checked to see that our seat belts were fastened.

Then Diane came on.

“Please check your seat belts. It will get choppy as we pass over the mountains.”

As we flew over the mountains it seemed that a giant hand had grabbed hold of the plane and began to shake it. Anyone who has ever flown a light plane over the desert in the afternoon doesn't take turbulence in a bigger plane very seriously. This was something else. I watched as a stray plastic drinking glass seemed to float in the air for an instant and bounce off the wall.

Sensing our concern, Marty said, “Winds are tricky through here. Don't worry, Diane and Nancy have flown this many times.”

The BAC was built to stand this turbulence with resolution. The wind nevertheless had bounced it like a cork in the ocean as we approached.

I was relieved as we started our final approach. After we landed I was glad to be on the ground.

We were in Mollita near the Southwestern tip of the Anzelian triangle. This was the main mining district where we would be working.

It was early dusk on a Thursday evening and quite warm. My suit, which had been very comfortable in London and the air conditioned plane cabin, was now much too warm. I noted that the airport was quite modern, as evidenced by the antennas and other equipment. The mountains looked majestic in the distance and there were some blue and gold colored birds having an argument. No doubt over some lady bird. A van picked us up and took us to the hotel. This was our introduction to Anzelia.

As we entered the hotel there was stringed music in the background and several beautiful statues in the lobby. They depicted the Chief Priestesses of the past and other heroes of Anzelian history. There was a huge silken tapestry showing the great battle with Molliana holding the jeweled sword and commanding the south wind to blow to the north. The caption said, in Anzelian,

Molliana en La Valo de Fajro kai Sangro. (Molliana in the Valley of Fire and Blood.)

As we were checking in Marty remarked, “By the way girls, come down to my place, number 210, in half an hour. I have a snack coming up from room service for you.”

We went to our rooms. It was a cross between a hotel and a furnished apartment. Our suite had a small kitchen, a living area, a bedroom and a bathroom. The room had several delightful pictures and tapestries and a window which opened out onto a small balcony which faced towards the mountains. The bathroom had gold colored fixtures and big mirrors on the walls. There was a sunken tub big enough for two people.

I couldn't wait to get out of my wool suit and take a shower. I changed into a billowy cotton dress and high heeled shoes. I sat down on the bed and noted that it had silk sheets. Silk seemed to be common in Anzelia and I made a mental note to ask Marty about it later.

Julie came in and asked if I was ready and we headed for Marty's room.

We arrived at Marty's just as the 'snack' was arriving. Some snack. On one platter was a large stuffed peafowl. The tray containing the bird sat on a bed of multicolored feathers. Another tray had assorted fruits and vegetables. There were several bottles of wine and I was able to see written native Anzelian for the second time. I looked at one of the bottles, the label read

Bonega Blanka Vino el La Montoj de Anzelia. (Finest White Wine from the Mountains of Anzelia.)

I assumed it was a white Anzelian Mountain wine.

Jeannette and Linda arrived shortly after we did.

“I didn't realize peafowl grew so big,” Jeannette remarked.

“Special birds,” Marty replied, “they breed them to the size of turkeys. Excellent eating.”

The meat was more juicy than turkey and the fruit and nut stuffing was just out of this world.