

The Dress Designer



Susan Hulbert

A "Her TV" Novel



Reluctant Press TV/TS Publishers

This story (including all images) is a work of fiction. Any similarity to persons living or dead is entirely coincidental. All situations and events herein presented are fictional, and intended only for the enjoyment of the reader. Neither the author nor the publisher advocate engaging in or attempting to imitate any of the activities or behaviors portrayed.

Persons seeking gender reassignment surgery, hormone therapy or any other medical and/or body-altering process should seek the counsel of a qualified therapist who follows the Benjamin Standards of Care for Gender Identity Disorder. This material is intended for persons over the age of 18 only.



Copyright © 2026

Published by Reluctant Press
in association with Mags, Inc.
All Rights Reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher, except for brief quotes contained within a critical review.

For information address
Mags Inc/Reluctant Press
4645 Van Nuys Blvd., Suite 101
Sherman Oaks, CA 91403
USA

Call toll free (800) 359-2116

reluctantpress.com & magsinc.com

New Authors Wanted!

Mags, Inc and Reluctant Press are looking for new authors who want to write exciting TG, crossdressing or sissy TV fiction.

Stories should be in Word or Rich Text format, and around 24,000 to 30,000 words in length. Reluctant Press also prints some shorter stories in the 19,000 to 24,000 word range.

If you think you have what it takes, this could be your opportunity to see your name in print on a real book, commercially published, and get paid for it.

Contact

magsinc@pacbell.net, reluctantpress@gmail.com - or call 800-359-2116 to get started.

BE THE FIRST TO KNOW

Our monthly newsletter can keep you in the know. It's free, and you can cancel at any time! We'd love to see you there... Just send your name and address to Mags Inc/Reluctant Press, 4645 Van Nuys Blvd, Suite 101, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403 USA - or call 800-359-2116 and leave a message to be included our free newsletter.

“The Dress Designer”

By Susan Hulbert.

I always liked to draw.

Mom said I must have been born reaching for a pencil. As an infant, I drew ships and cars, castles and space rockets. Then I started to draw people. They were cartoons, badly copied ideas from the books and magazines at home. Gradually they morphed into recognisable people; movie stars and politicians; people in the news.

As I grew older, High School art lessons taught me some techniques of shading and design. I began to appreciate how I could incorporate ideas of movement into the design on the page. I had books and books of sketches. I was 18 and getting ready for college also.

At home, Mom always encouraged me. She introduced me to the local amateur theatre society. I started to design the stage sets and then the costumes. Once that first costume crossed my horizon, there was no stopping me.

I designed period pieces and contemporary dress. I designed things which they could never afford, and things which none of their actors could fit. I let my imagination run riot, partly inspired by those old Hollywood costume movies; you know the kind where the dress is so extravagant that it could hardly exist in real life.

“You should submit that to the magazine’s designer competition.” Mom looked through some designs for dresses which she should never have seen.

“My reputation would be shot instantly if anyone ever found out.”

“But they’re beautiful,” She protested when I snatched the papers back from her.

I didn’t dare tell her that I imagined myself wearing these creations; dancing and sighing into the arms of the leading man. I couldn’t even admit that I had these thoughts. As I grew older, they faded into a dim mist but the thought of wearing the dresses, having my hair falling down my back, with really glamorous makeup never left me. But then I determined that I was a guy and guys are into girls in a different way.

What she’d seen were some sketches of a girl I’d seen in one of my classes. She was Alice and she was so distant, so lovely and so far above my social status in the school that I daren’t even speak to her.

I'd drawn her as she was, then improvised. She became blonder and then brunette. She always had such style and looks that I couldn't resist sketching. She fascinated me, yet I'm sure she had no idea that I existed.

"You've a real talent for designing attractive clothes for young women," Mom persisted. "I never knew you even thought about such things."

"It was designing costumes," I said. "I understood that whatever I drew had to be able to show character and movement."

"They look as if someone could wear them; not too fanciful," she said. "There's a design competition in one of my magazines. I think they're good enough to win."

"That's because I'm your son," I replied.

I thought my refusal would be sufficient. We didn't speak of it again for a while, but that's jumping ahead. Life continued as before. Mom went to her office and I went to my classes. Whichever of us got home first would start dinner and we'd usually eat together.

It seemed that would be the way forever; the two of us alone in the world. Things started to change when Mom met Suzie. They started going places together. I was silently pleased. Mom needed something other than the office and me in her life.

"You'd better read this." Mom's smile beamed as she handed a letter to me. "There's a banker's draft with it too."

“This can’t be real.” I looked up from the letter. “It says that Josie’s entry has been awarded the designer prize. I don’t know anyone called Josie.”

“That’s my fault,’ she replied. “I sent in your designs, but I invented Josie because you were so reluctant. I didn’t think that Joseph would be appropriate for a series of sketches of girls in dresses.”

“It’s not right though; suppose they want to meet Josie.”

“I don’t think that’s going to happen. It’s only a small competition.”

“Well, it’s done and your sketches won.” She looked at the banker’s draft. “It’s made out to me as your parent, but I’ll transfer the money to you.”

“But why did you use Josie? ”

“I didn’t want to use your name obviously. There can’t be many Josephs in town.”

“I guess that’s good thinking,” I sighed. “I may be able to stay anonymous. I may be christened Joseph, but everyone calls me Chip anyway. I bet they don’t know my real name.”

“But you’re a winner.”

“I wouldn’t be if everyone knew and started calling me Josie at school.”

So nothing happened for a while. No one knew that the Josie who began to submit more designs was really me. I made a few dollars from the drawings, not that anything ever went to a manufacturer, and all seemed well.

Then everything started to change.

“I’m wearing your design tomorrow,” Mom announced out of the blue. “It’s the big charity ball. I had one of your designs made specially.”

“You mustn’t tell anyone.” I felt panic.

“Don’t worry; I’m not going to do anything to embarrass you. I thought you’d be pleased to see one of the dresses you designed actually being worn.”

“That’s okay, but I draw these things for the sake of drawing.”

“I understand that, but my dressmaker thinks you have a real flair and a real potential as a designer.”

“But I’m not trained,” I said, feeling intrigued that someone should react this way. “I don’t know anything about the way clothes are constructed.”

“Of course you do,” she protested. “Don’t think I haven’t seen you looking through my wardrobe.”

“I was only looking.” I could feel my blush rising.

“I don’t care. If I hadn’t come home early last week, I’d never have known.” She smiled as if we had a conspiracy. “Anyway, you have an appointment to see Joshua Warren at his design studio.”

“I’ve heard of him. His trademark is a glamorous blonde in a black and white drawing,” I replied and then stopped to think. “He’s really important. I can’t think why he’d make time to see me.”

“Whatever; the appointment’s made and you’re to be there in the city next week.” She handed me a card with the address.

I knew where it was because I’d looked in the window of the studio where some displays were always available. It was exciting to be invited but I wondered if I dared.

“Now let me into a secret,” Mom asked. I know you’re a compulsive sketcher, but it’s nearly always the same girl when you draw a face. There must be a girl who’s your model.”

“There may be, but don’t ever ask,” I replied, blushing again. “And if you guess, don’t ever tell her.”

“Do I know her?”

“Maybe you do, but I think I’d die if she knew.”

“I think she’d be flattered. They’re beautiful designs and you make her look so romantic.”

“Believe me, Mom; she’d probably hate it.”

Have you talked to her? I think you should.”

“Leave it; she’s way above my league.” I wanted to end the conversation. “She’s looks the type to go for the football players and the rich ones too.”

“Not all girls are so mercenary.”

“Maybe not but I’m at the bottom of the dating league.”

“Suzie’s coming over this evening,” Mom announced at breakfast next day. “She’s going to be wearing one of your dresses too.”

“How many people have you told?” I broke into a cold sweat.

“I didn’t say anything. She saw the designs in my bag and asked to see them.”

“You had my designs in your bag?” I gasped. “Why on earth...?”

“I took several that I liked in case one was too impractical to make,” Mom said calmly. “They told me that they were all so practical, especially the ones where you’d drawn the side and back views.”

“I think I remember which ones you mean.”

“I really loved the way you’d included the hairstyle and the makeup too.”

“I got carried away and drew her,” I admitted. “Those drawings weren’t made for anyone.”

“Well, anyone would think you wanted to be a dress designer,” Mom replied. “I don’t see why you’d want to keep it a secret.”

“Think of the guys I see at school,” I said bitterly. “They’re semi-evolved primates and they’d love another reason to pick on me beside the fact that I’m scrawny and wear my hair long.”

“You tie it back for school.”

“That doesn’t stop them. I do my best to keep out of the way,” I replied. “Sure, I’d love to go to study design; I dream about it. Some of my best imagined creations are in those sketches.”

“You’d have to learn about basic sewing and how clothes are constructed.”

“I’d love to do that, but please, don’t tell anyone.”

There was nothing more I could say. What’s done is done after all.

Suzie turned out to be a really nice person. She was bubbly and full of chatter, despite my monosyllabic replies at first. She was a little similar in build to the make believe girl in my drawings. She was slim, lithe, and elegant.

After a light meal, she and Mom retired to her bedroom to get dressed and ready.

I sat and drew; what else would I do? I could hear them laughing and chattering as they were getting ready. It seemed to take ages.

“Are you ready?” Mom shouted down the stairs. “Prepare to be amazed when you see us.”

I heard their steps on the stairs. Suzie appeared first. Her dress was a striking green and made out of a light material. I didn’t know what to call it. The Grecian design suited her figure, tall and elegant. Her hair was in a messy up-do with tendrils of pale blonde hair framing her face.

Bangles jingled at her wrist and pearls swung from dangling earrings. Her pearl fingernails were elegant and the way she walked in high backless heels completed the picture.

“When you’ve finished watching Suzie, how do I look?”

Mom entered a few moments after Suzie. I think they’d planned it for the effect. Her dress was black and long. Her raven hair was wavy and worn loose, hanging down over her breasts and down her back.

The dress was one I recognised. I think I’d drawn it several times to get it right. It was low in the front and the back, tight at the bodice and hips, flaring out into a full skirt. There were full sleeves, flaring out to Tudor style at the wrists with a trim which was weighted so that it moved nicely. With black heels, Mom was a lot taller than in her daily shoes. It was good that she was as slim as Suzie.

“It’s not too young?” she asked, looking at me.

“Heck, Mom, you’re only in your thirties, you’re not an old lady.”

“I was worried.” She stood and looked in the mirror on the wall. “Suzie did my makeup. She talked me into these false eyelashes. I haven’t worn them for ages. I could never do my makeup like this.”

“That’s because I’m the makeup girl at Helen’s salon and spa in town,” Suzie replied. “I spend my days trying to make people look good, even though I fail sometimes.”

“That’s the raw material.” Mom laughed as they exchanged glances. “I know some of your clients and they’re awful.”

“Just because they’re awful doesn’t mean I don’t try,” Suzie replied. “And the worst ones are the best tippers usually, so I always smile.”

“So do you approve?” Suzie curtsied to me.

“More importantly, do you think Josie would approve?” Mom asked.

“I’m sure she would.” I tried to hide my blush.

A couple of days later, I was home for the day. I was alone and I knew I’d be alone until late. Temptation and curiosity got the better of me. I opened Mom’s closet and took out that dress. Her perfume lingered on the fabric.

I examined it carefully. I looked at the seams and the way the linings were cut. I’d hoped that my drawing was sufficient for the pattern to be made and I was so pleased to know that it had been.

I held the dress against me. I think I knew in that instant that I was going to try it on. I stripped off my clothes in a single minded thrill. I opened drawer after drawer. Soon I was standing in front of the mirror looking back at myself in bra and panties, a garter belt, and stockings.

I took the band from my hair, brushed it straight and let it fall over my shoulders. I was getting more excited as I looked. I put a hand under one of the bra cups, imagining what it would feel like if I had a real breast in there. I hadn’t, so I bundled up panties to give some shape, if not substance, to the illusion.



I started to rummage in the drawer under the mirror and soon I was stroking foundation across my face. I started shading and contouring. Yes, I knew about these things; I was an artist after all. Eye shadow followed, dark and mysterious and then eye liner and mascara. I tried her shoes but they didn't fit until I found some open back sandals. They didn't match the dress, but they were all I had.

I liked the feel of the clothes as I drifted from room to room through the house. The skirt slipped over my thighs as the stocking rustled. The tug of the garter straps took me by surprise. I made myself a drink and took it to the lounge where I sat, pretending that I was interested in some daytime television show, all the while trying to feel the things I would feel if I were really female.

It wasn't good. I knew I should put away all the clothes and remove the makeup before anyone came home and found me. I made my decision and fortunately was in the shower when Mom came home. I double checked to make sure that all traces of makeup had gone before venturing back to the kitchen.

Mom gave me a knowing look, or maybe I just thought she did. I could feel a blush as she asked me about my day. I mumbled a reply and no more was said.

I vowed never to do that again.

My journey into the city was nerve-wracking. I was never good in such busy and crowded places, but

that wasn't the reason for the butterflies in my tummy. I was so nervous.

Joshua Warren was famous; such a talent for his designs. I'd looked them up again before I went out so that I could pretend I knew what he was talking about and make some sensible answers. I didn't want to appear as a mumbling idiot.

As I walked to the door of the studio, I realised that I hadn't seen a picture of Joshua anywhere. I pictured a guy in a suit, but maybe without the jacket; shirtsleeves rolled up, and standing at a design board. Maybe he had designer stubble.

I pressed the entry phone and waited. I announced who I was and when the buzzer sounded, I took a deep breath, went inside, and up the stairs to a reception desk. I looked round as I waited for someone to greet me.

"You must be Joseph." A dark girl dressed like a gypsy walked up to me, pulled me into a gentle hug, and took my hand. "Joshua's so pleased you could come; he loved your ideas."

She led me through the studio. The main area was open plan, bright and full of fabrics. An old fashioned sewing machine was next to the most modern one I'd ever seen. She knocked on a door at the rear, put her head round, and said something I didn't hear.

"Just wait a few moments and Joshua will call you in." She indicated a chair near the door. "He's getting changed."

After a few moments, the door opened. A dream of a blonde peered round the door and smiled at me. I stood and was pulled into another gentle hug. I felt

her hair on my face and caught her perfume; wood and lavender, citrus and jasmine. She stood back and I looked at her.

I was struck dumb. She must have thought what a wordless fool I was. Her makeup was sublime. Dark eyes, sparkling green, and lashes which must have been done in a high end salon. Generous and perfectly shaped lips, a luscious colour somewhere between apricot and pink.

Her dress was pure white with a scooped neckline, showing the rise of two delicate breasts. The waist was tight, the skirt was short and frilled. Backless sandals with a pointed toe and low spike heel showed her bare toes, painted the same shade as her long nails.

She wore a plain gold ring on her left hand with jangling bracelets on her wrist. I noticed a pendant around her neck with a glittering design almost nestling between her breasts. Gold hoops in several sizes were in her ears.

“Welcome; we’re so pleased you could come.” Her voice was soft and a little husky.

“I was surprised to get the invitation to see Joshua.” I replied looking round. “This is an amazing space to work in.”

“Maybe you could come here during vacation. You could get a feel for the place and the discipline it takes.”

“You make it sound like a factory,” I joked badly. “Is Joshua coming back?”