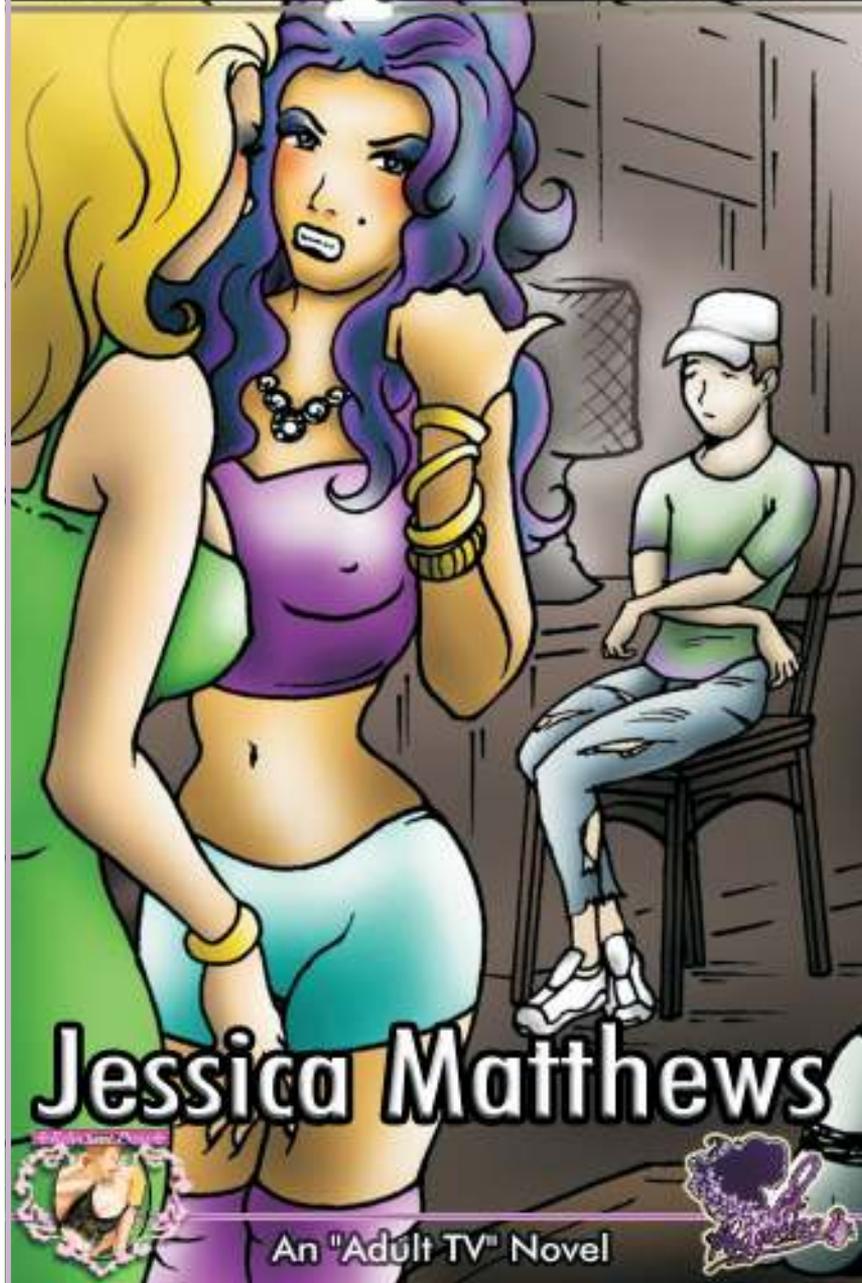


Sophia



Jessica Matthews



An "Adult TV" Novel



Reluctant Press TV/TS Publishers

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Sophia

By Jessica Matthews

So here I am tired and happy at last; not that I'd been unhappy really since I left home. I love these personal appearances. I didn't think I would, but here I am smiling and ready to go onstage.

My dress is what you'd expect. It's all very severe and plain black with a daring low-cut neckline to show off the cleavage between my breasts. The bodice is tight, and the waist is narrow. It's tight around my hips too and ends just above my knee. I'm wearing black stiletto heels with an ankle strap to go with the image.

I'm wearing a wedding set, although I'm not married. Debbie thought it would be a good idea and make the fans wonder. Of course I was told that I needn't answer any questions about them.

I've been talking to a reporter from some website or other. I'm wise enough to be really careful how I answer; no careless talk to undermine my fan base.

How did it all start? That's what I'm going to tell you. It was all serendipity really. I got caught being a little impolite, sneaking pictures in the street. I always knew how much I loved the feminine aside of life, but I didn't know how much until I loved it until that day and I never looked back.

I can't go back now. These breasts don't come off at night, not that I'd ever want to go back to stuffing my bra. It's one of so many things I never expected. I can't seem to remember a time without manicures and red nail extensions, being blonde and going to hair salons.

I never thought of jewellery, now I wear earrings and bangles, rings and a necklace. I feel naked without them.

I've learned never to take anything for granted. I always make sure my makeup is perfect; heavy around my eyes, with long lash extensions. I wear perfume and always carry it in my purse to refresh it through the day.

I'm a long, long way from the boy who was going nowhere. I even have my own Prince Charming looking after me on this tour.

I love my fans and thank them always.

"Excuse me, Miss Debbie. I'd like you to come and see something on the CCTV system's hard drive."

"Is it important, Jerome?" She had ended her telephone call and put down the receiver. "I'm rather busy. Can't it wait?"

"Possibly, but I'd rather you came to look."

They went to the doorkeeper's booth where Jerome supervised the security when the club was open.

"What am I looking at?" The screen showed the street outside. "There's nothing happening."

"Watch the kid with the bike," Jerome said.

They watched in silence as he stood on the sidewalk opposite the entrance, leaning on his bicycle which was propped up against the wall.

"It's only some kid playing with his mobile," she said. "Why are you showing me this?"

"Keep watching; I've edited it for you to see. He's been there for four weeks at least."

"Four weeks?"

"I started to notice him a few days ago and then I went back over the recordings on the hard drive. We only keep four weeks, so he may have been there longer."

"He looks harmless enough. He's about fourteen and alone."

"Keep watching."

As they watched, the kid's phone was raised slightly and he seemed to be taking a photograph. Immediately after, what looked like a girl walked into the club. He'd obviously taken the picture as she was walking towards the entrance.

"That's Amy," Jerome said with a grin on his face. "He could stop traffic for a hundred yards with a skirt that short. But you need to keep watching."

"He's taken her photograph," Debbie said. "Is that a problem?"

“Keep watching.” Jerome clicked the mouse to move the recording forwards at a faster speed.

“There’s Diane,” he said as the figure walked into view. “Sometimes he makes me wonder why I’m straight.”

“He’s taken his picture too,” Debbie said as she watched another and then another of her girls arriving.

“I think you’ve seen enough.” Jerome let the video play. “He’s been there sometimes on Friday and the last four Saturdays taking pictures.”

“Does he only take the girls who come dressed?”

“No, he’s taken some of the guys who come in boy clothes as well. He’s taken pictures of the display boards outside too.”

“And all the girls’ pictures are on the website,” Debbie mused to herself. “He could always see them there.”

“Do you want me to warn him off?”

“Let me think about it,” Debbie replied. “Don’t do anything, just watch if he’s there next weekend. Watch him on Friday, but call me if he’s back again on Saturday.”

“He’s back.” Jerome put his head round the office door early on Saturday afternoon. “He wasn’t here yesterday though.”

“Is he taking pictures?” Debbie looked up from her computer.

“Not yet, but he’s only been there for a few minutes.”

“Call me if he stays there and keeps taking those pictures.”

“Don’t you want me to scare him off?”

“No, don’t do anything like that. I have a feeling that there’s more to this story than we can guess.”

“You’re the boss.” Jerome started to leave but Debbie called him back.

“Watch him carefully,” she said. “If he shows more interest in one of the girls than the others, let me know immediately.”

Jerome returned to the door and Debbie tried to get her attention fixed on the spreadsheets she’d been using. It was hard to concentrate. There was something about that kid that distracted her.

“He’s still there.” Jerome put his head round the door. “I think he got really excited when Amy showed up again.”

“What was she wearing?”

“She’s blonde today, hair over her shoulders with a green strappy dress which doesn’t do much to hide her figure, and matching stiletto sandals. If I didn’t know her boobs came off at night, I’d be drooling.”

“Ask her to come and speak to me, please.”

“Amy, there’s a kid across the road. He seems to be a big fan of yours...”

“Is he the one who keeps taking my picture?”

“That’s the one.” Debbie smiled. “I’d like you to go across the road; use your best wiggle as you do it. Get him in here. I want to talk to him.”

“Okay,” Amy said slowly. “How do you know he’s not some kind of pervert?”

“How could you? We don’t get perverts in here. Just because Jerome’s the only guy who doesn’t wear a dress...”

“Okay, I give in.” Amy smiled. “I’ll go and reel him in.”

“Get Jerome to look after his bike,” Debbie called to her back as she went out of the office.

Ten minutes later, Debbie returned to her office. Amy stood over a fearful figure seated in the chair in front of her desk. In heels, Amy towered over him as if on guard should he try to escape.

“What do you want?” he said. “I haven’t done anything.”

“Maybe you have and then again, maybe you haven’t,” Debbie said slowly.

Her eyes looked him up and down, from worn-out trainers on his feet to the generic baseball hat on his head. She took her time, taking in the scrawny figure with the washed out T-shirt and the ripped jeans; ripped in a worn-out way rather than a fashionable one.

“Take you cap off so that I can see your face,” Debbie said.

He hesitated, looked at her and then pulled the cap to the side and off. Long dark blonde hair tumbled over his shoulders. He pushed it back and looked up.

“How old are you?” she asked.



“I’m seventeen next birthday,” he replied.

“Is that the truth?”

“I’m not lying.”

“What’s your name?”

“Joseph...” he hesitated in a way that said he was desperately thinking of a plausible surname. “Lincoln.”

“I think we both know that’s not true,” Debbie sighed. “As to what you’ve been doing, I’m going to ask Jerome to show you some video we have. Then we’ll start again.”

She rang for Jerome and told him what she wanted.

“Amy’s going to take you there.” She smiled at Amy who smiled reassuringly at him. “I’m sure you won’t be giving her any problem.”

His eyes looked up at Amy. There was something like awe in his eyes as if he’d found a dream girl.

“I’m not a problem,” he stuttered.

Amy took his hand and pulled him up. They stood face to face, with Amy bending down to him as her heels made her so much taller.

“I’m sure you want to behave really nicely,” she said, stroking his face with her other hand, allowing her long red nails to gently scratch down his cheek.

Amy returned to Debbie’s empty office and sat him down in the same chair. Debbie had waved to them

as they walked through the club so she knew the return had been noted.

“Now then, Mr. Lincoln, what have you to say?”

“I was only taking some pictures,” he said with his voice low and nervous. “Please don’t tell anyone. I didn’t mean any harm.”

“Who shouldn’t I tell?” Debbie asked, surprised at his request.

“My mom; her boyfriend would whip me something awful if he knew.”

Debbie looked at Amy who shrugged her shoulders to say that she knew nothing more. Debbie looked at him, remembering the power of silence when questioning someone.

“Why don’t you start at the beginning?” she said slowly. “I’ve got all night, and you’re going to tell me the truth. If you don’t, I’m calling the cops to take you home.”

“You can’t do that,” he gasped.

“You’re sixteen,” Debbie replied. “Don’t tell me what I can’t do.”

They looked at each other for a long moment. Suddenly he burst into tears.

“I’m sorry,” He sobbed. “I’ll tell you everything; I promise I’ll tell you the truth, but please don’t call the cops.”

“Okay.” Debbie gave a heavy theatrically long sigh. “Amy’s going to take you for a drink and you’re going to calm down. After that, we’ll talk again.”

She nodded to Debbie who held out her hand. “Come on, Joseph, or whatever you’re called. I promise not to bite.”

“Please don’t be too hard on him.” Amy returned to Debbie’s office. “Remember how scared I was when I first came here?”

“You were different,” Debbie said. “You were dressed and it was obvious that you could play the part of a girl from the start.”

“It took all the courage I had to come to see you that day,” Amy replied. “It was the first time I’d gone out in public dressed as a girl.”

“I remember you told me.”

“And do you remember how I said that I had to start somewhere? Coming here dressed how I wanted to be was hard, but when you accepted me, it was as if all my dreams had come true.”

“So why are you reminding me of this right now?”

“I have a feeling about this kid...”

“Where is he by the way?”

“I left Diane holding his hand,” Amy replied. “The way he was looking at her said that he wouldn’t be going anywhere.”

“He’d never get past Jerome on the door anyway.”

“He doesn’t know that,” Amy said. “He’s starting to calm down and I think we’re going to be surprised when he comes back.”

“Do you want me to wait a while before I ask you to bring him back?”

“Thanks; that would be kind. Leave it to me and when Diane and I have had some time with him, I’ll bring him back.”

“I’ve just one question; why did you leave him with Diane?”

“You know Diane; she looks like the ideal girl next door when she arrives, and she’ll keep chattering until whoever she’s with wants to tell her everything.”

“And she’s never made a secret of being a boy who lives as a girl.”

“I don’t think he’s ever met anyone like her. I don’t think he’s ever been near anyone like her and I think he wants to be. I think that’s why he was taking pictures,” Amy said. “And I think that once she’s been talking to him about herself, he’ll be ready to open up.”

“Maybe he’ll be ready to own up as well?” Debbie smiled. “Bring him in when you think he’s ready.”

Half an hour later, Amy knocked on Debbie’s door and then ushered the boy into the office. Diane hovered in the doorway until Debbie beckoned that she should come in as well. The boy looked gratefully at Diane as she sat next to him.

“I don’t want you to feel under threat,” Debbie said. “But I do want to make it clear that I expect the truth.”

“I understand,” he said in a soft voice. “Please believe me, I didn’t mean any harm.”

“You know what sort of place this is. We have to take our safety and security very serious. My girls have to be protected from chasers and predators.”

“I’d like to be one of your girls,” he blurted out and looked up with tears rolling down his cheeks.

Debbie looked to Diane and to Amy. Their expressions told her that they believed him. Diane put her hand on his arm as Amy handed him a tissue. Debbie's face relaxed as they waited for him to regain his self-control.

"How old are you really?" Debbie asked quietly. "Were you telling the truth?"

"Yes; I'm nearly seventeen."

"I can't let you into the club until you're eighteen."

"I don't think I'll survive to eighteen if I can't get away," he said with an alarmed look on his face. "Mom's boyfriend will have beaten me to death by them."

"Why would he do that?"

"He's caught me a couple of times. I try to be careful, but I haven't been careful enough."

"What do you mean?"

"One time they came home and I was wearing Mom's dress and heels. He didn't recognise me at first, probably because they'd been drinking. I'd stayed too long that night. My makeup was the best I'd ever done. Boy, did I get a beating."

"That's awful." Diane squeezed his hand.

"It wasn't so bad," he replied. "The drink made it that he wasn't hitting me as hard as he wanted."

"You said a couple of times," Amy said

"That's right. I really want to be like you. I want to be free to dress prettily and wear makeup and heels every day."

"So he caught you again."

“It was because I was careless. I thought I’d cleaned off all the makeup, but there was still some mascara around my eyes and he saw it. That time he really hurt me.”

“But he didn’t stop you?”

“That’s why I was taking the pictures. I wanted to learn how to be a better girl. I don’t know if I want to *be* a girl, but I know I want to look like one and live like one.”

“You could have asked.”

“How was I to know that? I was so scared to admit that it was what I wanted... but now I know it *is* what I want. I figured I could learn and then get a job somewhere like this.”

“So Mr. Lincoln, let’s say I believe you,” Debbie said. “Would you go and sit in the bar? Let me talk to Amy and Diane for a few moments and we’ll think about what you’ve said.”

“Gee, that’s wonderful.” He wiped his eye again. “My name’s really Andy, Andy Hurley. Don’t worry, I won’t run away and here’s my mobile so you can look at the pictures I’ve taken.”

“So what do we do with him?” Debbie looked at their faces after the door had closed behind him.

“I think he’d look good if we dressed him up,” Diane said. “The guys who come here would love him.”

“Hey, hold on. We can’t have him in the bar under age,” Debbie said. “That would be to risk our licenses and I don’t want to take any risks. There are a lot of people who’d be happy to see me closed down.”

“But he could work backstage; clean the dressing rooms and help out.”

“What do you think, Amy?”

“I think he’s genuine,” she said slowly. “I know how long it took me to get where I am today. You supported me when I needed it most.”

“And his home situation sounds awful,” Diane added. “The poor boy needs some support.”

“His mom’s boyfriend doesn’t sound like a nice man,” Amy stated the obvious.

“I don’t know what we can do.” Debbie leaned back in her chair. “I’ll think about it for a few moments. Go and look after him for a while.”

Debbie thought and thought but came to no particular conclusion. Her office phone rang, then emails pinged in to her computer. All conspired to distract her from the problem of what to do with Andy.

The simplest answer was to tell him to go away. She rejected that, remembering when she was a sad and lonely boy with nothing to look forward to and nowhere to go.

She could tell him to come back when he was eighteen when she could legally employ him. She thought that he looked as if he could be made over into something lovely now. She allowed herself to think about that, visualising him slinking through the club.

He could be dressed in something slinky, maybe silver or super shiny silk, with his hair lightened and cascading loosely over his shoulders. He could be mesmerising. The clients would be transfixed if they handled his new look as well as she knew they could.

Then her thoughts turned to what he had said. It was little enough but she understood that he was afraid of his mom's boyfriend. He sounded violent and probably unpredictable in drink. From the little he said, it didn't sound like he could depend upon much support from Mother's direction either.

She knew that a decision was called for. Amy and Diane would expect her to do something. But right at that moment, she had some more things demanding her attention before the club opened for the evening.

Meanwhile in another room...

"Are you really boys?" Andy's eyes were wide with surprise as he looked at Amy and Diane.

They looked from him to each other.

"I'm not going to ask if you want to feel under my dress to check," Amy said.

"If you speak to me nicely, I'll let you check... as long as you warm your hands first." Diane laughed.

"I'm sorry, I shouldn't have asked like that." Andy blushed.

"I'm sure you shouldn't have asked at all," Amy replied. "You read the posters outside and I'm sure you've seen the club's website. You know about the girls employed here."

"Is it true?" he asked. "From the servers to the entertainers; they're all boys?"

"Jerome's the only guy here, and you've met him."

"I wouldn't like to argue with him." Andy forced a laugh.

“Debbie relies on him to deal with the occasional flare-up either in the club or at the door.” Diane looked closely at Andy’s face. “And the fact that he used to be a cop here helps when he needs assistance.”

“Why are you looking at me like that?” Andy shifted in his seat.

“I’m imagining what I could do to your face,” she replied. “Have you ever used makeup?”

“Yes, I used my mom’s stuff,” Andy said. “I told you that’s what got me into trouble with her boyfriend.”

“I think that with your features, you could look quite attractive.” She turned his head to the side. “Your profile is good too.”

“That’s lucky because I thought he’d broken my nose.” Andy shuddered. “He was more than a little over-served. I saw the punch coming and almost got out of the way. It was bleeding for ages.”

“I don’t know how long Debbie’s going to be,” Amy said. “Why don’t we take him into the dressing room?”

“Take me into the dressing room?” Andy repeated.

“I’d like to see you all made-up and pretty,” Diane said. “It might make Debbie think harder about what she could do.”

“Do you think she’d help me?”

“She’s a good person,” Amy said. “I think she was as horrified as we are to hear that you’ve been beaten up. We know that most girls like us have problems, but it doesn’t make it any easier to accept.”

“Wait, I think Rupert’s still in the dressing room.” Diane held up her hand to stop them.

“Who’s Rupert?” Andy asked. “I thought you said that there were only girls like you here.”

“He comes from the theatrical outfitters,” Amy said. “He’s as gay as the month of May and a sweetheart really. It’s his company and they take care of our wigs and costumes, supply the shoes and best of all, supply the best makeup this side of the Pacific.”

“He teaches cosmetology too,” Diane added. “He can do nails and hair too, and if he can’t, one of his staff comes in.”

“Don’t you do your own?” Andy asked.

“Sure we do, but who do you think taught us the things we didn’t know?” Amy said. “I thought I was good until he stripped all my techniques down and taught me better.”

“Do you think we should ask him?” Diane nodded towards the dressing room door.

“I’ll go,” Amy said. “He owes me a favour or two.”

“He probably owes you more than that,” Diane laughed. “I saw you getting into his car after the last show on Sunday. You didn’t get back until Thursday afternoon.”

“You should complain.” Amy flounced towards the door. “A girl needs her ego massaging from time to time.”

“It wasn’t just her ego he was massaging,” Diane confided as the door closed behind Amy. “He’s a nice guy and very generous, but be careful around him.”

“How should I be careful?” Andy looked puzzled.

“Don’t give him the wrong signals,” she replied.

“I’m not on the same page.” Andy still looked mystified.

“Don’t turn your back to him and bend down. If you do, then don’t be surprised to find something poking there, trying to get where the sun never shines.”

“I’ve never thought of that.” Andy blushed.

“If you’re coming into this game, don’t be surprised,” Diane replied. “It’s something that’s going to be all around you.”

“I’ve never had sex.” Andy blushed again, brighter this time. “That’s not normal.”

“It’s normal for us.” Diane didn’t hold back from telling the truth.

“That must hurt.”

“Actually, it’s really lovely when you’re with a partner who knows what to do.” Diane smiled as if remembering something good. “You have to prepare; always remember that you can never be too lubricated and clean. The first time you feel a guy coming into you, you’ll sigh and think you’ve gone to Heaven.”

The door opened and Amy emerged with Rupert following.

“Yes, I think she could be quite a beauty.” Rupert walked around Andy, looking closely at him. “Stand for me,” he commanded.

Andy stood and allowed Rupert to move him into a clear space, so that he could walk round again.

“Walk over there, turn and come back to me.” Rupert stood to the side to watch Andy moving. “Have you ever worn heels?”

“I never got the chance,” Andy admitted. “My mom’s were too tight. She only had the one pair and she never wears them; she’s always in sneakers these days.”

“How very inelegant she must be.” Rupert’s nose curled in distaste.

“She’s not anywhere near elegant.” Andy smiled for the first time. “And given the load she usually drinks, she’d never be able to balance on heels for long.”

“I’ve been to check with Debbie.” Amy returned.

“You didn’t tell her?” Diane’s expression said it all.

“Of course I didn’t tell her. Can you imagine? That boy who was taking the pictures; well, we’ve got him in the dressing room and you’re never going to believe what a sweet...”

“And sexy...” Diane interrupted.

“And sensational girl was hiding underneath those hideous boy’s clothes,” Amy finished the sentence.

“I hope you added that it was all due to my powers of persuasion and knowledge of the art of bringing my special girls to perfection.” Rupert preened.

“I didn’t, and I didn’t say that you always do your best to get inside their panties either.”

“Bitch.” Rupert scowled, but in a friendly way.

“So are you going to tell us what she said?” Diane asked.

“She said that she was too busy to think about him and to give him a hamburger,” Amy replied. “She said that she’d speak to him later once the club was open and she could relax with all the staff here.”

“In that case, the artist will commence.” Rupert pulled out a chair and gestured to Andy. “Sit.”

Rupert walked round the chair and then started to comb out Andy’s hair. He smoothed a hand over it as it fell over his shoulders.

“Not bad condition, but it could do with a good hairdresser, which I of course happen to be, but I don’t think I have time to do it justice this afternoon,” he said, as he combed it all back. “I can see it with highlights, with all these horribly split ends trimmed away.”

“I don’t want it cut.” Andy recoiled in horror.

“I don’t mean to cut it any more than necessary to make it healthy.” Rupert held out a lock for him to look at. “See how these ends are awful. Trimming will make it look so much fuller and smoother. You’d like that, wouldn’t you?”

“I guess,” Andy replied, his voice doing nothing to hide that he was unsure. “I’ve never met anyone like you before,” he blurted out.

“My dear girl, there’s no one like me.” He struck a pose. “All my boyfriends tell me that and I don’t expect that you’ll be an exception.”

Amy looked at Diane, who looked back. Then they both looked from Andy’s misapprehension to Rupert’s huge beaming confidence and burst out laughing.

“Don’t say we didn’t warn you,” Amy said to Andy.

Rupert prowled; there was no other description that could fit. He looked at Andy from the front, the right and left, and then he asked him to stand and walk again. He tied his hair back, then loosened it again. He made no comment.

“I think it would be better if you took him to change into some more appealing clothes, lingerie, stockings and most importantly, heels are what I want him wearing,” He said at last. “Then I will start on his transformation.”

“Why, you don’t know how he’s going to look, never mind that he’s a novice in a dress,” Amy said.

“Whatever she’s going to wear, it starts with the shoes,” Rupert said formally. “The shoes form the character. A woman in heels walks and holds herself differently to a boy or a girl in sneakers, and we are going to create a woman this afternoon.”

Andy looked up and gulped, but quickly recovered himself. “I guess I’ll have to change back before I go home.”

“Only if you have to go home,” Amy added.

“I’ve never worn anything like this.” Andy held the lavender bra and panties as if they were going to bite him. “I tried Mom’s things, but they were nothing like these.”

“When you’re a girl, you should wear something that makes you feel really feminine,” Amy said.

“It helps you towards that character shift that Rupert was talking about.” Diane was rummaging

through the lingerie scattered about the dressing room. "This completes the set."

"A garter belt; I never even saw one of these in Mom's drawers." He touched it gingerly. "I guess there's a lot that she's been missing."

"From what you've already told us, your mom doesn't sound as if she was a lady who made the best of herself." Diane's voice was very matter-of-fact as she spoke.

"The pictures of her when she was young are pretty," Andy said. "Then when she and Dad split up, she gave up and let herself go. Now it's too late. She drinks too much and changes boyfriends on a whim, depending who pays for her booze."

"Why do you stay there?"

"I've nowhere else to go, but I finish high school in a month or so and then I'm going," Andy said. "I don't know where, but I have to go or I'll have no life of my own."

"And you want a girl's life, you said."

"I know that's what I want." His face showed how earnest he was. "I guess I may have a lot to learn and it won't be easy, but I'm fascinated by makeup and hair and all that goes with it."

"We know a lot about that," Diane said.

"And if we don't, Rupert will be only too willing to teach you," Amy added. "But he's likely to want payment in kind."

"I heard you hint that before." Andy hesitated. "I'm scared of that, but I guess its part of the price to pay. Is he gentle?"

“Like I said, if that’s what you decide, you’ll have to get used to it. Rupert would kill for the opportunity.” Amy seemed to think for a few moments. “And that would depend upon what sort of girl he could make you over into.”

“I guess I’d better get dressed in these.” Andy started to strip. “I’m really excited. I can’t believe that you’re really doing this for me.”

“It’s only because I need the practise,” Rupert drawled.

“Don’t believe him,” Amy laughed. “When he’s being so nice, that’s the time you should really take care.”

“Is this really me?” Andy looked in the mirror at his reflection. I can’t believe how I feel with this bra and panties set. It’s so lovely.”

“Sit and I’ll help you with your stockings and garter belt.” Diane steered him gently to a chair. “Stockings are so much sexier than tights or hold-ups. You get to feel the garter tabs shift as you move.”

“You’re putting the tabs under my panties,” Andy said in surprise.

“Think about it,” Diane said. If you have to go to the bathroom, you can drop the panties easily. And if there’s someone wanting access to your boy parts, the same is true.”

“I’ve a lot to learn.” Andy’s penis rose as she slipped her hand under the panties.

“One of those things is that you need to control that.” Diane laughed. “I’m not going to help you with that this time; you’d better go into the bathroom right now.”

As he did what he was told, Andy remembered the words, “this time.”

“Why won’t you let me watch?” Andy complained as Rupert worked a moisturiser across his face. “I could sit in front of the mirror just as easily.”

Diane and Amy had left Rupert and Andy alone in the dressing room to the rear of the main club room.

“You have your back to it for a reason.” Rupert examined Andy’s skin carefully and changed the subject quickly. “You have nice skin considering you’ve probably done nothing to care for it. I can’t detect any beard growing here either.”

“I don’t think I could ever grow a beard.” Andy hadn’t thought of that before. “It must be something genetic.”

“You’re very lucky.” Rupert rummaged through the makeup in the storage area. “I’m going to make you into someone you’ll never recognise.”

“But you could turn my chair round and let me watch,” Andy complained again. “I might learn something.”

“You might, but then I might not want to be giving away all my secret techniques and it would spoil the surprise.” Rupert started to apply dots of foundation to Andy’s face. “I’m starting to really like this technique.”

Andy kept still as a sponge spread it all over his face, as the process was repeated with a second shade, then a third.

“If you’re wondering, I’m contouring and blending to give definition to your best features.” Rupert

smiled as he worked. "When I get to using some powder and blush, your complexion will be flawless, trust me."

Rupert stood back to look at Andy from a distance and from left to right. "Now you need some powder to set it; lots of powder, and then we'll start on your look."

"What's my look?" Andy sounded puzzled.

"Are you the girl next door this evening, or are you the sensationally hot girl who wants everyone to look at her?" Rupert asked.

"Which would you like me to be?"

"Sizzling hot of course; I think you could do it if you let your imagination run wild."

"Debbie's still busy." Amy came through the door and stopped to look at Andy. "Does he really have those cheekbones?"

"Of course he does," Rupert replied. "Do you think I've glued them on?"

"I came to tell you that she says that she's sorry but she can't see Andy until later." Amy stared at him. "And I guess that later, she's not going to see Andy anywhere."

"You flatter me." Rupert preened. "Even I can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

"That's not a good comparison." Amy shook her head. "Your starting point was much easier."

"And there I was convincing this poor boy that I could make him into a sensational girl."

Amy nodded. "Actually, I think by the time you've finished and we've dressed him, Debbie's going to

have a difficult time deciding what she can really say.”

“Do you think she’ll let me work here?” Andy’s face lit up under the unfinished makeup.

“She can’t until you’re eighteen,” Amy replied. “But maybe she could get you something to do in the backroom.”

“I’d do anything,” Andy said, suddenly feeling hope in his heart. “I don’t want to go back home; not that they’d miss me anyway.”

“Amy, please go away and leave the artist to his palette,” Rupert interrupted. “By the time I’m finished, Debbie will be unable to resist this poor boy.”

“I’ll hold you to that.” Amy reached for the door and then paused. “How should we dress him?”

Rupert stood for a moment and thought. “I suggest classically; a shift dress, plain and with a slash neck, black heels...” He peered again at Andy. “No jewelry; I would suggest gold hoops but his ears aren’t pierced yet. Let’s keep it plain and the makeup will make a bigger impact.”

“Okay but what about his nails?” Amy asked. “Those hands don’t look anything like feminine.”

“I hadn’t noticed.” Rupert picked up one of Andy’s hands. “Ugh, you’re right. Can you ask Diane if she could do a quick manicure? Longer nails, probably in a classic deep red would go well against a black dress.”

“I’ll get her.” Amy closed the door.