

RUFFLES & CURLS

By KAMMI MORTON



ILLUSTRATED BY BRIAN DUKEHART

A 'HER TV' NOVEL

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RUFFLES & CURLS

BY KAMMI MORTON

CHAPTER ONE: The Contest

I had not planned on college, thinking I did not need it and finances would be a problem. Dad had died when I was fourteen and there had not been much life insurance. Mom had used most of it to pay for hair dressing school training and to support us until she graduated and found a job. She and Dad had married right after she got out of high school and I had been born a year later, so she had never worked and now at the age of thirty—three she was hit with the reality of beginning a new career and becoming the bread winner.

And let me tell you, it was no fun for me either. Aside from the devastation of losing my father, my whole life was turned up side down. I was forced to help out with household chores, which I hated. I was afraid of my friends finding out that I did such unmanly things as laundry, dishes, and vacuuming.

Worst of all, I was being used as a dummy for Mom's "homework".

Many an evening I sat at the kitchen table while she practiced her roller sets, pin curls, finger waves, etc. on me. As humiliating as this was, at least Mom did not object to letting me wear my hair long when all my friends were having major fights with their parents about their hair length.

I would make sure that all the shades were drawn first so nobody could see me and would race to my bedroom if anyone came to the door. At least it would all wash out in the shower before I went to school.

Once I overcame my nervousness about being seen with a head full of curlers I began to actually enjoy these nightly sessions. I told myself it was just because I liked getting my head massaged during the shampoo or feeling my mother's gentle hands working with my hair. Yet, I knew there was more to it and this scared me. I was beginning to get a strange, sensual feeling as soon as my mother said "hair time"!

Was this caused by my getting my hair done, or because it was a feminine thing to do? Either way made me feel like I was perverted.

In the process though, I did learn a lot about hair styling and one evening, when Mom was particularly tired after a long day, I offered to set her hair and this then became another nightly routine. I kind of enjoyed this but was deathly afraid anybody would find out and repeatedly made Mom promise not to tell anybody. I had trouble enough with my image since I was only five foot six and weighed one hundred ten pounds.

She could not understand why my setting her hair should be such a big secret. "Some of the best hairdressers in the world are men and you certainly have a knack

for it. You do my hair as well as I do, better in fact. You should be proud of your talent. I think you should seriously consider a career in hair styling.”

I got her to promise not to say anything to anybody. That would be all I needed — for everyone at school to know I was going to become a hairdresser!

I was already looked down on as a sissy and didn't need any more humiliation.

But, I really did enjoy doing her hair and found I got the same aroused feelings when I set her hair as when she did mine. What kind of weirdo was I? I increasingly asked myself. I even tried to stop this nightly ritual, citing, “too much homework,” or, “not feeling well,”; but, my mother insisted I continue.

“There's nothing stopping you from doing your homework while I do your hair and putting my hair up only takes you fifteen minutes. You can surely spare that for your tired mother,” she noted sternly, throwing in the sympathy factor as well.

And to be honest with myself, I was glad that she had not let me stop. Yes, I could now pretend I was forced to go through these feminine activities, yet at the same time I could not keep from taking increasingly greater pleasure from these “ordeals”.

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One evening, a couple of weeks before Mom's graduation, she mentioned at supper there was a styling contest for all the students. It was actually like a final exam, but prizes were awarded for the top three.

“I'm sure you'll win first prize, Mom,” I said supportively.

“I do think I have a good chance, but I'll need to practice a lot, OK?”

I knew this meant I would be spending the next few nights getting my hair curled and teased over and over, but I did not protest, knowing I was helping my mother and it would soon all be over and I would never have a curler in my hair again.

For the next three nights I would have my hair washed, set, dried, and styled at least twice each evening with Mom trying a variety of setting patterns, sizes of rollers, comb outs, etc.

And then the other shoe dropped!

We were having breakfast on Sunday morning when Mom mentioned she would need a model for the hair styling contest.

“Where do you get somebody for that?” I asked in complete innocence.

“I was hoping you would do it, Danny.”

“WHAT! No way Mom, please. I'd be the laughingstock of the whole place and I'm sure word would get out at school too. I'd die of embarrassment.”

“I did consider all that, but you have such perfect hair for the style I am going to do and I have it down to perfection with our practicing. No two heads are alike and so it would be difficult to get it just right on someone else. It is not all that important that I win the contest, but there will be representatives from some of the major salons pres-

ent and they use this contest as part of their interviewing process so it does have a big impact on getting a job.”

Oh boy, here come the guilt feelings. If I refused I could prevent my mother from working which of course also would have an effect on me. But still, the thought of sitting in front of a group of people watching me get my hair done gave me shivers. *It would have been easier to walk down Main Street naked,* I thought.

“But Mom, think how that would affect me for the rest of my life. Any place I went people would be laughing at me and calling me a sissy.”

I knew this was just a little exaggerated but I was trying to win an argument.

“I do have an idea that will help, I think,” Mom countered, tentatively, and I got a strange feeling I was not going to like the “idea”. “If you dressed as a girl, nobody would give it a second thought.”

I was not sure what was worse — appearing as a boy model at a hair styling show, or getting dressed up as a girl. I decided they were equally objectionable and it was time I put my foot down.

“No way Mom. Maybe this whole thing was a bad idea in the first place. Can't you just get someone else, someone that is a woman already?”

“I'm afraid it's too late to find anyone and to get to know their hair and to practice. I'm sorry, Danny, I really am. I guess if I had thought it through from the beginning I would have known it was too much to ask of you. It's just that we have become so close since your father died I see you as much as a friend as a son. I'll just forget about the contest and hope for the best for a job.”

Whether she was deliberately putting me on a guilt trip or not, it worked. The disappointment on my mother's face was too much for me to take.

“Oh, all right. I'll do it!”

Mom hugged me for a long time and I felt good about my decision, for a short time anyway.

When we went upstairs to her bedroom and she began searching through her closet for the right clothes for me to wear, my fears returned. But I had agreed and I could not change my mind now. After all, just how bad could it be? There was no need for embarrassment as only my mother knew I was a boy wearing girl's clothes, and she was not going to tease me about it.

I saw Mom removing frilly under things from her lingerie drawer.

“Are those for me?” I asked.

“Yes,” Mom answered casually.

“Nobody will be able to see underneath my clothes so why can't I wear my own underwear?”

“Oh, you silly boy!” Mom laughed. “There are a lot of reasons. First of all, the clothes will not fit right unless you have the right things underneath. Secondly, suppose someone did see up your dress when you are bending over or sitting down, and realized that you were a boy or a girl that wore boy's underwear. Either way, it would

seem very strange. Lastly, since you are playing the part of a girl, it's important that you feel like a girl, from the skin out.”

With that speech over, Mom handed me a pair of panties and told me to go to the bathroom and put them on.

I took off my pajamas and, like I was about to swallow some distasteful medicine, quickly pulled up the panties. They were a pale blue nylon with a white lace border on the waist and at the leg openings. They fit quite snugly, but not uncomfortably. In fact, though I hated myself for thinking it, they felt almost nice. I know I was blushing when I walked back into Mom's bedroom.

“Very nice Danny. I figured you and I were probably the same size so that will make everything much easier. Let me help you with this.”

“This” was a pink pantygirdle that Mom had me step into and pulled up over my bottom. Not only was this snug too, it was uncomfortable!

“Ah...I...ah, think that this is a little bit small, Mom. It's really tight.”

“It's supposed to be tight, silly. If it was loose, there would be no point in wearing it. Just be glad you do not have to wear one for twelve hours a day, every day. OK, let's see what's next.”

“Next” was what to me was the ultimate female garment — a bra!

Mom had me hold my arms out while she slipped the straps up and went behind me to fasten the clasps. The bra matched the panties but the cups sagged. Mom quickly fixed that with a couple of sponge inserts.

“Just our little secret,” she said and winked.

I was beginning to feel like a trussed pig being prepared for the sacrifice.

Mom had me sit on the edge of the bed while she unrolled a pair of sheer stockings up my legs and attached the tops to the four garters on the girdle.

“Oh dear,” said Mom. “I did not realize just how much hair you had on your legs. It's so light I never noticed, but now you can see it all sticking through the stockings.”

What a relief, I thought. At least I would not have to wear the nylons.

“We'll have to shave your legs, Danny,” Mom stated. “Let's go to the bathroom.”

I could have protested, but what use would it have been? I just had to suffer through this for the next twenty—four hours or so and maybe someday I would be able to look back and laugh at the whole situation.

“Sit on the edge of the tub,” Mom suggested as she reached under the vanity and got her razor and shaving cream. “And cheer up, for gosh sakes! This is usually a big moment in every girl's life, her first shave.”

Yeah, it was also usually a big occasion for a boy too, on a different part of the body. In fact, most of the guys at school had begun shaving their faces, but I only had some very soft peach fuzz so far.

Mom lathered my leg and carefully drew the razor up from my ankle to my knee until all the lather was removed. Then the other leg, followed by a rinsing. It felt real

funny to run my hands over my now smooth legs. It was back to the bedroom where the stockings were rolled up again.

“Much better!” exclaimed Mom.

And I had to agree.

“Now, let's see what we have for a slip. I think a full slip would be best.”

She got a white slip and bunched it together to get it over my head. I was surprised by how light it felt on me, almost as though it was not there, but the softness of the fabric as it slid down my body was not something I could ignore. Mom had me follow her to her closet where she began to remove dresses from their hangers and hold them up against me to check the size.

Finally she decided on a white cotton number which she put on me and buttoned the back. The top was snug, with a scoop neck decorated with scalloped lace. It had a wide, light blue belt which Mom drew tight, and a full skirt fell to just above my knees.

“Yes, I think that suits you perfectly,” said Mom, walking around me and adjusting the dress here and there, but not asking me what I thought, which probably did not matter in any case.

She next pulled out a pair of white, open toed shoes that had a small heel. She knelt on the floor and put them on my feet.

“OK, let's see how well you can walk across the room.”

I thought to myself, “No problem,” but found I was quite wobbly walking on the low heels. *How did women ever manage to walk so gracefully in those very high, narrow heels?*

“Do they feel all right? I mean, not too tight or too loose?”

“No, they fit just fine, except I feel like a real klutz.”

“Oh, don't worry. Before the day is over, you will be walking as steadily as the rest of us. Maybe you'll even be ready for a higher heel!”

“You mean I have to keep them on all day?” I asked.

“Of course! How do you think you will pass for a woman unless you become comfortable in your clothes as though this was all perfectly normal?”

“I have to keep all these clothes on too?”

“Yes, Danny. Is that really so bad? I can see already you are going to make a very pretty girl. You should be thrilled to look so good.”

“But what if anybody stops by?”

“I'm not expecting anybody and you said Billy is away for the weekend so I don't think you have anything to worry about.”

Billy was my best friend who lived a few doors down on the same street. *I would have died if he ever saw me like this.*

“So, let's see what a little make—up does for you. Come sit at my dressing table.”

“Make—up! You never said anything about make—up! Can't we skip that?”

“Sorry, Danny. I just assumed you would realize make—up would be a part of dressing up. Come on, it's really a lot of fun.”

Maybe for you, I thought, but certainly not for me.

I dutifully sat at her dresser and watched as she applied a light foundation which she expertly blended all over my face and neck. There was a touch of rouge on my cheeks and a pale pink lipstick. Next came my eyes. My lashes were curled and mascaraed, my lids were coated with a light blue powder, and my brows were shaped and outlined.

Needless to say, the transformation was shocking. I was a pretty girl and I had mixed feelings about this revelation. It was nice to be attractive, but what did this mean about who I was?

Mom decided I had spent enough time lately with my hair in curlers and spared me this ordeal. She did comb bangs down on my forehead and tied the back in a white ribbon. She had me parade back and forth across her bedroom. With each step I was getting more confident and secure in my heels.

“Just as I thought, Danny. You make a beautiful girl,” Mom observed thoughtfully, and I noticed tears in her eyes just before she hugged me tightly. “Want to go out for lunch?”

“Like this? No way!”

“Nobody would suspect you were not a girl and I'll bet a lot of boys would be looking you over.”

“MOM! That's gross! It's girls that I want looking at me,” I blurted out and immediately blushed. I was still young enough that I was a little embarrassed about being attracted to girls.

“Well, I'm sure they will notice you too, but with envy.”

I managed to talk Mom out of going to lunch, offering instead to cook for her. She slipped a ruffled apron on me before letting me loose in the kitchen. I liked to cook and had often wished I could take lessons at school, but in those days Home Ec was strictly for girls and I had no wish to rock the boat. As my mind became occupied on preparing the meal, I almost forgot about how I was dressed except when the pull of the stockings or the feel of the slip against my uncovered thighs reminded me. And it was not an unpleasant feeling, though the girdle and bra took some getting used to.

We ate and washed the dishes together. Mom and I sat in the living room to watch a movie on TV. Halfway into the thriller, Mom subtly reached over and took my hand in her lap. I knew she was trying to do this unnoticed, but it is pretty difficult to file a person's nails without them noticing.

“They just need a little shaping, that's all,” Mom noted when I looked at her questioning.

But she had more than shaping on her mind as she proceeded to give me a full manicure finalized by the application of several coats of light pink nail polish. At this point, I really did not care as I looked so feminine by now anyway.

And now, my hands were as pretty as the rest of me!

That finished, Mom had me put my feet in her lap and she removed my shoes and stockings so she could do my toenails too.

Later, Mom took out her knitting and actually suggested I should try it. This was going just a little too far and I politely declined to take up this very feminine hobby.

Mom suggested I take a shower before bed as we would be rushed in the morning and would need every minute we had. She unbuttoned the back of the dress and unhooked the bra.

“Will you be able to do the rest yourself?” she asked.

“Yes, Mother,” I replied, somewhat sarcastically. At my age I certainly did not want my mother undressing me!

I picked up my pajamas and went to the bathroom and turned on the shower. It certainly took a lot longer to take all these things off than my normal clothes. I wiggled out of the dress and hung it on the hanger Mom had provided. She had warned me to handle it carefully or I would be made to iron it, which was the last thing in the world I wanted to do. The slip and bra came off easily but I struggled with the garter snaps before figuring out just how they worked. Funny, something that was a common everyday experience for almost half the population was a total mystery for the other half. The girdle too took some effort, with a lot of wriggling and pulling before I was free of the thing. The panties came off with it. It felt wonderful to have it off and be able to scratch myself. I spent a long time in the shower, enjoying the warm jets of water.

When I came out, my pajamas were not on the hook where I had left them and instead a pink nylon nightie was hanging in their place. All the other clothes had been removed too.

“MOM!” I shouted, several times. But there was no answer. It was a choice of leaving the bathroom naked or wearing the nightie. I was far too bashful to be seen in the buff so I slipped the nightie over my head and ran to my bedroom. Just as I was about to get my other pajamas, Mom walked in.

“I just need to put a few rollers in your hair to give it a little style for tomorrow. We don't need to do a full set so they won't bother you sleeping.”

“Mom, what did you do with my pajamas?” I asked, noting she had made no comment about the nightie I was wearing.

“Oh, I picked them up to put in the wash along with the other things. Why?”

“You left your nightgown behind and I had nothing else to wear.”

“That nightgown was left for you. After dressing like a girl all day and continuing tomorrow, surely you did not expect to stop for the night? If you do not want to be found out, you need to feel like a girl as much as possible. Now, sit on your bed so I can do your hair.”

She wound a few pink rollers on top of my head and one in my bangs. She tied a pink hair net around the set and kissed me good night.

My mind raced over what had happened today and what was in store for tomorrow. I told myself as a boy I should have hated all this, but I didn't. Sure, there was no desire to do this on a regular basis, and certainly not in front of anyone I knew, but it had been kind of fun to dress and act differently. I ran my hands over the soft nightie, enjoying the feel of the fabric and the looseness of the fit.

Why shouldn't boys be able to wear silky things when they felt like it?

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It seemed like I had just closed my eyes when I felt Mom shaking me awake. It was only five o'clock, but Mom said it would take a while to get both herself and me ready. She told me to go wash up and handed me a pair of white lace panties to put on in the bathroom. I saw myself in the mirror and figured I looked like what I imagined all other girls looked like when they first got up. I took off the nightie and put on the panties. They stretched and held me snugly with a different feel from the ones yesterday. The rest was a repeat of yesterday — girdle, stockings, bra and slip.

“Ok, let's go have breakfast and we'll finish later,” Mom suggested.

And so, with rollers and hair net and wearing my slip, I sat down at the kitchen table and had a hearty meal with my mother. She too was in her slip and I felt a closeness to her I had never felt before.

We went back to her bedroom where she sat me at her dresser and applied my make—up. It was heavier today and made me look older which was what Mom was trying to do.

“I decided the dress was not quite the right look for you and think a skirt and blouse would be better.”

She handed me a black skirt which was quite tight and forced me to take short steps when I walked. Next came a beautiful white blouse. My grandmother had given it to Mom for her birthday and it was one of her prized possessions. It was sheer silk with tight ruffles all down the front and frilly cuffs at the end of the long sleeves. I had thought Mom looked so pretty in it the few times she had worn it. Now I felt privileged to be allowed to wear it. Mom untied the net and removed the rollers. She fluffed up the top and tied the back in a ribbon again. She added a pair of black, clip on earrings and when I looked in the mirror I felt pretty proud of myself.

On the ride to the hairdressing school, which was about twenty miles away, Mom gave me last minute instructions on how to behave. She told me that as a model I should just sit and be quiet, like a dummy, no matter what she did to my hair. This got me a little concerned. She also told me she would introduce me as her neighbor, Danielle.

“Why do I have to change my name?”

“Well, everybody knows I have a son named Danny, so I don't think it would take much guessing to figure out that you were not a girl. Is that what you want?”

“No,” I answered.

As we entered the parking lot and Mom waved to several of her classmates, I suddenly got very nervous. The reality of the situation I had gotten myself into finally hit. This was no longer a game played in the privacy of my home with only my mother aware of the charade. I now had to go out in public and for the next several hours pass myself off as a girl in a place where only women belonged, or run the risk of total humiliation.

The look, the smell, and even the feel of the school, which was like a huge beauty shop, was totally feminine. And the feelings that came over me were very strange indeed. I had never been in a beauty shop in my life yet I felt like I belonged here. I suppose I felt like someone about to go on stage as the star of the show — nervous as hell, but excited and thrilled and anxious to hear the applause.

As I followed my Mom I hoped my legs would not fold under me. Mom seated me in one of about twenty work stations in two rows in a room that went all across the back of the building. While I took it all in Mom got her things ready and had a brief discussion with the head instructor.

The head instructor and three other people walked slowly down the rows to inspect each model's hair and make notes on clipboards.

There were not enough shampoo sinks for all of us at once so we went in groups. After getting my hair washed Mom sectioned my hair and began cutting. I had not expected this, but kept my mouth shut as instructed. During this, and through each following phase of my ordeal, the four judges, three of whom were actually owners of large salons in the city, would check my Mom's work and ask her questions.

When the cutting was done, Mom put a tight plastic cap over my head and tied it under my chin. The cap was covered with small, different colored circles. Without telling me what she was doing, she took a plastic rod that looked like a crochet hook, and began to puncture the circles and pull out small strands of my hair from the cap. Pretty soon, I looked like something from outer space with the white cap and pieces of hair sticking out all over the place. Mom got a bottle of some foul smelling lotion and dabbed the stuff on my exposed hair. She was wearing rubber gloves for this operation, which did not make me feel very relaxed. I had to sit for about fifteen minutes while Mom talked to one of the judges. Mom whispered, "Good boy," and patted my shoulder before she left with the judge.

While I waited, I got up enough courage to look around at what else was going on in the room. There were some strange sights as the models went through a variety of rituals on their hair. Worst of all was the pungent odor from the different chemicals being applied. I wondered why women put themselves through all this.

When Mom came back, she inspected her work and took me to the shampoo sink and rinsed my hair. She put some more smelly lotion on the exposed hair. It had been over an hour since we had arrived. She removed the cap and very carefully wound all my hair on different sized and colored plastic rollers and covered them with a net that was drawn tightly around my head.

Next, it was off to another room where several others were already sitting under the dryers. I sat under mine for forty—five minutes, relieved when the hot air turned

cooler signaling that the end was near. It was a number of minutes after the dryer shut off before my mother came.

“Since we are so close to noon it has been decided that the styling will take place after we come back from lunch. Are you hungry, Danielle?”

I was starved, but of greater concern was where we would be eating lunch.

“We don't have to go out, do we?” I asked.

“You don't see any lunch counter in here, do you?” said the woman who was with my mother.

“Danielle is a very proper young lady and does not like to be seen in public with her hair in rollers,” Mom answered for me. “Don't worry, Danielle, around here they are used to seeing us everyday with our hair in all sorts of weird states. Nobody will give you a second look.”

And so, along with a bunch of women, I went outside and walked a block to the cafeteria style restaurant. I imagined that my head was as big as a blimp and that everybody was laughing at me, but in fact this was far from the truth. By the time lunch was over I was quite relaxed and even enjoying my time with “the girls”.

When I was seated at the styling station, Mom put a short pink cape with a lace border over my shoulders and secured it under my chin with a clip. She removed my net and rollers and brushed and teased my hair vigorously. She had turned the chair around so I could not see in the mirror what was being done. But it sure felt awful and I could not hold back my tears. At one point I did get a brief glance in the mirror on the other side of the room and saw that my hair was standing straight out from my head in every direction. Mom began to carefully comb the hair and arrange it to her satisfaction. I was doused with scented hair spray and Mom twirled the chair around.

“Voila!” she exclaimed.

“*WOW! Is that really me?*” I wondered. My hair was puffed out in a beautiful bouffant with a sweeping wave that came down over my right eye and curled up. The left side was behind my ear and curled under. But the biggest difference was not the style.

Mom had bleached my hair!

Suddenly, the whole look came together. From the hair style to the make—up to the clothes, all combined to create a picture of a lovely young woman.

I had a great difficulty believing was me.

It was another half hour before all the models were ready for presentation to the judges. We all had to walk individually up and down the room and sit in front of the judges while they examined the hair style close—up.

Mom won first prize!

She was given a trophy and we had our picture taken together. More importantly, she was offered a job at the most fashionable salon in the city. It was not so much the better pay but rather the experience and exposure that mattered, she explained to me later. All the way home she repeatedly thanked me for all that I had done and for being such a good, cooperative model.

“Ah, Mom, you didn't tell me you were going to cut my hair or you were going to bleach it. Will it look OK after I wash it out?”

“Actually, I only cut a little to shape it and I did not 'bleach' your hair, it's just frosted a little.”

“Oh, all right,” I answered, not really sure what frosting was but thinking it was like a coating on a cake and it would come right out when I showered.

When we pulled into our driveway I pretended I couldn't wait to rush up to my room, get out of these awful clothes and get rid of the very feminine hair style. But Mom, thankfully, had other ideas and persuaded me to remain as her “girl” for the evening. She told me how pretty I looked and she just wanted to prolong this wonderful day. Well, it seemed like it would mean a lot to her and what difference would a few more hours make anyway, I told myself. But she did let me change my clothes and it sure felt good to get out of the confining garments. In their place, I put on the nightie I had worn the night before covered by a quilted, floor length, pink satin robe. I had to admit, it sure was comfortable to dress that way for an evening in front of the TV. Mom handed me a bottle of nail polish remover and some cotton swabs and showed me how to clean my nails. At bedtime, I took off the robe, and to please my mother, I left the nightie on.

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Standing under the shower in the morning, yesterday seemed like a dream. But today was reality and back to school. When I put my jockey shorts on, I felt a little pang of guilt thinking the panties had felt a lot softer. What was happening to me? Maybe all the kids at school were right — maybe I was a sissy, or worse, “queer”!

When I combed my hair I found Mom was right and my hair was still long and it did fall in place better. There did seem to be strands of lighter hair but with my hair still wet, I really was not sure. After getting dressed and having breakfast it had dried enough to see it was definitely lighter.

“Mom, the frosting did not wash out!”

“Of course not, silly. It's not supposed to.”

“But I can't go to school like this. Everybody will laugh at me.”

“Nonsense! I only lightened it a couple of shades lighter than your regular color. Anybody that does notice it will just think you have been out in the sun.”

“In February?” I exclaimed sarcastically.

I went off to school with my mind once again greatly exaggerating the effects of the change in hair color. I thought everybody would immediately notice my platinum color, though in truth it was certainly far from this light. I tried to think up different excuses to explain my appearance and decided I would say I had mistakenly used my mother's shampoo. I was braced for all sorts of nasty comments when I walked into school but none were forthcoming. Even the class bully passed me by in the hallway without saying anything. But several girls who I was friendly with, and even a few I hardly knew,

commented on my “cute new haircut”. By the end of lunch in the cafeteria I had relaxed and was beginning to enjoy the favorable comments from the girls.

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Mom finished up school and started her job. It took a lot out of her as she worked long hours and so I volunteered to take on more of the housework, but on the condition that Mom not tell anybody about it. I felt it was such a threat to what little manhood I had. During the week after the hairdressing contest I found that the two pairs of panties I had worn that weekend showed up in my dresser drawer, freshly laundered. And the nightie was hung on a satin hanger in my closet. Mom received a framed, 12x14 copy of the picture of us at the hairdressing school with her holding her trophy. I almost blew a gasket when I found it prominently displayed on top of the TV one evening. I talked her into removing it to her bedroom, arguing that all her friends knew she did not have a niece and that the resemblance to me, despite the make—up and hair style, was too close not to raise questions.

There were several times over the next few months when Mom would hold the picture in her hand and comment on how pretty I looked.

“Would you like to dress up again, Danny?”

“NO WAY!” I responded, too forcefully.

In fact, there were times when I would love to have changed back into Danielle, and there had been a few times when I had come home from school and put on the panties while I did my housework. Since I now did the laundry, I could wash them and return them to my dresser without Mom knowing. I could not understand my feelings, especially getting an erection every time I even thought about putting on the silky underwear. I was so afraid I was “queer” which was something I did not really understand but which seemed to be the worst thing in the world for a boy to be, at least according to the way the other boys at school talked.

Eventually Mom stopped mentioning me dressing as a girl. I did continue to set her hair every night, learning new ways to style it and even how to put it up in French twists or chignons or curly up—do's. But there was no longer any excuse for her to set my hair which was disappointing. I was afraid if I asked her to do such a thing she would think there was something wrong with me and send me off to a doctor to be treated. After all, what boy enjoyed getting curlers put in his hair? I did allow her to cut my hair in the style she wanted and to keep it frosted.

In summer I even let her go a little lighter. While most of the guys let their hair grow long, they did not take care of it properly and let it hang straggly and dirty. I, on the other hand, shampooed my hair every morning and used a cream rinse so it was always clean and shiny. Girls would often comment on how nice it looked and some even would ask me what I did to keep it looking so nice.

I found I had more friends. Increasingly among the girls rather than boys, though I did not have “girlfriends”. I was not the sports type and found it easier to talk to girls and vice versa.

I found myself sitting in class studying the girls' hair styles and thinking about what setting pattern and size rollers they would have used. I would think about how another style might be more flattering and how some subtle highlighting or change in color might be better. And I would study their clothes, admiring a well pressed pleated skirt and blouse and, when I really let myself drift off, wondering how a particular outfit would look on me.

When I discovered myself thinking like that I would actually blush in class and tell myself not to have those thoughts. I was a boy!

I should be admiring their breasts or their legs! But when I tried to force myself to think like this it would lead to wondering about what slips, bras, and panties they were wearing and remembering fondly those few days when I had been similarly attired.

I began to wonder if I was indeed “queer”, now knowing just what this meant. But when I thought about it I decided I did not have any feelings toward boys and the idea of kissing one or doing other things repulsed me. So what was I? I did not know who I could talk to about this. My mother? The school counselor? The minister? Surely there was not another boy in the whole world who got aroused thinking about getting his hair curled and wearing girls' clothes!

I would be labeled a freak and locked away for the rest of my life. I decided it was best I said nothing and try to keep my feelings and thoughts under better control.

I bought Sports Illustrated and even Playboy and started watching sports on television, figuring this was what a “normal” boy would do. I hoped this would take my mind off “girls” things. But it did not help. When I opened the centerfold of Playboy my eyes went first to her hair, which got me excited thinking about washing, setting, and brushing it while I ignored the enormous breasts and the rest of her body. And television sports bored me as much as the real thing and I would find myself reaching for one of my mother's magazines on the coffee table to look through while some baseball player scratched himself and spat on the ground. I began to consider myself a freak and thought I would be better off dead than to have someone discover my deep, dark secret!

High school dragged by and I could not wait for it to end. I was not a good student and was somewhat of a loner. My whole thinking was focused on graduating.

CHAPTER TWO: Susie

It was my senior year and everybody was talking about what college or job they were going into. I had never given much consideration to this, but now realized I had to make a decision. I had applied to several colleges, just to postpone the time I had to enter the “real” world, and now the rejections began coming back. My grades were poor and I had always taken the easiest courses which was not what colleges were looking for.

“So what will you do now?” Mom asked.

“I don't know. The career counselor said she would do some research and see what else might be good for me but there really is nothing I am interested in.”

I saw Mom's eyes light up and knew what was coming next.

“How about joining me in the shop? You have a real knack for hairdressing and it can be very rewarding.”

Mom had scraped up enough to buy her own beauty shop last year and I had helped out on Saturdays, the busiest day, giving shampoos and taking out the rollers as well as sweeping the floor and other odd jobs. I had strongly fought this when Mom first suggested it, again terrified of what people would think about a boy working in a beauty shop.

“Danny, nobody knows you in Lincoln and besides, so what if people do see you? I really do not know what all the fuss is about. Lots of guys have jobs after school and most are damn glad to have them.”

Lincoln was about five miles away from Meadville where we lived and she was right, we did not know anybody there. But Mom had many friends and had developed a following at the shop where she had worked before, and most of those customers thought nothing of going to Lincoln to have their hair done. And sure, lots of the guys had part time jobs but none of them were in a damn beauty shop!

Mom was persistent and she really did need the extra help. And so every Saturday morning we drove together to Lincoln and put in a good ten hours making women beautiful. I looked forward to eating out after the shop was closed.

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At first I just wore a white shirt and slacks but then Mom succumbed to the pitch of a salesman.

“Oh goody! They've arrived. Wait 'till you see what I bought you,” my mother said excitedly as she opened a package that had been delivered to our house. She held up a pink nylon smock that had white piping and on the breast pocket was embroidered a white flower with the word Danni stitched in a curve under the flower. It had small, curved collars with a satin bow between them. It had two buttons — in the back!

“Don't you love it, sweetheart? I got two for you and four for me,” she said, holding up her white smock with pink lettering. “They're real easy to wash and are drip dry so you won't have to iron them. What do you say?”

“They're, ah, kinda feminine, don't you think?”

“Well of course they are! It is a beauty shop after all. You'd look pretty funny wearing blue overalls, for crying out loud. Now, just go touch them up with the iron to get the folds out and you can begin wearing them on Saturday. Oh, by the way. I bought you some white slacks to wear with them. You'll look so cute!”

I protested wearing such an obviously feminine uniform, but to no avail. Mom insisted I wear them and called me ungrateful for the nice things she bought for me.

Cute! That became a very common word in the shop for the next several weeks! It seemed that every customer that came in looked at my new outfit and said “cute” although some actually said “pretty” which really made me blush. Now I was even more nervous about being seen in the shop by anyone that knew me.

My worst fears were realized when I saw Susie Wales come into the shop with her mother one afternoon. Susie was in my class at school and I had a secret crush on her. She was very pretty and popular so I figured that I did not have a chance with her. But she was always very nice to me, especially when we sat beside each other in French class. When others laughed at my difficulties in pronunciation she would smile sympathetically at me and once reached over and patted my arm as if to say, "It's all right". That little gesture drove me wild. But now the girl of my dreams was going to see me in my sissy job as a shampoo boy!

"Hi Danny," she said casually to me as though it was perfectly normal for a boy to be wearing a pink nylon smock and removing pins and rollers from a woman's hair. There was no look of surprise or burst of giggling, which I had experienced with some teenage girls that came to the shop.

I sheepishly smiled back and said "Hi" almost inaudibly.

I hoped it was her mother who was getting her hair done since I would be mortified to have to wait on Susie. But on the other hand, I could not help but think how nice it would be to shampoo her beautiful golden hair.

"Danny, when you are finished with Mrs. Robinson, you can get Miss Wales ready," said my mother, maintaining the formality that she insisted on with customers, not knowing that Susie and I knew each other from school.

When I had taken out the last roller from Mrs. Robinson's head, I walked over to where Susie was sitting and asked her to follow me to the shampoo sink. My hands shook as I fitted the cape around her neck and lowered the back of the chair.

"So, how long have you been working here?" asked Susie.

"Ah...well...ah, about a year," I answered. "My Mom really needs the extra help and can't afford to hire another hairdresser yet."

"Are you going to hairdressing school after graduation?" she continued as I wet her hair with the warm spray and began the shampoo.

"Oh no!" I exclaimed, perhaps too quickly. "I'm going to become a doctor," even though I knew that was all but impossible now. But, I was trying to impress Susie.

"That's wonderful. Are you going to give me a free physical?"

I was not sure if she was mocking me or if she was flirting with me. The latter was something I had very little experience with and did not know how to handle. I worked the lather through her hair and rinsed.

"What brings you over here?" I asked her.

"Well, my mother's best friend raves about how good your mother is and so Mom decided to give her a try and talked me into coming along with her. I'm glad I did now that you are going to do my hair."

Damn! She was flirting with me.

"Ah...well...ah, I just do shampoos and help out, but I don't actually do hair. But I wish I did now," I added, making my best attempt at flirting back.