

VIVIAN

By Elizabeth Anne Nelson



ILLUSTRATED BY MISTY MALVEAUX

A 'YOUNG ADULT' NOVEL

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Reluctant Press TG Publishers

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By Elizabeth Ann Nelson

Chapter One: Vivian's Birthday Party

“But John, we must do something. She is coming here. She plans to come for her favorite niece's birthday party,” my mother exclaimed, interrupting dad's evening T.V. news. I never bothered to correct her belief that Vivian was our daughter named after her. Frankly, we agreed on the name.”

“Never liked the name Vivian for a boy no matter what the baby name book said,” dad commented unsympathetically. “If the old biddy didn't have so much money I wouldn't have saddled the boy with such a foolish name. Now that we have enough money to get by on I think we should have his name changed to John or something more solid and masculine.”

“Well, she is my sister, and she isn't an old biddy, she's two years younger than I and has a daughter, Geraldine, who is a year older than our Vivian,” mother detailed. “And how was I to know she was coming to visit us? Her husband died two years ago and she lives all the way to Indiana! And she sent the most expensive gifts this time.”

“Not another girl's sweater,” I protested, remembering how the guys had spotted the label on my blue sweater that had up until then passed as a boy's sweater.

“No dear,” mother replied with a smile. “Up until now her gifts have been fairly usable except for that big wetty doll that I had to pack away.”

“I think you should have told her the truth,” dad noted with a shrug, breaking away from the news as a commercial came on. “As far as I'm concerned she's your problem, dear.”

“But, what shall I do with her gift?” mother pleaded.

“Well..,” dad began as the news broke into his answer, “let the boy show her how silly this whole thing has been.”

Mother saw that he was finished with the discussion so she sighed and left the living room to retreat into the kitchen motioning for me to follow her.

“But, mom I'm studying?”

“Shh, son, go with her,” dad ordered half under his breath causing me to get the message and follow mom into the kitchen.

After mother had closed the door she smiled towards me that smile she always used when she wanted me to do something like mow the lawn or worse.

“Darling, you really must do me a very big favor. Dad will be gone during your birthday party on a buying trip and Aunt Vivian will leave before he returns so it will be our little secret.”

“What?” I asked beginning to feel that I really didn't want to know.

“Well, dearest, that will have to wait until your birthday. I think our little surprise should be kept secret,” she mused half to herself. “She will arrive on the noon train on your birthday with her daughter Geraldine and that will give me plenty of time.”

“What is this all about?” I repeated knowing full well that she wouldn't tell me now that she had changed her mind. Mothers are that way.

“You just promise to do what I tell you. Promise?” she half ordered in that tone parents use when they make the decision and they expect you to agree.

“Okay,” I replied with a shrug, “can I go back to my books now?”

“Of course dear,” mother noted her mind on other thoughts.

The week passed without a hint of what morn had in mind and as usual dad left on his monthly buying trip to New York leaving the house to mom and I. That night mom came to my room as I was undressing for bed....

“Darling, I want you to look fresh and clean tomorrow so I have drawn a hot bath for you.”

“Aw, mom,” I complained feeling that one bath a week was one too many. “I don't need a bath.”

“Vivian Love Gaines,” mother warned using my full name indicating was a hair from getting a spanking from dad if I didn't obey her. “You undress and take a bath and I'm going to help you”

But mom, I'm old enough to take care of myself," I begged not liking the idea of her babying me.

“I have made up my mind!”

“Okay,” I muttered knowing better than to fight the problem. With a sigh of surrender I undressed, slipped into my bathrobe, and followed her down the hall to enter a bathroom that smelled like mom's bed room. In surprise I looked at the pink bubble filled bath tub. “What' 8 that?”

“Hot water, young man,” she replied opening a cabinet door and taking from the top shelf a hand brush. “It is something I use to remove old rough skin and oils.”

“That's girls' stuff,” I argued hoping for a reprieve.

“IN YOU GO!”

“Okay, okay” Gingerly I stepped into the steaming tub feeling the pins and needles of the hot water. “SAY, ITS HOT!”

“No need to shout, just sit down,” mother suggested unhelpfully before rolling up the sleeves of her house dress and lifting her skirt to kneel by the tub with the menacing brush in one hand and a bar of strong soap in the other. Before I had a chance to recover from the stinging heat of the water she began to scrub me as if she planned to skin me with her brush.

“Hey”

“Stop whining, it won't hurt you to get really clean for once young man.”

She took my left arm and began to belabor the elbow until it all but glowed a bright red. And when I finally was allowed to lower my elbow into the hot water I thought I was being boiled. But mother continued her task until I am sure she scrubbed every inch of my body, she even took a rough wash cloth to my face until it stung like fresh sun burn.

“Now you just sit there and soak for about ten minutes. Right up to your neck, understand?”

“Yes, mom,” I bemoaned sliding into the tub more.

As I soaked she opened the medicine cabinet and removed from it her leg shaving razor, dad's foam lather can, and a comb. Without consulting me she used the comb to comb my wet hair from the back of the neck towards the top of my head. “Hey, your not going to cut my hair, are you. The guys are all wearing the Beatle cut, mom.”

“Heavens, no,” mother replied in mock seriousness, “I wouldn't want to destroy your lovely long hair. I'm just going to shave the back of your neck a little.” Inside of a minute she had foamed the back of my neck and using the water and shaving cream to separate the longer hairs from the short bristles she discovered an almost V-shaped part above my neck and shaved the hair off below the V. “There, that should work excellently. Now to wash and rinse your hair.”

While I continued to rest she picked a pink bottle of shampoo and squirted it all over my head before I had a chance to protest against the fragrance of her shampoo. Soon my head was thick with rich pink lather and mom spent half her time sculpting the pink mess and hair into different shapes as she spent the balance looking at her artwork.

“Did you know that before I met your dad I was a beautician,” mom observed casually.

“You mean you fixed women's hair into those crazy curls and such,” I asked with a fair amount of disinterest feeling the warm comfort of the water.

“Why yes, dear, and I think I still can style hair,” she mused adjusting her skirts as the soap hairdo remained in place and she arose to look at it from by the vanity sink. “I would love to see if I could set your hair, it really is long enough for a very pretty coiffure.”

“Not on your life,” I protested mildly.

“Oh, come on, be a sport,” she laughed opening her section of the cabinets. “Just let me try and I promise to undo it. It might be real fun?”

“Having a girl's hairdo, some fun.”

“Ah, come on, be a sport. I'll take it out and maybe you can get that air rifle you wanted.”

“If you promise me,” I coaxed seeing opportunity knocking. “Why not.”

“Your on,” she laughed picking up the shampoo hose and rinsing the thick soap from my hair my using a hair brush in one hand as she soaked my head with water causing me to close my eyes. She continued to brush my brown hair until it squeaked

with each brushing. Satisfied with her efforts she went to the vanity and picked up another bottle marked color rinse and in a moment she drained the tub, washed but the remaining soap and had me lean forward as

soaked my head with the contents of the bottle. After waiting a couple of minutes she took the shampoo hose and washed the rinse down the drain. She then dried me.

“Here,” she murmured, handing me another bottle labeled Rose bath oil. “Use this all over.”

“Say, what's this for?”

“Too keep your skin smooth,” she replied casually while taking a towel and using it to dry my head. “Remember the air rifle?”

“Will I smell tomorrow?”

“Not from that, dearest,” she answered, taking the comb and parting my hair into several sections. As I applied the rose scented oil all over my body enjoying the coolness she began to dab each lock of hair with a white lotion that stunk to high heaven. After conditioning the hair she began to roll it.. on to pink plastic curlers and then after allowing it to set she began to squeeze a plastic bottle type applicator very carefully so that a foam like solution soaked each curler. “There we are for a start,” mom observed at last setting the plastic bottle aside. Picking up a fuzzy pink cotton towel she wrapped it about my head into a kind of turban. “In time we will take it off and style the curls, dear. But now I think you had better go to bed and I'LL wake you when we're ready.”

“Okay,” I reluctantly agreed, wishing that her foolishness wouldn't take so long. Soon I slipped into a pair of pajamas and crawled into bed after saying my short prayer. After all how long did a ten year old need to pray?

Sleep soon overtook my thoughts about the air rifle and I was awakened by the sun streaming through the my east bed room window. Almost at the same time mother entered my room carrying a breakfast tray.

“Good morning darling, happy birthday.”

“Hey it's morning,” I complained in answer touching my pink turban.

“I thought you were going to wake me ups”

“I have dear,” she answered placing the tray across my lap when I sat up. “You eat your breakfast while I go fetch a few things and leave the turban alone. Remember the air rifle.”

Shrugging I turned my attention to breakfast seeing that mom had herself. Eggs, ham, pancakes, toast, and -of all things- a malted into my breakfast I hardly noticed mom as she entered my room with boxes. “What's that, my birthday presents?”

“Some of them,” she replied quite thoughtfully. “Now let me see what do I need now. Oh, yes...” And with these rambling words she left to return with a vanity case. “I really can't tell the results of your hairdo until I correct a few other details. I'm going to shape your brows just a bit and curl those long lashes.”

“As long as it gets me the air rifle,” I cautioned returning to my eating as she took a pair of tweezers and fulfilled her heart’s desire. Taking out a few hairs at each brow she brushed the eyebrows with her fingers which were dampened with oil. Smiling to herself over the results she took a golden mascara wand and worked my lashes and the delicate hairs under my eyes before she took a curler and pressed each set of upper lashes into a delicate upsweep which she touched up with the mascara wand to be sure that the little hairs stayed in place.

“Ah, that is wonderful,” she whispered proudly. Reaching into the vanity case she produced an all too familiar cylinder.

“Hey, your not going to put any lipstick on me!”

“Darling, your too young for bright lipstick,” she laughed, opening the tube and screwing it until a cream white cylinder emerged looking like a chap stick. “See?”

I nodded my head and once I had finished the malt she wiped my lips with a napkin and applied the stick with great care. “When does this crazy aunt of mine come, mom?”

“She's not crazy,” mother reminded. “She's my sister. She may be a bit bossy and overbearing, but otherwise she is quite nice. She is kind of jealous of me, you know, she had a real crush on your dad.”

“Well, she must be nuts to think I am a girl,” I stated firmly.

“Perhaps,” mom commented vaguely. “I wonder what you would look like as a girl. From your face you would be beautiful to say the least, you have my mother's facial shape and your dad's mother' s features. A striking combination with the highly vaunted heart shaped face and delicate features. Why any girl would give everything she had to be half as pretty.”

“Aw, come on, quite teasing me,” I managed after blushing a bit in reaction to her feminine comments. “Who would want to be a girl anyhow.”

“You may have a point, buster,” she laughed, sitting on the edge of my bed spreading the blue satin skirt of her princess housecoat. “Bit, haven't you ever wanted to dress up as a girl, even once?”

“Aw, fellows aren't suppose to have such nutty ideas.”

“Come on now, be honest. Haven't you wondered what it would be like to be a girl?”

I shrugged saying, “I guess so. But it must be kind of drippy to be a girl and wear all those silly clothes. Most girls can't even play ball or other games because they might get dirty. It must be awful to be so clean.”

Mom laughed and took one of my hands into hers. “Say, you've stopped biting those nails I see, but you should have them cleaned,” she noted, taking a nail cleaner and clearing the dead skin from beneath my nail tips. “I always thought boys were kind of stupid until I became older. And for your information I was our sandlot pitcher and running back when I was your age.”

“Really?”

“Sure thing,” she answered with a slight grin. “I grew out of it though, but I did have a chance to pretend that I was just as good as any boy. I bet you couldn't do as well as a girl?”

“Do what?” I asked feeling her challenge. “Play with a doll. That's really nutty.”

“Sure, anything you can't do is nutty, wise guy,” she taunted taking a cuticle scissors in hand. “I bet you couldn't.”

“What?”

“Act like a girl,” she casually noted with near disinterest. “I'm willing to bet almost anything on that.”

“How about a new bike,” I suggested jokingly calling her bluff.

“Well, a bike is pretty steep,” she noted more seriously.

“You said anything?” I countered feeling pretty safe that she was just bluffing. “A bike, one of those four speed jobs like Bob has.”

“Sounds kind of fast,” she murmured in protest.

“Fast, why it flies..,” and then I knew I had over played my hand, I had not planned for pushing the bike until Christmas. “Well it doesn't exactly go that fast.”

“Perhaps not,” she acknowledged. “But what if you lose our little bet what do you pay off with?”

Looking at her for a moment I said, “I'll do the dishes for you for a week.”

“A month is about equal to a bike,” mom countered.

“You're on,” I replied settling the bet before I realized the full meaning. “Hey, whose going to judge this contest. I certainly wouldn't want dad or the gang to see me and it's hardly fair to let you be the judge.”

“Hmmm, I think you're right. We need someone who doesn't know who you are. A sort of impartial judge.” Mom sat before me looking out of my window quite thoughtfully.

And then it dawned on me~ “Why not Aunt Vivian and her daughter? She thinks I'm a girl and we could see if they tumble to it?”

“I don't know,” mom began and then she nodded her head in approval to the idea. “I think it might be a fine trick on her anyway.”

“Great,” I exclaimed seeing my bike already.

“Is it a deal, Vivian?” she asked, reaching out her hand. “You pretend to be my daughter as long as she is here or until she discovers the truth. A bicycle if you win, a month K. P. if you lose.”

“Four speed?”

“Yes, and I'll help coach you a bit before she comes considering that there are two of them judging your performance,” mom conceded as we shook hands. “Your word of honor?”

“Yes,” I promised faithfully.

“Fine, the contest is on,” she confirmed squeezing my hand. Releasing my hand she opened a bottle of clear nail polish and retook my hand in her's.

“Say,” I began to protest...

“From now on if you quite you do a month's worth of dishes,” she stated rather matter-of-factly. “Any quitting?”

“I guess not,” was the only reply I could make, she had me coming and going and knew it. Moms are pretty smart. So I sat there as she painted my nails causing me to note that the polish dried a very soft lustre pink.

“Now you sit tight for a minute and don't touch those nails,” main cautioned arising from my bedside and walking to the stack of boxes on the chair. Opening a box she pushed aside the tissue paper and carefully took from the box a pink bundle, which she placed upon the end of the bed before removing the tray from my lap. “Up and out of those silly boy's pajamas young lady.”

“Ah, mom,” I half whispered in protest.

“If we're going to play this game right I must get into the habit of treating you as a girl,” mother explained as I undressed. “And now to see if you really can be a girl. My first test, aren't they adorable?”

Before my eyes she unrolled the pink folded bundle to reveal such a thing as I had never dreamed existed. A pair of pink pants made of nylon and cuffed with tier upon tier of rich lace. “What are those?”

“Pettipants, dearest. Any little girl knows that,” and handing them to me with a mile that said, 'I dare you' “they fit on that way. Just step into them dearest.”

“I...” my protest began and then I knew I couldn't back down, I had to win that bike and show her being a girl wasn't such a big deal. With set teeth and determination I stepped into the soft pettipants feeling the nylon caress my legs and then clinging coolness against my thighs as the lace ruffles tickled just above my knees.

“How sweet they look, Vivian, dearest,” mother gushed adjusting the waist band to my discomfort and chagrin. Satisfied with her taunt and my slightly flushed cheeks she reached into the box and produced another shocking garment

“Okay dearest, raise your arms,” mother suggested with amusement in her eyes as she then lowered the pink nylon and lace slip over my form. It had wide lace shoulder straps, and the part that mother calls a bodice was also trimmed with lace along the top with the rest. of the bodice clinging tightly down my waist in a smooth flow of pink taffeta. Mother knelt at my side and straighten the waist line before reaching under the skirt and adjusting the pink starched under skirt that felt like crinkly paper and held the over skirts out and up bouffant like mother described her party dress. Almost unconsciously I looked to check and see if it didn't flounce out so much that it showed my pettipants causing mother to watch me with renewed interest until it dawned on her. “No, they don't show darling, but you mustn't run or jump unless you want everybody to see your lovely panties. Girls must be careful about such things.”

I swallowed hard against her jibe. “I can imagine.”

Laughing, mother lowered the slip skirts to adjust the nylon net and lace tiers of the overskirts so that the overlaying hems matched to add to the flounce. Satisfied with her handiwork she motioned me to the bed and had me sit down to carefully adjust the all too short skirts until they covered my knees saying, "I think you will remember to cover your knees with your skirt when you sit down so that none can see your panties. Don't you?"

"Yes, mom."

"Girls call their mothers, mother or mommy, okay?"

"Yes, mommy," I laughed watching her clean my toenails, paint them with finger nail polish, and then after they dried slip pink calf length stockings over my feet before fitting each foot into a dark pink patent leather shoe with a single strap. "They are called Mary Janes, all girls wear them as the basic shoe. Only yours are especially pretty, aren't they, my little fairy doll?"

"Just great," I protested causing her to smile and stand up. Taking my hand she helped me from the bed and led me to the stack of cardboard boxes that I thought were birthday presents.

"When a girl stands she stands erect with her legs together, and her arms at her side with her wrists slightly bent upwards," she instructed, "I think you should practice walking as a girl."

"Walking?" I asked in wonderment, "don't girls walk like boys and anyone?"

"Watch me walk, dearest," she coached removing her high heeled bed room slippers. She then moved across the floor with a smooth flow of motion that seemed to undulate her body like a cat's. Frankly I had never noticed before but girls do walk differently. "To begin with I think you should learn how to walk like a fashion model to get the feeling. Remember to take steps about three quarters as short as the ones you normally do. Don't swing your arms, just allow them to rest naturally at your side. Walk by placing one foot in front of the other as if walking on an imaginary line. Walking starts from the hips on a girl rather than at the knees." She demonstrated. "Young girls your age tend to exaggerate this hip sway a bit, so you can walk that way. Now you rock your foot from the heel to the ball of the foot using the ball to push off into your next step while your heel serves to balance the weight on your forward foot. That's why women's heels give that sharp clicking noise. Now you try it."

She watched me walk across the room and added a few corrections, "see how easy it is?" She then taught me how to turn and how to sit and stand. "When you carry a book on your head," she suggested placing one of my books on the pink turban, "you will learn how to walk erect and confine your forward motion to a straight line with your body motion acting from the waist line down."

While I continued to practice she taught me how to pick up the book when it fell showing me that a girl didn't bend from the waist in fear of revealing her panties, but instead she lowered herself into a crouch and actually used her legs as the force to lift rather than her back and I remembered my gym teacher saying once that weight lifters used the same technique, so girls weren't really too stupid. Walking in skirts was a strange sensation. First the ruffled lace from my pettipants tickled me with each step

as the smooth underskirt swished gently over my nylon clad upper legs allowing the skirt hems to brush against my knees. And above all I had the feeling of being terribly naked beneath that swinging skirt and yet somehow free from the closeness of slacks. Frankly it wouldn't have been so bad if I didn't have to worry about keeping my skirts in order against revealing the nakedness and near shame those pettipants seemed to represent.

Mother watched my progress with growing approval. Without a word she took my hand and led me from the room to the hail stairs and showed me how to walk up and down stairs. After awhile she removed the book from my head and led me back into my bed room where she opened another box to withdraw from its tissue what looked like a simple pink nylon sleeveless dress with a plain circle neck opening and a full skirt. Unbuttoning the back of this dress to the waist she helped me into it explaining that it was an under dress, kind of like a slip only tailored for a particular dress. Buttoning the back she straightened the skirt before returning to the boxes, Opening a large pink box she held up for my inspection a pink nylon organza sheer dress. Undoing the back buttons she helped me into it and then re-buttoned it. The dress was really too much, it was so very feminine that it seemed to transform me into its own ways. The collar consisted of a wide oval shaped roll of lace in a style my mother calls portrait. The sleeves were pink puffs trimmed at the edge with ruffled lace. The sheer bodice fit tightly over the smooth pink taffeta of the under dress. About the waist was a wide pink satin sash that covered the tucked pleats of the waist of the skirt and tied into a large butterfly bow in the back. From the waist the organza skirt flowed from the satin sash to about an inch below the under dress' hem where the dress hem was decorated with a rich lace ruffled overhem that hid the edge of the undershirts.

As I stood looking at my reflected image in the mirror I began to wonder. "Say, where did you find this dress?"

"Aunt Vivian sent it as a birthday present," mother noted casually before removing the pink turban. "We certainly wouldn't be very practical to refuse to wear such a pretty party dress."

"I've been tricked," I suddenly protested. "You've planned to put me in this dress since last night."

"A bargain is a bargain," she reminded. "Just because I'm smarter doesn't lessen the value of your promise does it?"

"Well, no," was the only possible answer. Quietly I stood while she unrolled each curler and took a brush and comb to the tight little roll of golden hair. Across my brow she arranged a short bang crowned by a high pompadou which consisted of teased curls that were gradually tapered towards the neckline. Before my fascinated eyes I had been changed into a girl from head to toe.

"Yesterday, while you were at the movie I arranged with that nice girl next door to borrow several of her things and I have converted the small guest room into your feminine bed room. Her mother and I are bridge club members and June was all too happy to help out in your little game."

"Help out," I questioned considering June Glorin a real pain.

“Why of course, dearest, what is a girl's birthday party without her friends,” mother explained placing a charm bracelet about my wrist. “Every girl in our neighborhood about your age is coming, about twelve lovely playmates.”

“Oh, mother, how could you,” I protested bitterly. “What will I tell the gang? Why, it'll be all over that I was playing at being a girl!”

“You'll survive,” mother noted taking me by the hand and leading me down the hall to our little spare bedroom. The bed room door was opened allowing me to see a large doll adorning the guest bed which was covered with a pink satin bed spread and the sprawling figure of June Glorin dressed in a simple blue sun dress. She was reading a book but at our arrival she looked up and pursed her lips thoughtfully allowing her eyes to study my all too embarrassed form. “Now you two girls play together while I arrange a few things in the kitchen. Vivian, you are going to bake your own birthday cake, won't that be fun?”

“Yes, mother,” I sighed, knowing when I was beaten.

“You really should show more happiness,” June noted arising from the bed and lifting the front of my dress a bit. “Your mother wants you to be happy.”

“Hey, what's the idea?”

“I just had to look and see those adorable pettipients, dearest,” June gushed before impulsively throwing her arms about me and kissing me. “We're going to have loads of fun.”

Soon mother was gone and June took complete charge. She showed me her collection of toys and games and soon we were playing with her Barbie Game on my bed while she talked endlessly about what she liked and disliked, what she did in school, how pretty I was, and how much fun it was going to be at my birthday party. All the girls were coming, which was as I feared, and I was going to receive presents selected by their mothers. Girl's things I could use once I became a nasty boy again. In a swirl of skirts she jumped from the bed and showed me my girl's wardrobe that she had donated. Without pause she described each item asking me questions to test my memory. Certain skirts were princess styled; cuffs were raglan, cap, puff, mutton, three quarter, and so on; shoes were baby doll, mary jane, slipper, ballet, or something else; and dresses were A line, skimmer, or another style. Within a few minutes I lost all fears of her and all of my own embarrassment over being dressed as a silly girl. In tact June and I became fast friends. She turned from her clothes back to her toy~ and began to explain to me how she didn't like dolls much anymore, except Barbie, of course, and she only brought a few over because most girls used them to decorate their room. She picked up a life size baby doll and held it in her arms telling me that mother had given it to her and most girls around six dreamed of owning such a beautiful doll. With this she had me hold it while she explained bow to dress and undress it and what a girl usually did while playing with her doll. And just as suddenly we were playing with her dolls which led me to believe that girls with dollies were like dad's with electric trains.

“Okay, girls,” mother announced, entering my new bed room holding a bib apron in her hand which she helped me into. Soon we were in the kitchen and I was learning how to bake a cake while June helped by making sandwiches.