

The Training Bra



Sofronia Anne Strong

A "Young Adult TV" Novel

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THE TRAINING BRA

by **Sofronia Anne Strong**

Chapter 1

I could feel Mom's bony fingers against the flesh below my shoulder blades. They felt chilly and raw as she slid the third finger of her left hand beneath the bandeau of my brassiere. The thimble on its tip was hard and cold.

"You are not going to take it off, I will see to that." She tugged and pulled at the elastic of the hooked closure as she slid her needle in and out of the material. "You are going to wear this until the cast comes off Kenneth's arm, you God-awful ruffian. That will be a minimum of six weeks, I am told, and I am going to have you show the whole world how we deal with our little Barbarian."

She snapped the Spandex at the back of the satin bandeau against my bare skin and snipped the thread-end off neatly.

“I have told you repeatedly that I will not tolerate physical violence, you bully. This time you have gone too far and you will atone for it properly. Now, put your sweater on and prepare to live with your penance. Hopefully, by the time you are allowed to take off this brassiere, you will have learned how to be nice.”

Sis let go of my hands and dangled my white knit V-necked sweater in front of me.

I took it from her disconsolately. I couldn't take my eyes off my torso. Upon my upper body I could see the black brassiere covering my chest, black silk-satin except for the lace filigree that made up the upper half of each breast. The satin straps cut into my shoulders. Below my breasts, it encircled me in a wide band that descended to just below my rib cage.

Mom had called it a long-line brassiere. She said it was made by someone called “Maidenform.”

My big sister began to giggle as she parodied the current series of magazine ads for this company.

“I dreamed I beat up my buddy in my Maidenform Bra,” she tittered. These ads always showed a gorgeous fashion model elegantly turned out in some stylish ensemble but naked from the waist up except for a Maidenform brassiere styled to be worn under the missing part of the outfit. They were quite daring at the time; certainly not by current standards. It was a time when women still didn't admit to wearing brassieres and still a couple of decades before they began burning them.

“Oh, Olivia, that's precious,” Mom replied. “We should put him in a skirt and pose him in his brassiere and sell it to the Maidenform people. Wouldn't that be a sensation?”

The two of them broke into merry laughter and began hugging each other while I died of embarrassment.

I stared in horror and disbelief at the image of myself in the mirror. The image of myself, a sixteen-year-old boy, wearing a black satin lace-encrusted brassiere, appalled me. I shrank into myself, trying not to feel the terror and shame that infused me. Mom stepped behind me, still chuckling at my sister's joke although her voice began to take on the hard edge she had used earlier with me.

“Well, it really is a Maidenform, you know. It's called the ‘Full-Rise Model.’ Madame Edna at Lane's says it is the new mode for this Fall. See how it lifts your breasts up fully and thrusts them out in two clearly defined points. It will look marvelous under your sweater. Everyone will be able to see that you have reached your full development. Look Dear, see how the long line construction smoothes out the area below your lovely breasts and helps them stand out in all their fullness.”

I squirmed at these words in the forlorn hope that hunching up my shoulders would somehow make the lace and satin mountains on my chest dissolve and shrivel. They remained firmly in place, of course. There was nothing that was going to make my new female bosom disappear from view.

“How about, ‘I dreamed my Mommy turned me into a girl in my Maidenform falsies?’” Olivia was being vile. She cracked up at her own horrid joke. I could have belted her, but only shouted at her uselessly.

“Shut up, dammit,” I blurted. “Do I have to listen to this, Mom?” I blunted it with a question.

Mom never let me get after Sister Perfect. Olivia was her pet. The two of them were thicker than bees on nectar. Mom put her hand under my chin, something that always infuriated me. It was so demeaning. She lifted my head and lowered hers until she was looking directly into my eyes.

“I think you must be prepared to listen to a lot of this kind of thing, Sweetheart. Your sister is probably being gentle by comparison with what you will have to deal with. The next few weeks will undoubtedly be a series of nightmares in your Maidenform Bra. You had better not let me hear of your losing your temper over any of it either. If I do, you will find yourself wearing something bigger and more embarrassing than what you have on now.”

“A corset, a real lace-up cage, with bones and everything. Oh, gee, Mom, let’s do put him into a corset. Wow, I can’t wait. How delicious.” Olivia jumped up and down, clapping her manicured hands, gleefully anticipating what she had suggested.

“Now there’s a thought,” Mom mused, releasing my chin. “He’s in a C-cup now. I’ll tell you what, young savage, the first time I hear of you giving anyone a bad time, you’ll go to a D-cup, and we’ll make it a corselette so you can be a girl all the way up and down. Then, if you get smart after that, I’ll start listening to Olivia.”

“Wow! Lillian Russel! We’ll truss him up in one of those hourglass jobs. This I gotta see.” My sister could be absolutely intolerable.

I could imagine what she was suggesting and it scared me so badly, I momentarily forgot about the black satin shaming device that covered my chest already.

“And keep this in mind, my bosomy boy, if I have to change your brassiere, you will go back to square one and start the whole six weeks of your penance over again. Understand?”

I nodded disconsolately. These words took the fire out of me. I was about to belt my sister, and that would, absolutely, have been the end of my manhood, I was sure.

“I think you had better leave him alone, now, Olivia. He will have enough trouble living with this without your tormenting him. Mr. Tuffy here might just lose it and I hate to think what retribution we would have to think up in that contingency.”

I didn't want to think about it either.

“Now, put your sweater on, Mr. C-Cup. This isn't a dream, so you get to wear a sweater over your bra.”

Slowly, I pulled my white knit sweater over my head and adjusted the sleeves. The tightness of the brassiere felt strangely cumbersome as I pulled down the bottom of the sweater. My chest fairly sprung up and out as I did so.

“Look, Olivia, it's just as I thought. The black lace on the cups shows through. You can see the shadow of the whole brassiere through the sweater.”

I had been taking quiet solace in the idea that once I had the sweater on, it would at least conceal the brassiere, if not my new effeminate shape. I despaired as I looked in the mirror and saw the delicate tracery of the lace and satin beneath the sweater. The V-neck stopped short of actually showing the brassiere itself, but an embarrassing cleavage was apparent. Worse yet, the tiny black satin bow on the front

of the bra, right at the bottom of my cleavage, tended to reveal itself.

Olivia, of course, had to make comment. She always had to make comment.

“Oooh, but the bow is really cute. It’s just precious.”

Olivia never missed a chance, not one.

“We’ll need more sweaters, I’m sure, but for now, go clean up your room. Then we can go downtown to lunch. We can find you a pink angora, perhaps, something with a high collar to hide that cleavage. You will need another brassiere too, one to sleep in so you can wash that one out every evening.”

Olivia resumed her little dance of satisfaction at my degradation as Mom turned me around and examined me from every angle. She finally slapped me on the fanny and sent me off to my room to do my Saturday chores.

Kenny Miller absolutely had it coming. He had been bullying me for weeks, trying to goad me into a fight. I don’t think he really thought he could beat me up. He was like any bully. If I called his bluff, he would fold, but that would have meant actually confronting him, and that made the possibility of blows pretty high. I knew from long experience that any kind of fighting would land me in big trouble with Mom, so I had tried all through the Fall to avoid getting into it with Kenny. That avoidance only encouraged him, of course, and with each passing week, his taunts and challenges became more outrageous. The whole football team was just waiting for it to happen. His buddies were really egging him on.

Kenny finally snapped at my loins with a wet towel in the locker room once too often. Calling me a candy-assed brown nosier, he caught me across the butt with the wet towel as I spun away to avoid taking the blow in the groin. That's when I lost it.

As he stooped over to get something out of his locker, I planted my foot against his rear and propelled him head first into its recesses. When he recoiled and came up to face me, I plowed my right into his breadbasket. As he doubled over, I brought a left uppercut squarely into his nose. His head snapped back and I nailed him with a right cross that sent him to La-La-Land. He staggered back into his locker, sideways. His right arm was broken both above and below the elbow when he smashed it into the hook on the inside of the locker and then cracked the arm on the concrete floor edge of the platform on which the lockers rested.

When he returned to school three days later, he had his whole arm in one of those full casts that rested on a crutch belted around his waist.

I didn't see his return. I was sitting out a one week suspension while the school officials argued about expelling me altogether.

I was grounded, of course. I pretty much kept to my room while Mom and Dad argued about it. Mom was all for just "throwing me away," whatever that meant. Dad argued that there was an element of self-defense involved, or at least I was provoked. He believed me when I said Kenny had it coming.

Mom said there was never any justification for fighting, ever, period. She was really rigid on this point of view, totally nonnegotiable. Even I didn't say he deserved a broken arm, but I did argue that I did-

n't actually break it, that part was accidental. Mom said I caused the damage, and that was that.

The Principal, Mrs. Nevlin, took the view that the fight was unprovoked, which made me the villain. Either she didn't know, or chose to ignore, what had led up to it.

Things finally calmed down as she discovered, after a few days, what had led up to the fight and the matter was closed with the week's suspension.

Mom was still not mollified. I heard her downstairs hollering at Dad for letting me play football. She said that it only encouraged me to be crude and brutish. She kept at him, insisting that he make me quit the team and take some initiative in finding ways to refine my ruffian-like actions.

I guess she finally wore him out. I heard him shout at her in exasperation that he didn't see what was so wrong in my attitudes and behavior.

"Boys will be boys," he said and told her that if she didn't like my rough and ready style, she was free to figure out what to do about it on her own.

She did!

He washed his hands of the whole affair. Even after my penance began and I turned to him for help, he told me that it wasn't his affair any longer, that Mom was in charge. He was through with it.

The suspension ended on Friday. Saturday morning, Mom beckoned me into her room.

Olivia was sitting on her bed, wearing a smirk.

“Mom’s got a present for you, Mr. Linebacker,” she cooed. “You’ve got a new set of pads.”

This remark went right by me. I told Olivia to shut up. Mom waved her to be quiet and thrust a small box, tied with a pink ribbon, into my hands.

“Some new school uniforms for you,” she remarked, dryly. “You are too dangerous to be let loose in a civilized school without some means of keeping you under control. This is intended to help you change your attitude. Open it!”

Befuddled, but now on my guard, I untied the ribbon, slid the contents out of the end of the plain box, and held the black silk garment, still folded, in my hand. I stared at it dumfounded, unsure, at first, of what it was.

Olivia snatched it out of my hand, held it up by its straps, and dangled it in front of me.

I stared at it, dumfounded, unable to think of anything to say.

“You will wear this while poor Kenneth wears his cast. It will make your life as awkward for you as you have made his for him. Now put on your brassiere, Honey. The sooner you begin, the sooner you will become accustomed to wearing it.”

I was frozen to the spot, transfixed.

Olivia kept dangling the horrid garment in front of my face.

“Lacy, lacy, Lord but it’s dainty,” she sang. “Come on, put it on. Hurry up, I can’t wait to see this.”

“Off with the shirt, James,” Mom commanded. She seized the bottom of my T-shirt at the sides, jerking it upwards.

Instinctively, I bent over, threw my arms over my head and slipped backwards out of the shirt.

“You’re frigging nuts! What the Hell is this? Forget it!” I shouted at them; I bolted out the door and into the hall. I was running for my life. I had no intention of stopping until I was somewhere else entirely. As I turned the corner in the hall, bounding for the stairs and freedom, the floor went out from under me.

Mom took me off my feet with one swipe of the wet mop that had been standing in its pail just outside the bathroom door.

I hit the floor with a loud thud, swearing. As I struggled to my knees, the mop hit me squarely in the back, flattening me. As I sprawled helplessly on the floor, the mop descended a third time. Water was flying everywhere. The wet mop weighed several pounds and it felt like being hit with a pile driver.

“Flat! Don’t move an inch, Mister, or I’ll break a few bones for you. Not a word! Face down, hands on your head!” Mom put the sole of her shoe on my neck. “You are going to cooperate and do as you are told, or I will take your hide right off of you. Do you want some more?”

I managed to say I didn’t want any more of her punishment, rather weakly. I was actually starting to cry. I had never experienced anything like this before. We were not a crude bunch, not with Mom’s prohibition against violence. Mom didn’t even go in for spanking. The fight just drained out of me.

“On your feet, Mr. Tough Guy. You need to get dressed, don’t you?”

I struggled to my feet and leaned weakly against the bathroom door jamb.

Mom jerked me by the arm and propelled me back toward her bedroom. She lay the mop on my bare shoulder and jammed the end of the handle into the base of my neck. She marched me back into the room and pushed me up against the wall, face first. I was terrified and unwilling to defend myself as she twisted my left arm behind my back in a breakhold. As she handed her mop to Olivia, she put her mouth up to my ear and spoke softly, but with a hard edge in her voice.

“Will you ever defy me again?” It dripped with menace.

“No.” My answer came out mostly like a squeak.

“Will you ever use that kind of language in front of ladies again?”

Again I squeaked.

Mom turned me to face her. Olivia held the mop aloft, prepared to strike. Obviously, she was just waiting for a chance to get in her licks. Mom picked the dreadful brassiere off the vanity and thrust it in my face.

“Tell me that you are going to wear this brassiere. Ask me nicely for it, and sound like you mean it!”

“Please. . . Mom. . . uh, can I wear it?”

“Oh, no! I told you to tell me that you *want* to wear your lovely brassiere. Tell me that you *want* to put it

on. Promise me that you won't take it off, either. I want to hear some enthusiasm here."

I squeezed out the terrible words. It was eerie hearing my own voice begging to be allowed to wear the ghastly thing and promising to do so.

Mother was only too quick to grant my wish. She parked me on the stool in front of her skirted vanity and ordered Olivia to fetch a washcloth and towel to clean up the mop debris that covered my shoulders.

As I reluctantly held my arms out in front of myself, Olivia slipped the shiny shoulder straps up my arms and Mom hooked it in back. I was allowed to lay my hands in my lap as Mom slipped a pair of molded breast forms into the cups of the brassiere. My new bosoms swelled and rose into pointed fullness.

"You are not going to get into any more trouble, now," Mom ordered. "Wearing this for the next six weeks will cause you some problems. That is my intention. Despite your promise to wear it, I don't feel you are to be trusted to keep it on. You don't want to know what I will do to you if you do take it off, so I will remove the temptation."

My heart sank as she put on her thimble and began to stitch the hooks in back. As she did so, she lectured me on the nature of boys, "all roughness and crudeness, snips and snails," she said. She told me that she hoped this trial would remind me to think of being sugar and spice instead. She said she was sorry to have to take such strong measures, but she was convinced that a little dose of femininity would take the edge off my rudeness.

I struggled to hold back the tears. They came anyway, but they were more of rage and helplessness

than shame. I was terrified by visions of what the coming weeks would hold for me.

I was packed off to clean up my room, trying to avoid my image in the mirror on the closet door, but I caught a few awful glimpses of myself anyway. I was appalled at the new shape of my torso and of the black, lacy shadows beneath my white sweater. I could avoid looking at myself but I couldn't escape the tactile sensations, the pressure around my ribs and the touch of the girl's garment on my skin. These sensations kept superimposing themselves on my consciousness with each motion I made.

Chapter 2

I was just stuffing the last of my laundry in the hamper when my precious sister stuck her head in the door.

"Come on, Billy Boobs. It's lunch time. Mom says it's time for your public debut. We're going to The Rooftop at Dunham's. All us girls do lunch at Dunham's. Then we go shopping."

"Shut up, Bitch! I'll belt you from here to the rooftops." I held my voice down so Mom wouldn't hear me.

"Touch me, and your boobs will swell like Pinocchio's nose." Then she stuck her tongue out at me. She was forever doing that. It was so dumb for a really pretty girl of eighteen. She didn't do it to anyone else anymore. She did it to me because it annoyed me so. She was right, of course. If I laid a hand on her, things would get worse and I knew it. "Mom isn't going to wait. Let's go. You might as well face it."