

# Sea of Changes



**Darlette Davis**

A "New Woman" Novel



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# Sea of Changes

**By Darlette Davis**

Have you ever looked at a ceiling? I mean, really looked at the great unmarred expanse that softly mirrors a room's floor? I have, hundreds, perhaps thousands of times, but never quite like I was doing now. I was lying in the soft bed, arm nestling my new husband's head against my curls. I was half counting the rivets in the overhead of our honeymoon state-room and half daydreaming about our future.

I was content, so content that I was barely able to reflect upon our wedding night. Harry had been terrific, each time he took me had been better than the last.

At first Harry had almost forced himself on me, taking me aggressively, even harshly, intent upon dominating my soft, defenseless body. A domination I

submitted to willingly, almost grateful for his powerful impassioned abuse. It had not been love but an almost animal lust that had driven him at first and I loved him for it.

The second time, after a restful respite for us both, was no less impassioned, but his previously explosive thrusts were slower, had grown somehow more powerful in their gentleness. His slow, deliberately gentle thrusts seemed to echo the pounding vibrations of the mighty engines that propelled the pleasure (you got that right!) ship through the waves, bringing to me a passion that grew as he did inside of me.

Harry's strong hands gripped my soft breasts tenderly as he bent to alternately suck and bite in turn at my swollen and tender nipples. Painful at first, his nibbling soon became a pain that bordered on an astonishingly lustful craving for more and more.

I heard a low moaning, unrecognizable at first as my own seemingly disembodied voice saying over and over again and again, "Oh, I love what you're doing to me. Don't stop, pleaseee Harrrrry! Uhhhhh! Ohhhh! Uhhhhh! Uhhhhh! Oh, yesss!"

The low rhythmic moaning rose to a scream unbidden and unstoppable, almost anguished in its frenzied lust as I exploded in ecstasy scant moments before I felt my husband's final pounding thrust and hot, almost scorching, eruption deep within me.

Our passion finally spent, Harry lay sleeping peacefully in my arms as I thought about our future and my past.

I stroked his arm on which my hand now lay quietly, thinking of the two weeks yet to come of our honeymoon through the Caribbean. Afterwards, we would return to the city to take up residence in our beautiful country club home as Mr. and Mrs. Harry Calder. I would be the perfect loving wife, free to enjoy a pleasant existence of golf, luncheons, bridge and the obligatory volunteer work of the young well-to-do society matron.

Oh, what a heavenly ending for the unbelievable events that had started when I had taken my first job out of school many years ago.

My memory turned back to that place and time, standing before the business school bulletin board reading the posted job notices.

I remember that I'd been very discouraged as I stared at that board slowly reading every single "help wanted" ad not once but several times.

I had already lost out on two promising offers. One was a salesperson with an important national company; the other a financial trainee with a major bank.

I'd been sure I had the positions in the bag when I interviewed. I waited a few days for them to call, only to find out when they did that I had been passed over by each for a couple of girls. The positions were for "woman's work," one executive explained to me when I called.

It was the first time in my life that I had felt truly handicapped by my gender. A strange experience to say the least.

I found myself staring at the bulletin board once again with two weeks to go before graduation and still no job prospects.

Most of what I read were old notices, long since past their usefulness.

The one exception was one that read:

“Administrative Assistant Wanted. Small progressive retail sales firm seeking sharp, young individual with M. A. degree, for the position of Administrative Assistant to the owner. Rapid promotion to responsible management position possible.”

Two days later when I arrived at the firm’s address for my interview, I discovered, much to my disappointment, I was not dealing with a major blue-chip concern as I had hoped, but rather a woman’s retail clothing store.

“Dorothea’s Fashions” was a small, upscale women’s clothing chain that hadn’t quite expanded out of the local area.

I knew of their line of clothing; good quality but which had little appeal to girls around my age. Nevertheless, their reputation was excellent and I was quite taken with the exotic-looking Dorothea who interviewed me almost immediately after I introduced myself to her secretary.

“So nice you could come, Mister Johnson.” She extended her long, slim hand tipped with lavish, scarlet nails. She smiled, her lips a bright, nail-matching red

beneath dark, penciled brows; and jet black hair, drawn severely back into a large, tight bun.

She lost no time in getting to the point. She had read my resume and my college transcripts. She hadn't had much success with the other applicants, not that there had been many. She'd been turned down by one applicant and had passed on two others, one who hadn't seemed sharp enough to her and the other who appeared to be overqualified.

While I hadn't had much to say, she suddenly surprised me with, "Well, Allen, I like your looks, your manner and I think you and I would get along beautifully. I'm ready to start you as soon as you graduate. I cannot equal what a big company can give you to start but we'll make it up to you with quicker advancement."

After some conversation about details, I decided to grasp the bird in hand and agreed to start in two weeks.

I learned a lot the following six months, spending time in each department of each store and was ready to become a full-fledged administrative assistant.

At first the work was interesting, but I soon became disillusioned with the way I thought an Administrative Assistant should function. For one thing, my envisioned private office consisted of a mere secretarial desk in the anteroom just outside Dorothea's office. Far from private, I shared the office with Naomi, Dorothea's private secretary. Both Naomi and I had word processors and computer terminals on our duplicate, near mirror image, desks.



I found to my dismay that my typewriter was kept busy, not only with my weekly reports, but with Dotty's correspondence when Naomi was out or overly busy. I even found myself doing the bulk of Naomi's filing and retrieval. As an Administrative Assistant with a newly earned MBA, I appeared to be more of an assistant secretary to Naomi, a young woman barely two years out of secretarial school.

Unhappy with what I felt I had become, I had a talk with Dotty, expressing both my disappointment and frustration, even questioning why she had hired me in the first place. Dotty, in her typically quick-to-the-point fashion, invited me out to dinner to discuss my future.

Dinner went well, although whenever I tried to be specific about my situation, Dotty quickly changed the subject.

As dinner progressed I found myself, somewhat uneasily, becoming distracted from my concerns as I became taken with Dotty's beauty. Understandable, considering that I had been attracted to her persuasively dominant personality almost from the instant I had met her.

I felt pleurably calm in her presence and recognized, without reluctance, that she exerted an almost hypnotic influence over me.

At dinner's end she shocked me with an unflinching announcement that she would like me to spend the night with her at her home.

An hour later I found myself in Dotty's king-sized bed, her arms around me, her teeth nipping on my neck and a formidable dildo, complicatedly harnessed to her waist and legs, churning back and forth inside me. Disgusted with myself, I had been compromised by a woman at least twenty-five years older than me. What was worse, I suffered the ultimate embarrassment of eventually finding myself both climaxing and sobbing with pleasure. As embarrassed as I had been, I loved what she had introduced me to, and I wanted more.

My desires now quite evident, Dotty lost no time in declaring my residence permanent. When I protested, mildly to be sure, she pointed out that while I hadn't received a raise, I would now be enjoying benefits that few employers would ever consider. A rent-free existence, complete with two of my three meals prepared daily by Melissa, a quiet Polynesian woman, Dotty's personal maid.

Not yet used to the relative irresponsibility and economical advantages of living in Dorothea's comfortable home, I was further presented with a proposal from Dotty. A proposal that was as outlandish and bizarre as our insane lovemaking had become. Frankly the idea was, at first, repellent to me. Later, I would come to enjoy it to the point that I avidly looked forward to the end of each workday.

Dotty in her usual directness, explained the strange proposition she had in mind for me.

"I'm going to tell you something about yourself that struck me from the instant I saw you, my dear.

Something which may answer your question about why I hired you on the spot.”

It had been something that I wondered about almost from the beginning. I waited for her to continue.

“The main reason I hired you was your appearance,” she said softly.

“My appearance?” I asked confused. I hadn’t considered myself to be a particularly sharp dresser, either then or now.

“Not your clothing, dear, but you yourself. You remind me very much of myself as a teenager and young woman, mostly because of that nice baby smooth complexion of yours. Oh, I know you are a blond, your hair is short, all the other obvious differences, but I see in your face enough of my own features that we could be very closely related.”

I studied her face for a second, failing to see any resemblance. True, I had a complexion as clear as hers and with my scant beard, cheeks nearly as smooth, but little other than that. Seeing my doubtful expression, Dotty smiled.

“Incidentally, a couple of the girls at the office have asked me independently whether you could possibly be family, so I am not alone in noting the distant but distinct resemblance.” She smiled again as she took a deep breath. “You have told me on more than one occasion, that you thoroughly enjoy your passivity to my more aggressive role in our lovemaking.”

I nodded hesitantly, not quite sure what she was leading up to.

“I would like to take our fantasy one step further. I want you to don an outfit from among my things each evening upon our arrival home,” she said seriously. “I also had two wigs custom made for you to wear, both jet black to match my own hair coloring.”

“Two wigs?”

“Yes, for you to wear depending on the time of the evening. One is drawn tightly back into a bun and the other with the tresses falling long and free like mine when I prepare for bed.”

“In other words,” I said, a little breathlessly and with an insight that astounded me later, “you want to be able to look upon me, while we’re intimate, as yourself twenty or thirty years ago. I’m really stunned by this, as you can imagine. I am curious though, how you can possibly hope to see in me a replica of yourself, just by having me wear your clothing and a wig?”

“Oh, you’re going to be surprised, really quite amazed, darling,” she rejoined with a smile. “Wait till you see what happens when I make you up. The full scarlet lips, the long, arching brows, the powder, blusher and eye makeup tricks I’m going to use on you. And with those long, thick lashes I’ll teach you to put on, I’ll have you wondering who is passing in front of your bathroom mirror, you or I.”

I was still dubious, but willing to try anything to please the captivating Doty.

“How about trying it all right now? We’re close enough to being the same size so I don’t think you’ll have a bit of trouble with the fit of any of my things,” she smiled encouragingly.

While I was far from convinced that I could appear to be a second, more youthful, Dotty or even that such play-acting would be anything but a strange bore, I acquiesced to her request.

“All right, let’s try it if you like,” I hesitantly agreed. “I love being with you and if this is what makes you happy, then I’m willing to try it.”

Getting dressed in Dotty’s things produced in me an inexplicably pleasurable excitement that my mentor laughingly noted, saying she had hoped this would be an added attraction in our arrangement.

As she applied my makeup, she commented in detail on every action, every bottle of strange smelling concoctions, every stroke of the numerous brushes she used. Telling me as I watched each skillful movement of her hand on my face, that within a week or two I would be able to duplicate her artistry without her guidance. I wondered.

She further stated that each evening I would find laid out on my bed by Melissa, a dress or skirt of hers plus accessories that I was to don before coming down for cocktails.

Lastly, she added, “And one other thing, dear, your boy’s name would be quite distracting while you’re wearing my dresses. So we need to call you something more appropriate, more feminine. I’ve always

loved the name 'Marianne'. I've often thought of adopting it as my own. Too late for that now, of course. 'Dorothea's Fashions,' while not yet a household name, has grown to be a valuable investment. But I'd like to call you Marianne. You wouldn't mind that, would you, Marianne dear?"

Our bizarre new arrangement quickly became permanent and extended from only after work and weekends to the office itself within a few months.

I gradually found myself ignoring or, as I liked to rationalize, postponing my business ambition for a while longer.

In exchange for an unbelievable but compellingly seductive lifestyle, I would have to be content to be a mere office assistant, or rather in unspoken reality, Naomi's "Girl Friday".

Finding myself suddenly in this subordinate capacity, I ruefully admitted to myself that for a while I would have to find my business satisfactions in typing an error-free letter, performing timely errands for Dotty or an over-busy Naomi and conquering my most important challenge, namely the nighttime shorthand course Dotty required me to take "to relieve Naomi of her routine dictation."

Of course, the evening offered its own vital objectives such as learning to make up my face as a carbon copy of Dorothea Spencer and fulfilling her never-failing bedtime routine. A lovely session of being mounted for her dildo workout followed by my assuming the missionary position to orally stimulate

her clitoris until she achieved her own powerful orgasms ensued.

At that stage of my development, I would have done anything for my seductive boss, as I was to prove to my own further dismay six months later.

On that final recollection, with my husband now purring contentedly beside me and the ship rolling in a gentle swell, I drifted into a dreamless sleep.

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The next morning I found that Harry had risen early and had left our stateroom. I arose, showered and slipped into my bra and panties, ready to face the always fun task of making up my face and doing my shoulder-length platinum tresses.

I was into my dress and spikes, combing out my rolled-up curls when the key turned in the lock and Harry hastily entered. Grabbing me in both arms and smothering me with kisses as if he hadn't seen me for days, he slowly forced me backwards to my accompanying complaint that I had just finished my face and was ready for a leisurely breakfast.

“Nonsense,” he grinned lustily, “what’s a honeymoon for but to keep a beautiful wife like you in a constant state of being messed up?”

I felt him undo my zipper and pull my new lavender taffeta over my head. I knew he had just created a tangled sea of errant curls of my careful coiffure. I had little time to reflect upon the mess when I sud-





denly found myself bounced onto my back on the bed, panties and girdle roughly being pulled from my waist. Within seconds, Harry's tongue was in my still tender vagina and breakfast quickly slid from my immediate desires.

With these delightful preliminaries over, I experienced the sharp pain that wasn't quite a pain, as his organ brutishly entered me, unmindful that I had not yet lost my soreness from the night before.

Within moments, however, Harry's pre-cum lubrication was released and I felt myself rocking in time with his rhythm. A small part of my desire-filled mind speculated that there would be a lot less sightseeing on this cruise than the first time I had sailed these same waters with Dotty four years earlier.

What an exciting and climactic time that voyage had been!

As I relaxed, following Harry's surprisingly quick ejaculation, I looked back upon the different nature of my other cruise.

My first experience at sea had been a wondrous time. Dotty had laughingly called it "Marianne's Born Again Cruise." Not because of any religious conversion on my part, but in recognition of a joyous celebration of the delivery of my adoption papers the week before.

I was now officially and legally "Marianne Spencer," the adopted daughter of my adored and adoring boss. A role I fell into perfectly, both emotionally and physically!

Once on shipboard, Dotty and I seemed to be constantly on the go. I don't think there was a deck game we didn't play, a shore tour we didn't take, an evening show or dance we didn't attend. I offered to call Dotty "Mommy" in honor of all she had done to allow me to enjoy my life as never before. She, while not opposed to the idea, firmly limited its use to our private times. She was much too busy having fun passing as my older sister to explain why I called her "Mommy." Passing as my older sibling was actually quite easy for Dotty, for that was exactly what we appeared to be: sisters.

A couple of days into our cruise, we each found new relationships that, other than meals and sleeping arrangements, kept us apart. Dotty's involved a meeting with a young man at the noontime snack bar. She confided to me later that he reminded her of a boyfriend she had known briefly and quite fondly in her pre-career days.

Mine, occurring the same day, happened when I was approached along the taffrail by a tall gentleman. I had been watching the wake, totally lost in thought, when a tall man came up beside me and began speaking. His name was Harry Calder from Boston and he was a newly minted partner in a large law firm. He admitted, much to my surprise, that he had been observing me since the start of the cruise. Almost shyly, he asked me not to consider him rude when he told me that I was the most beautiful woman he'd ever seen. I, of course, managed a blush as I forgive his delightful "rudeness."

“You have Rita Hayworth’s copper red hair but with that turned-up nose, I think you’re even cuter,” Harry added as “insult” to his previous “injury.”

By trip’s end, my future husband and Patrick, Dotty’s newfound friend, had, by mutual consent, replaced the two girls at our table and become our constant companions on excursions and during nighttime festivities.

I’d never been a good dancer and found the experience of being led by a man on a sometimes rocky dance floor a novel, but not entirely successful, experience. I quickly learned that by pressing my face firmly against Harry’s shoulder, I could stabilize my equilibrium, but not my whirling emotions.

The last night out, Harry held me in his arms, kissing me endlessly. He told me how he had fallen in love with me and asked if he could see me regularly when we returned to Boston. I readily agreed, naturally pleased that he had not once suspected that I had previously been as male as he.

One other lasting relationship had its brief beginning aboard ship on that voyage. I was lounging by the pool the afternoon of the day before we returned, when an attractive woman about my age approached me.

She asked if I minded if she sat down next to me. I dimly recognized her from having seen her someplace in the past. With some trepidation, I heard her opening words reflect my recollection.

“My name is Cathy Stone, Mrs. Cathy Stone. I hope you’ll pardon this intrusion but I’ve been telling my husband since the first day I saw you that we have met somewhere before, perhaps in high school or college? It just bothers me so that I can’t place you because I have this strange feeling that I both know you and don’t. Did you ever attend school or live in Hartford, where I grew up, or attend Smith?”

“No,” I answered. “I grew up in Boston where I went to both school and college.”

“I see,” she said, sounding disappointed. “Well then, do you have any sisters or cousins about my age that you know of that I might have run into?” she persisted.

“Not to my knowledge,” I said. This was my first experience with a subject I did not care to get into and I felt strangely uncomfortable with my cool evasions until my newfound acquaintance became discouraged and left for her cabin.

Afterwards, Dotty remarked on the “cute girl” she had seen me talking with. “She almost seemed as though she knew you, Marianne.”

“She did, but not as Marianne,” I rejoined. “I ran into her one unpleasant evening in college but fortunately she didn’t seem to remember the incident.”

“Oh, Marianne, you’re too sensitive for your own good,” scolded Dotty, exhibiting her newly discovered motherly instincts. “I really can’t see the harm in confirming her memory no matter what the circum-

stances she met you under. I'm sure you'd enjoy having her for a new friend."

As I found out much later, Dotty saw no harm either in meeting with Harry for a private farewell conversation later that evening. Not knowing this then, I would be left to wonder why I was not to hear from Harry again for the next three years.

Upon returning home, Dotty and I had the meeting we had studiously avoided on my "Adoption Celebration" cruise.

First, she repeated what she had said several times before and again asked for my confirmation.

"Marianne, dear, you have become not only my best friend, but my lovely daughter as well," she began. "Because of you, I'm finally at peace with myself and happier than I've been since I started building my lucrative but demanding business career."

I smiled and looked demurely at my hands folded in my lap. I was pleased that I had been part of her happiness.

"You have told me a number of times that you have the same feelings, of being at peace with the world, of having found yourself at last as my daughter. What I'm going to suggest recognizes our happy, mutual development and takes it a step further. It is a change of direction that I want you to consider very, very seriously.

"As you know," she went on, "our relationship has changed gradually during the past couple of years.

From my obedient ‘mistress’ as well as faithful employee, you have developed into a lovely and much beloved companion. We remain deeply affectionate. While I sometimes miss the wildness of our early relationship, I still find enormous pleasure in our loving. But from our shipboard experiences, I can see that you’re as ready for a normal heterosexual affair as I am.”

I nodded slowly, beginning to feel like a fledgling sparrow about to be pushed from the nest.

“In my new capacity as a responsible and caring mother, I’m asking you not to return to ‘Dorothea’s Fashions’.” She held up her hand to stop my cries of protest.

“Please hear me out, Marianne. I want you to be free to realize your ambitions in the business world, the bigger one beyond our small company. You’re still only thirty and I will provide you with suitable references that will make you sound like a first-class ‘water-walker’. If what I’ve read recently is true, women are getting an equal, if not preferred, break over men in first-rung executive trainee openings with large corporations.”

I thought about it for a second. Reentering the corporate work force did sound appealing, even more so if I could begin as a woman.

“While you are searching for your calling in the business world, I think that it would be best if you take an apartment of your own, out from the shelter of ‘Mommie’s house.’ During your search, I’m prepared to pay your rent and continue your salary until

you find a good job. We can still see each other frequently, either at your place or mine and occasionally meet for supper out at my expense. How does that sound to you?”

Dotty leaned back in her chair and waited as I thought her offers over. To say that it was tempting would be to underestimate my desire to fulfill a void that had been growing over the past few years. I could never rest until I knew for sure that I was destined for the high-powered business world. It was a scary proposition, but I was ready.

“All I can say, Mommy,” I said letting out a deeply held breath. “is that you are the dearest, sweetest person I’ve ever known. I’ve been secretly dreaming of something like this during the past year. You have no idea how I dreaded telling you I was ready to leave the company.”

Dotty smiled knowingly, leaving me to wonder if my feelings for her had been that transparent.

“I was hoping that instead of just leaving you, I would simply become your daughter out on her own. I wanted to make you proud of me, as a young woman on my own. With your help, I know that I can do it!”

A thought occurred to me, “But if I leave, who will replace me at work?”

“Believe it or not, my young friend Patrick, from shipboard, has agreed to be your replacement.” Noticing my look, Dotty hastened to reassure me that Patrick wouldn’t replace me entirely. “Why, Marianne, shame on you. Patrick is a nice young

man, but he will never, ever take your place in my heart, darling. Never fear, Marianne, you will be my beloved daughter forever,” she laughed.

While I was happy with this assurance, I couldn't help reflecting that I had not seen the last of the turbulent changes in my life. Changes that stemmed from my fascinating relationship with my adopted mother, Dorothea Spencer.

Two weeks later, I had landed a position as a salesperson with a national office products company and moved into a lovely studio apartment in the center of town overlooking The Common.

Mommy was thrilled with the news. We began our new relationship, with regular visits with each other. She expressed her willingness to continue with her financial support were I to experience temporary setbacks. Something that thankfully, was never to occur.

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My thoughts drifted briefly back to the present. Harry was napping after another delightfully successful morning assault on me. I took the opportunity to once again roll my hair and freshen my makeup, reattaching a few errant lashes, jarred out of place by the intensity of our lovemaking.

I was once again in my lavender dress and I doing last minute primping when Harry finally awoke. He glanced at his watch and asked if instead of trying to make the breakfast meal, which closed at ten, we



could go to the afterdeck buffet that would be serving brunch in another half hour.

I thought that it was a grand idea and we grabbed a couple of pleasantly situated deck chairs to think about what we might plan to eat while nursing a couple of extra-large Margaritas.

An hour later, our tummies contentedly full, we continued to lounge in our chairs until Harry again fell asleep, the poor dear. I was beginning to feel a little sleepy myself. Harry had exhausted me as well as himself, but not nearly as much.

It was then I noticed the meddlesome woman who had asked about previously meeting me on my cruise with Dotty. Unbelievably, she was on board again. I hastily donned my dark glasses, leaned back to pretend sleep, and return to my musing about my life during the past four years.

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Following my move out of “Mommie’s House,” the next three years were to be as filled with emotions as mixed as the previous year. While I was thrilled with my independence, one of the few I’d experienced in my life, without immediate boss, teacher, parents or what have you regimenting my life, there were limits to my newfound enjoyment.

As far as work was concerned, I was moderately successful. I found I was not a natural salesperson, even less now than during my summer vacations from college. I had managed to do a fair amount of

business through sheer hard work and determination, however. Some of my extra sales came through mostly unwanted attention from some male buyers who seemed to feel their purchases included use of my personal time. For the most part, I was successful in discouraging these advances, although I did have one turbulent affair with an attractive married man that almost got out of hand.

He had steered me into a definite side track in my life when he started paying my rent. His generosity was not without its price, though. In return for paying my rent, I slept with him a couple of nights a week when “business pressures” kept him “working late at the office” and finding he had to do his overnights in town.

This “gentleman” almost made me lose my mind for a while. His demands on me to do his gift shopping and other errands extended to having me explore the regions of kinky sex with him. I was introduced to the wild practices of sucking on the private male (or on occasion female) parts of others while undergoing a buggering, sucking, or natural or unnatural violation of my own organs.

At first, I couldn't get enough of these strangely impersonal new “thrills.” However, I found the “thrills” quickly paled to become a boring waste of time, not to mention fundamentally repugnant to my basically prissy nature.

With the loss of interest in indiscriminate sex, I let my lover know I wouldn't need him or his rent payments anymore. He was intelligent enough to understand that if he continued, I might feel the need to in-

form his wife of his nighttime work life away from home.

My main desire in having a relationship with a man I could love permanently, however, had never left me. I thought more and more frequently about getting in touch with Harry Calder. I couldn't understand how he could ignore me after the way we had gotten along on the cruise.

My longing to see him again did not abate after I started trying to contact him by calling his law firm. He was definitely still there but after four or five unanswered messages, I began to feel that he had found someone else. I had been nothing more than another vacation romance.

Another yearning also grew in me with each passing month almost from the start of my sales career. It had stayed buried and virtually unrecognized for the first year and a half but one day when a customer offered me a job, I put aside what was probably my guilt and began to squarely face my true desires.

I had taken Mac, the crusty manager of an account that had given me considerable business, out to lunch. He was not one of those who had made advances on me, but he had shown he liked me despite his brusque manner. Over lunch he broached the subject that was to cause me the deepest consideration.

"Marianne, I've enjoyed dealing with you as a person," Mac said slowly, as though he was my own father, "but you just don't seem to have the aggressive, persistent, rejection-proof type personality that's

necessary to become a success in sales. Nor do I think you have the drive, the 'killer instinct' if you will, necessary to be successful in the managerial profession. You have to constantly be driving your people to push harder for increased business and you're too nice of a person for that."

Seeing my misty eyes, Mac took my hand comfortingly in his own. "Believe me, I'm a sales type myself, and although I admire you as a person, and think you're one of the prettiest women I know, I would not hire you as a salesperson. I sense you would always be fighting your real self in performing your duties."

I couldn't help the tears welling in my eyes and I knew my mascara and eyeliner would soon be a mess as I struggled to get my hankie to my face. My efforts were hampered only slightly by Mac's comforting pats on my hand.

"Oh, Mac, you've forced me to acknowledge something I knew from the moment I started selling office equipment but didn't want to admit. I can't go on like this." I sobbed. "What do you suggest I do, some clerical job?"

"Marianne, don't cry, but just listen to me for a minute," Mac said softly, still in his "fatherly" tone of voice. "You have many good business qualities. You're accurate, you're reliable; your memos and the other written reports I've seen are always perfect, and you make a terrific phone impression. In short, if you took the time to acquire the appropriate skills, you'd make a fantastic secretary. I venture that while you'll never make a million dollars, you would be much

happier. You have a natural flair and desire to support and help others to succeed.”

“You may be right,” I sniffled. I blew my nose, then informed Mac of my work with “Dorothea Fashions” where, if nothing else, I had gained the respect of both Naomi and Dotty for being an excellent secretarial worker. “My steno is rusty now but I was doing over a hundred words per minute and my typing, with all my letter and memo work, has remained at seventy-five words per minute.”

“Enough said,” rejoined Mac, obviously impressed by my background. “I’d love to have you join our secretarial staff. How much would you need to start?”

I named a figure that caused Mac’s face to fall and he answered that it was a “little high,” not that he minded paying it, except for “the effect on the older secretaries,” but he’d think about it.

Two weeks went by without hearing from Mac. Working on the premise that no news is good news, I became more enthusiastic about the prospect of returning to work I’d unconsciously grown to enjoy at Dotty’s office. I finally decided to make a clean breast of it with Dotty and brought the subject up the very next time she had me over for dinner.

Dotty obviously had mixed emotions about my desire. She could understand my new resolve, but rather lamely said that she would have difficulty finding me something right away. Patrick, to whom she was now engaged, had become her administrative assistant, and would become her assistant manager in time. My return would involve my reporting

through Naomi to him, a status she felt at this stage in my life I couldn't abide.

"Oh, you finally found someone you could depend on to fill your assistant job properly," I said but smiled without the least bitterness.

"No, I wouldn't want to 'go home again,' Mommy, really I wouldn't. I still want to be on my own," I said, concealing my smile over Dotty's small sigh of relief.

"But what I would like is a beautiful reference, describing what I can do as a secretary and redoing my job history as one who started at the bottom as a secretary trainee and rose to the level of a full-fledged secretary. Just don't lay it on too thick though, I don't want everyone to think that I'm overqualified."

Dotty smiled in relief. "Oh, my darling daughter, please be assured no one can ever take your special place in my life. Of course I'll change all that managerial potential stuff I put in my original Letter of Recommendation. Honey, I'll do nothing more than tell the truth. You have achieved a level where you're more than ready for an Executive Secretary position."

Our evening came to an appropriate end as we kissed lovingly and deeply. I and I'm sure Dotty, longed for old time's sake, as we gently fondled one another's breasts. Before we could resume our old ways with a roll in the sack, I broke away, kissing her one last time. I told Dotty that I couldn't wait to get back to my apartment to devise my new resume.