

Journal of a Change



Darlette Davis

A "New Woman" Novel



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Journal of a Change

By Darlette Davis

The view of the sunset over the ocean from Aunt Adele's home on the Pacific Coast was as breathtaking as I remembered it. Her house was the perfect place to watch sunsets as we were doing now. Sitting on a huge piece of property high on a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, you could see out into the ocean for nearly fifty miles.

To the South, after the sunset, you could see the glow of the lights of San Francisco, which Auntie called The City for some reason.

The house was large, giving the impression that my Aunt was wealthy. She wasn't exactly rich but made a good living operating her own company. She could afford the house and property only because it had been inherited from her husband, (whom I'd never met) when he died five years earlier.

This particular sunset was so beautiful that I almost diluted my Margarita with tears of happiness as we stood watching the sun sink into the Pacific. It was good to be back on the coast.

I had arrived a few hours earlier to spend my summer vacation from college with her. After putting my two suitcases in the bedroom I had stayed in last year, I returned to the living room and Auntie Adele.

We watched the sunset, then sat on one of the couches in the living room sipping our drinks and bringing each other up to date.

“Well, what do you say?” Auntie Adele asked as we began to sip our second cocktail.

“I’m happy to be back,” I sighed contentedly. Auntie was known for the strength of her Margaritas, the one I was sipping as well as the first, which was rapidly relaxing me.

“I know that, silly. I meant what do you say about coming to work for me at the company this summer?”

“I thought you said last summer, when I first offered, that you could afford another employee.” Although if I remembered correctly, I had offered to work for little or nothing, I thought.

Auntie shrugged her shapely shoulders, “That was last year. This year, I can use the help.”

“Okay, when do I start and what will I be doing?” Natural questions to ask, I thought.

“Not much really, you’ll be working in the front office. I have a lot of typing that needs to be done and I just can’t find anyone that I trust well enough to do it.”

I was flattered that she had enough confidence in my typing ability to actually offer me a job.

I was also glad that she didn’t expect me to try to use my still rather meager business skills. The freshman year in college is not really very heavy into the practical application of the Business Major. Mostly it was getting the basics out of the way. Refresher 101 in most areas.

I was to learn a little later that a job wasn't all she would be offering me.

"Sounds great! When can I start?" I asked, just as my stomach gave a growl, causing us both to giggle.

"Sounds like we need to put something into that flat little tummy of yours," Aunty laughed.

"I can't argue that, but I'd like to change clothes and slip into something more comfortable," I replied.

We had just started to enjoy our second drink when Adele asked, "Do you want to join me in the kitchen while I put together a snack or would you like to slip into something more comfortable?"

"More comfortable? You remembered," I answered as my heart suddenly beat faster.

"How could I ever forget the fun you had last summer?" Adele laughed. "I was hoping that you hadn't changed. Judging from the silly little grin on your face, you haven't."

I could feel myself blushing as I shook my head, "No, not really."

"I thought not. Well now, I think that if you check the dresser and closet in your room, you'll find a selection of the things you liked so well. I even added a few new items I thought you might like."

"You did?" I asked excitedly, "I've got to see."

"Well then, don't just sit there, go on and enjoy," Aunty laughed, waving her hand in a brushing motion..

"Be back in a few minutes," I called over my shoulder as I almost ran down the long hallway.

It actually took me a little longer than a few minutes. My rapid return to the living room was hampered by the excited thrills

coursing through my body. I was torn between rushing and savoring each sensual delight; after all, it had been nearly a year since I'd last felt those familiar thrills.

Copper wig in place and my makeup finally finished, I returned to the living room. Adele, still sitting on the couch, glanced up approvingly as I entered.

“You look absolutely divine, Honey,” she sighed. “That Kelly green shirtwaist dress goes perfectly with your red hair. I assume you’re wearing the matching teal green panties and bra set as well?”

The smile on my face told her that I was.

“Well now, you look very nice. If I didn’t know you were a boy, I’d never guess. What do you say we go to the kitchen and we’ll talk about this summer,” she said, rising.

I followed in Adele’s wake, enjoying the sharp clicking of my high-heeled pumps on the beautifully finished hardwood floors as I followed behind her.

“I just love these heels,” I said. “How did you know my size?”

“It was an educated guess, Allen dear. I knew that you found my shoes a little tight last summer, so I just added a size or two. I’m pleased that they fit so well,” Adele smiled. “You really do look adorable, you know.”

I could feel my face becoming as red as the hair of my wig as I mumbled my thanks.

Aunty missed my blush as she beckoned toward the small breakfast nook. “Eat your salad while we talk,” she commanded.

I sat down, brushing an errant strand of my wig from my face. “What would you like to talk about?”

“Oh, about you, your work at the business, and maybe how you look doing it,” Aunty smiled.

“How I look? You haven’t made everyone wear uniforms or something like that, have you?”

“No,” Auntie laughed, finding my suggestion hilarious for some unknown reason. “I haven’t required my staff to wear a uniform, unless you consider a skirt and blouse for the office staff, or jeans and T-shirt for the girls on the work crew.”

“Skirt and blouse? Even the guys?” I asked, suddenly felling uneasy.

“Honey, where you’re going to work, there are no ‘guys,’ at least not in the front office.” Auntie managed to smile and look serious at the same time.

“So I’ll be the first, then right?” I asked between bites of the delicious Chefs’ salad.

Auntie shifted in her chair, looking a little uncomfortable. “Well, yes — no, not really,” she almost stammered. “There’s a little problem that I’d like to talk to you about.”

“Okay,” I said uncertainly. I couldn’t imagine what the “little” problem could possibly be.

“Honey, before I tell you what I have in mind, I’d like to ask you some questions.” There was the barest of hesitations, as though she really didn’t know how to approach the subject “...about you liking to wear girl’s clothing. I know that you love to do it, wear girl’s clothing I mean, but what I’d like to know is, why?”

Why did I like to dress like a girl? That was something I’d like to know myself. The desire to dress like a girl had both thrilled and scared me.

I’m introverted, but not so much that I wasn’t well aware that “normal,” whatever that means nowadays, boys and men didn’t wear girl’s clothing. The question didn’t exactly take me by surprise, but I thought about it for a few seconds before I answered.

“I’ve asked myself that same question, hundreds maybe thousands of times since you allowed me to wear your clothes last summer,” I admitted, “and I keep coming back to the same answer.”

I regarded Aunt Adele for a second before I continued with my answer. We had always been close, and since last summer hadn’t many secrets between us. Of all the people in the world, she was the one I trusted most. I decided that I would be as honest with her as she’d been understanding with me.

“I think I know some, but not all, of the reasons why I enjoy it.”

“What do you think they are?” Adele asked, leaning forward in her chair.

“It’s really hard to explain, but I’ll try. All I know is that I like it.” Adele looked disappointed in my brief answer. I smiled and tried to explain my feelings. “Frankly, I have a wonderful sense of well-being, of being, for lack of a better word, complete. Until last summer, I had never experienced such a completeness in my life before. It’s like I’ve finally got it all together. Almost as though it was simply something that was meant to be.”

“I see,” Adele said sitting back in her chair. The look on her face told me that I had more or less confirmed something she had long suspected. “Are there any other reasons you can think of?”

“Yes. I hope you won’t consider me crazy or vain, but I simply love the way I look when I’m dressed as a girl. I think I look smashing, not like I do when I’m wearing my boy clothes.” I paused, noticing her odd look. “Don’t you think so?”

“Emphatically,” said Adele, smiling. “You’ve been blessed with your mother’s genes and fine delicate features, dear. There are quite a few real girls your age who would trade their features for yours in an instant. Now, can you think of other reasons? Say, how about you feel like you’re really a girl trapped in a man’s body?”

Seeing my quizzical look, she explained offhandedly. “That seems to be the standard reason I read that some men desire to be like women.”

“Good question,” I answered slowly, searching my feelings for the truth, “but in all honesty, I don’t. Although I’m more than happy with the way I look as a girl, I’ve never really considered myself as one. Not that I’m really happy being Allen either, I’m too boyish and immature looking to be really comfortable as myself. But to say I feel like a girl trapped in my body? No, I think that ‘trapped’ is too strong and inaccurate a word.”

“But you do like to wear women’s clothing,” Adele insisted. “Surely you’d like to see how it feels to be a woman as well as wear her clothing?”

I shook my head. “The closest I’ve ever come to that is in a little ‘daydream’ I have late at night. I’m wearing a nightgown and it feels so natural that I sometimes feel that it would have been better if I been born a girl. Since last summer those feelings have been more frequent, however.”

“You’re starting to make me feel I should apologize for getting you into this situation,” remarked Adele with a slightly poignant smile.

“Oh no, please don’t feel that way. I’ve never really been comfortable with myself, even before my visit with you last summer. I’ve always been an introvert, as you well know. I’ve always envied boys who are more macho than myself.” I paused, thinking that this was one of the few times I’d been truly honest with not only myself, but someone else.

“Go on, dear,” my ever-encouraging Aunty said softly.

“Aunty, I’ve been basically unhappy with myself ever since I got out of grade school.” I reached across the table and placed my hand on hers. “You’re not to blame for the way I feel. On the contrary, I can’t ever thank you enough for what you have done for me.”

“For what, dear? I just saw in you something softer than in most boys, I merely helped you see it too. I really don’t see how that could have helped.”

“Before you talked me into dressing like this, I had resigned myself to being frustrated the rest of my life. My only salvation was the hope that someday, when I was old and gray and my appearance finally matched my actual age, I could gain more respect from others and some measure of respect for myself.”

“I’m sure that respect will occur much sooner than that, darling.” Adele said reassuringly.

“No it wouldn’t.” I shook my head in disagreement. “I think that I’m happiest when I’m someone else, who just happens to be an attractive and desirable girl.”

“Which is exactly what you look like,” Adele agreed. Adele studied me in silence for a few seconds while she thought about my critical soul searching. “Thank you, Dear, that was an interesting insight.” She sighed. “I think you have done an excellent job of self-analysis. I’d like you to expand on something you said.”

“If I can,” I said slowly.

“You mention that you are envious of macho acting boys, correct?”

I nodded slowly, I had an idea Aunty was leading the question to the next logical conclusion.

“Could that possibly mean that you might really be a latent homosexual?”

I shook my head no, horrified by the thought.

“It’s getting to be the ‘politically correct’ method of resolving some rather complicated male sex dysfunctions nowadays, you know,” Adele sighed and smiled musingly. “With your ‘too-pretty-to-be-a-boy’ looks, you’d have no trouble attracting the so-called ‘macho’ men.”

“No trouble, but its not for me. In all truthfulness I’ve considered that possibility, but it isn’t my cup of tea, so to speak,” I spoke slowly and carefully, looking straight into her eyes. I wanted to allay any suspicions she might have about my sexual preference. “True, I am envious of the strong macho type, but it’s more like the envy a young boy has for a sports superstar.”

“How can that be, darling?”

“I remember one night last spring before I came to visit that might explain a little better. I remember watching a young couple, a strong ‘he-man’ type and a very pretty and feminine-appearing girl, on their way to a baseball game. I found myself fantasizing what fun it would have been if I’d been the girl. I could even imagine myself wearing her dress and heels, my hair and makeup identical to hers.”

“Really? What would you have done if you actually had been her?” Aunty asked with a curiously amused smile on her face.

I shrugged my shoulders and looked briefly at the ceiling, thinking back to the scene. When I answered I had a momentary guilty feeling, knowing that my answer would appear to contradict my honest denial of being a homosexual.

“If I had been her, I’d have been looking forward to going to the football game with him.”

“Sounds like a harmless and pleasant enough date.” Adele’s eyes twinkled as she continued, “Is that all you would have done?”

I looked down at the floor, blushing at the memory.

“No, there’s more, Auntie. I imagined that we had gone to the game and afterwards we went out to eat a late supper and go dancing. I remember at the time thinking that if he was as nice as he seemed to be, I even would have allowed him to make love to me.”

“Sounds like a very lovely daydream, dear,” Aunty sighed approvingly.

“But you must understand that my admittedly feminine emotions and desires that I’d felt then are about as close as I’ve come to anything like a homosexual impulse.” I said, trying to make sure she understood what my true feelings were. “Even then though, I thought of it as more of a normal boy-girl feeling than anything else.”

Aunty sat back in her chair and regarded me for a second. She was obviously trying to makeup her mind about something.

“I think I see,” Adele said, wearing the amused smile again. “I know these questions have been difficult for you, honey. But they had to be asked before I answered your question about uniforms.”

I nodded, bewildered as to what my answers to the questions had to do with wearing uniforms... unless... I dropped my fork into my empty plate with a loud clank when I realized what the answer was.

“You want me to dress and work as a girl?” I asked astonished.

Aunty laughed and clapped her hands. “I knew you were a bright boy. That’s *exactly* what I want you to do!”

“But why?” I asked the obvious question.

Aunty looked a little mysterious when she shrugged her shoulders and smiled. “Oh, a number of reason, but mainly because I think that deep down you’d like to see what it’s like being a girl for a while.”

I considered the answer. It did sound like it might be exciting. But did she really think that I looked enough like a girl to be accepted as one by other girls?

“I think so,” Aunty replied. I opened my mouth in stunned shock, thinking that she’d read my mind. I realized to my chagrin

that I had been thinking out loud. We both laughed over my reaction.

“Seriously, dear, you are pretty enough to be accepted. But I know you’ve got some doubts about it.”

“Doubts! It’s one thing to be dressed like this when I’m home alone with you,” I started to protest, “but something else entirely when I’m around strangers.”

“I knew you would say that. I’ve thought of a way that would reassure you that no one would question who you appear to be.”

“How’s that?”

“Quite simple really, I’ve asked Michelle to give you a job interview as a girl. If she says yes, then it’s skirts, blouses, high heels and one terrific summer job!”

“Dressed as a girl!” I said, still not convinced that I could pull it off.

“Dressed as the sweet young person you really are, darling,” Aunty corrected me.

I thought about it for a second, then laughed. “I can just see the letter that I’ll write to Cecilia about my new job.”

“Who’s Cecilia, darling?” Aunty asked.

“She’s a girl that I’ve dated a few times, nothing serious, but I like her just the same. Anyway, I can just see the letter now. ‘Dear Cecilia; You’ll never guess what a wonderful job I’ve found. I’m working as an assistant to my Aunt Adele in her office. They have a very strict dress code here; in fact, that’s what I have to wear, a dress! Of course, I get to wear all the other nice things that go along with it, like high heels, nylons and makeup. Oh, if you ever call the office, be sure to ask for ‘Cathy.’ That will be me. P.S.: Does this mean that our engagement is off? Love, Cathy.’”

Aunty laughed at my attempt at a joke. “Allen you’re just nervous about the idea. Don’t be. Everything will turn out fine. The girls in the office will know all about you and will probably end up being very protective of your privacy. As far as your parents are concerned, well, they’re three thousand miles away. It’s highly unlikely that they’ll ever know that you wore skirts all summer, unless you chose to tell them, that is. Remember, darling, this will all be in easy gentle stages, which can be stopped at anytime.”

“Okay,” I sighed, my fears of accidental discovery relieved. “When do I meet with Michelle?”

“Tomorrow night, dear. We’re to meet her at the Chez Bon restaurant at six for dinner and drinks. And before you ask, the restaurant is pretty fancy, so you should plan on wearing a cocktail gown for dinner. If she says it’s a go, then you can start the day after tomorrow.”

My dubious concerns were momentarily suppressed by what Aunty said I should wear. “A cocktail gown?” I asked.

“I bought you more than a few pair of heels, dear,” Aunty smiled, her eyes twinkling with delight.

I must admit that I got little sleep that night. When I did finally fall asleep, I dreamed about wearing the little spaghetti-strapped black cocktail dress I had found in the back of my closet.

As little sleep as I got, however, dawn found me standing in nightgown, negligee and heels in front of the stove, preparing breakfast for Aunty and myself.

“Smells delicious,” I heard a voice come from behind me.

“I thought that you might like one of my special Denver Omelettes you liked so well last year.”

“I can hardly wait. How do you like the nightie and negligee I found for you?”

I twirled around in a circle, allowing the full skirt of the nightgown to rise. I knew my freshly shaven legs were exposed just a little too much, but I didn't care. “It's just so adorable,” I gushed, feeling pleased with the gift.

Aunty took an experimental bite of the omelette, chewed thoughtfully then sighed, “You know, dear, someday you'll make a great housewife.”

“Aunty! Shame on you for saying that!” I admonished, grinning to show that I wasn't really upset with her.

“No, it's true,” Aunty insisted as she waved a fork at me. “If not a housewife, then you should at least consider being a cook or a domestic for a rich family somewhere.”

“Like you, Aunty?” I asked with a wink. I wouldn't have minded that arrangement in the least.

“Good heavens no, darling,” Aunty laughed. “I was just kidding.”

“Oh,” I said, slightly disappointed.

“Well, Cathy, what are you going to do today? You've got the whole day before we have to go to the Chez Bon.”

I had stayed awake half the night thinking about what I would say when Aunty asked this very question. “Oh, nothing much, I guess. Unless you have something in mind, I thought I might just sit around the pool and work on my California tan.”

Aunty glanced out the kitchen window. “It looks like it will be a great day for it.” Aunty smiled. “Be sure to put on some suntan lotion, the sun out here can be deceptive sometimes.”

“I will Aunty,” I agreed.

Actually, I had no intention of going near the pool until I had achieved my mission. What was my mission? I had to prove to myself that I could pass for a girl as easily as Auntie seemed to think I could. The question was, how?

The answer presented itself as I was idly browsing through the morning paper less than an hour after Auntie left for work. The first two pages were nothing out of the ordinary, just stories about some corrupt local politician, bank robberies, a couple of murders. You know, the normal stuff you find in most California newspapers.

The third page, however, instantly caught my eye and held my attention for nearly an hour. The page was nothing more than a full page ad heralding a 25% off everything sale at Fashion Gal.

Exactly what I had been looking for! I couldn't think of anyway better to find out if I could pass as a girl than doing something that most girls love to do — go shopping. The fact that one of the miniskirts in the ad looked positively to die for didn't have anything to do with my decision. Not much anyway.

Since Auntie had the only car that available to me, I knew that I would have to take the bus. I gamely removed \$100 from my boy's wallet and put it in the small purse Auntie had given me the night before. Adjusting my skirt for the fifth time, I stepped out into the bright sunlight and walked to the corner bus stop.

I have never felt more alone in my life, despite the fact that there was a delightful old man sitting at the bus stop when I arrived.

“Nice day, isn't it?” he asked. I demurely looked down at the ground, nodded and mumbled something, too terrified to speak out loud lest he recognize me for what I really was.

“I'm sorry, I didn't hear that,” he said, fiddling with the knob on a hearing aid.

“I said ‘yes it is’.” This time I spoke up louder as I sat down on the bench beside him. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw him

staring at me. Growing sick with anxiety, I looked quickly away. Had I sat down next to the proverbial dirty old man, and if I had, what should I do?

“Excuse me for staring at you like that, Miss,” I heard him say. “But you remind me so much of my Susan when she was younger.”

“Your daughter?” I asked, my curiosity aroused.

“No, my wife. She had red hair much like yours. Such a beautiful woman she was....” I listened to the old man for a few minutes as he talked about his wife. When he reached the part about how she’d run off with a no good honky tonk piano player forty years before, I allowed my mind to wander.

The old man’s long story about his wife ended when the bus pulled up. “I’m sorry to hear about your wife, mister,” I said as we stood up. “You must miss her a lot.”

“Miss her? Oh, no, not in the least. The day after she ran off, I moved in with her sister,” he laughed. “Had six kids with her too. That piano player was the best thing that ever happened to me.”

I stared dumbfounded at the old man’s back as he stepped up into the bus. Only in California, I thought.

The trip to the shopping center was mostly uneventful. A woman about Aunty’s age sat beside me on the third stop. Thankfully, unlike the old man, she didn’t try to engage me in a conversation until the end of our trip, where she wished me, “Have a nice day, honey.”

The Fashion Gal store lived up to its name and the ad in the paper. Nearly everything was on sale and all of it looked fabulous, trendy and *so* California. I wanted to take everything home with me. Fortunately, or unfortunately, depending on how you look at it, my cash would have run out long before the store’s inventory.

I was standing beside a clothing rack admiring the short mini-skirt I'd seen in the ad when I felt a presence.

"May I help you, miss?" a woman's voice said behind me. Fighting my panic, I turned slightly, smiled and nodded.

The young saleswoman, smiled back at me. "I think that this would look lovely on you. With your height and slim build, your legs will look even longer than they really are." She squinted at my waist and selected a skirt off the rack. "I think this is your size," she said, handing me the bright green garment.

I took a look at the label hanging on the side and nodded, not having the slightest idea if she was correct or not. I had forgotten to check the sizes of the clothes Aunty had given me. I decided to bluff it out. "Yes, thank you. I think I need a blouse to go with it."

The saleswoman's smile brightened. "I think I have one that will be just perfect. Please follow me."

I followed her throughout the store as she picked out a number of clothes for me. I had to admit that she had impeccable taste that matched my own! I finally had to call a halt with her selections when I suddenly realized that I would run out of money long before she finished.

"I think these are enough for today," I said regretfully.

"Well then, the next thing to do is go try it all on and see how they fit," she said, leading the way to the dressing rooms. "Call me if you need help."

Going into the dressing room was almost as scary as sitting beside the old man an hour earlier. What if someone accidentally saw me when I was taking my clothing off and recognized me for what I was, a boy? I nervously walked down the small hallway between the rooms, noticing to my relief that all you could see of the occupants were the lower part of their legs and feet.

Confident I could undress without disclosure, I closed the door behind me and began trying on the clothes we had selected.