

JUST COMPENSATION

By Laura Sexton



ILLUSTRATED BY CHAS

A 'NEW WOMAN' NOVEL

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by Laura Sexton

I

Dan couldn't pinpoint exactly when his life began shifting, but Halloween certainly had been the catalyst that propelled him away from everything he knew and pushed him toward a profoundly different attitude, lifestyle, look, and shape. What had changed prior to Halloween seemed tiny compared to the alterations made after the fight with his girlfriend, Paula. They were arguing about Halloween costumes. To Dan, it seemed that he and Paula had gotten into a lot of arguments lately.

"I refuse," she told him. "I'm not going as a Barbie Doll just so you can be Ken."

"I was thinking more along the lines of GI Joe. The really old one with the scar," he admitted. That way he could wear the fatigues and army helmet he found. He always thought that GI Joe could kick the crap out of Ken any day and steal away Barbie.

Dan hoped that Paula would do the Barbie thing. He fantasized seeing Paula as a blonde, with bigger boobs and a tinier waist. Her features looked somewhat Barbie-like, and with a wig, push up enhancers, corset, and a tight pink dress . . . Dan felt himself harden. *Woah*, he thought. *Better not give myself away*. He positioned himself so that Paula would find no reason to glance at his pants.

"I'm not going to provide you with more fuel to feed your sick little fantasies. I'm not going as Barbie, I'm not going as a French maid, I'm not going as a harem girl, saloon girl, devil girl, or any kind of girl you have in mind. I'm not going to wear the push up bra with the add a size pads or the corset or the five inch stilettos you got me. You may get off on those outfits you keep getting me, but I don't anymore."

"Last year you wore that cheerleader costume," he whined. Dan had a thing about cheerleaders. Last year he managed to finagle Paula into wearing a cheerleader costume from his old high school. Even though she didn't wear the blonde wig (again), Paula still looked hot in that tight sweater and short skirt.

"Why don't *you* go as a cheerleader?" she told him. "I'll go as a football player. We'll play role reversals. I'd rather wear padding on my shoulders than in my bra just to please you."

"That's gross," Dan recoiled. "Besides, I bought that stupid car because you wanted me to. You should do something for me."

The car in question was a chickmobile, according to all his friends. Dan wanted a 4x4 when his old car got totaled by the drunk, but Paula fell in love with a kind of reddish purple coupe and Dan allowed her to override his better judgment, even though it was an automatic and didn't have a whole lot of trunk or back seat space. It even had a mirror on the driver's side visor! Dan had to admit he got it for about \$2000 less

than blue book because he guy who sold it to him was a friend of a friend whose daughter was moving to Europe. Maybe Dan could trade it in once he got the title and insurance papers.

“I even got a cheerleader costume you could try on,” Paula announced.

“No way!”

They argued until Paula got a look on her face and dropped the subject. Dan figured that he had finally wore her down, and spent the rest of the evening with a smug look on his face, blithely unaware of the plan Paula was forming in her head. If Dan had thought to raise the subject again he might have grown suspicious. However, when he went over to Paula’s on Saturday so that they could get ready for the party, Paula was ready for him, with lunch and a beer waiting for him on the table.

During lunch Dan kept asking Paula what kind of costume she was going to wear. Was it the Barbie? Sexy witch perhaps? Maybe even - dare he say it - hooker or Vegas Showgirl?

“That food sure makes me thirsty,” Dan said once they finished eating.

“I know it’s spicy. Would you like me to get you a beer?”

“Sure,” Dan mumbled. This was living, he thought. Paula fetching him a beer. That was another one of his fantasies - that whole fifties thing where the wife had dinner all ready for the man when he got home from work. She’d retrieve beers whenever he asked for one, and each week he’d give her an allowance for which to buy food, clothes, and the like. Of course, the wife wore those funky girdles and stockings, padded bras, and the high heels. That was the clincher.

Paula returned with his beer and Dan began to feel very relaxed. He sat there on the couch feeling more relaxed until Paula said, “Well, it’s about five. How are you feeling?”

Dan just mumbled. He couldn’t move.

“Good. I guess that muscle relaxant worked. It’s time to get started...”

“She made a phone call. Within a few minutes Dan’s best friend Brad arrived, a tall lanky guy with a warped sense of humor. By then Paula had stripped Dan down to his underwear.

“What a pitiful waste of humanity,” Brad remarked upon seeing Dan. Dan mumbled something, but he couldn’t even lift a finger.

“Could you help me bring him into the bathroom?” Paula asked.

“Are you sure this is the way you want to break up with him? He is my best friend after all, even if he is kind of a jerk.”

“You don’t have to do this if you don’t want to.”

“Are you kidding? This is one great practical joke. I even brought my camera.” He held up a .35 mm with a small collection of filters and lenses.

They dragged him to the bathroom where Paula put a depilatory over his legs. “I want to get that smooth legged cheerleader look,” she laughed.

“So that’s what Dan’s going to be this year for Halloween.”

“I decided that since he likes cheerleaders so much, he should be one.”

“Why don’t you get rid of all the hair. Arms, chest, — what little there is of it — does that stuff work on beards?”

“No, we’ll need to shave his face.”

“Okay, you’re the boss.”

She smiled. “Dan never let me be the boss.”

“Dan’s a control freak. Being the boss feels pretty good, doesn’t it?”

“Yeah. So does revenge.”

When Daniel was shorn and a lotion applied to his skin, he was taken into the bedroom where they performed more magic on him. “We’re going to give him that wholesome, All American look,” she said, putting pink polish on his fingernails.

“Are you going to do his toes?”

“Why? Nobody will see them.”

“*He* will, once he takes off his shoes.”

“Good point. Uh oh, he’s starting to move. Can you mix him a whisky and Coke? Small glass, half whisky. I want him to be incoherent, but not having to pee any time soon. And give him one of these pills.”

“Gotcha.”

It took more than two hours to do Dan up as a high school cheerleader. He wore the blue and gold sweater and pleated skirt from his old high school — “nice touch,” said Brad — white shoes with low socks, pink lipstick and nail polish, mascara, foundation, a little rouge, and a blue and gold hornet on his cheek. Paula had found a gaff for him so that nothing would show through, then cinched his waist tightly — with the help of Brad.

“Won’t it hurt?” he said.

“If you ever had to wear one of these you know it does.”

“I hope I never get on your bad side.”

She bobby pinned a blonde wig with blue ribboned ponytails to his hair. “He always liked blondes.”

“I couldn’t wear that wig. My complexion is too dark. I’d have to be a very dark brunette cheerleader,” said Brad, pretending to flick his hair back behind his ear.

Paula laughed. “Dan doesn’t have a sense of humor either. Especially about himself. Maybe this will change him.”

“I think you already changed him,” remarked Brad. They both snickered.

For the final touches, Paula found an industrial strength adhesive to glue the breast padding to Dan’s skin. Then she went one step further and glued the pompom ropes to his wrists. When this was completed, the two conspirators stood back.

“Kodak moment,” said Brad, taking out his camera and putting on one of the filters. He stared through the viewfinder for a few moments then frowned. “I think you should cross his legs and get behind the chair to hold up his head. Maybe do something with the pompoms too.”

They took more than a few pictures and dragged Dan to Paula’s car, buckling him into the front passenger seat. “I want you to follow me in his car. We’ll leave it some place where he has to ask for help to retrieve it. Oh, but first we’ll have to load it with some boxes. I packed all those damn clothes and costumes he gave me the last two years so I could return them to him, since he seems to love them so much.”

“So where is the chickmobile?” Brad asked.

“Over there. Here’s the keys. I hope you’re not squeamish about driving it.”

“Us manly men don’t have to worry about our images when driving chickmobiles.”

It was after eight when they got Dan to the party. The two of them found a wheelchair and rolled him to the door of the clubhouse.

Cleopatra met them at the door. “What do we have here?”

“You remember my ex-boyfriend Dan, don’t you? Or maybe you don’t. Anyway, we’re bringing him here early. He may pose a bit of a problem when he becomes fully conscious, so you can give him a whiff of this if he becomes too rambunctious.” She handed over a small bottle full of clear liquid.

“Will you be coming to the party?” asked Cleo.

“I might. But I’ll be wearing a disguise so that he doesn’t recognize me.”

“That might be a good idea,” said Cleopatra.

As the muscle relaxant and booze began wearing off Dan started putting two and two together. His body felt funny, what he could feel of it, and his legs were cold. He had these things attached to his arms, and something was painted on his face. After a while he thought, oh yeah, that bitch dressed me up as a cheerleader. If I could move off this couch I’ll get her for this.

He scanned the room. He had been able to move enough to use the pompoms to cover up his legs. But he didn’t want to move, didn’t want anybody to notice him. Fear and shame had for now gained the upper hand over anger.

There was a French Maid, a sorceress, a saloon girl, and of course Cleopatra already at the party, as well as the amorphous ghosts, ugly witches, and various guys: a swashbuckler here, a gangster there, a Darth Vader even. If Dan weren’t dressed in the stupid cheerleader costume, he would consider going after that French Maid, even if she did seem to be attached to Vader.

Just then Cleopatra strode up to him. Next to her stood a man in formal wear, including a top hat and tails, holding a wand in one gloved hand, and with a pencil thin mustache glued above his lip.

“Hello,” said Cleopatra, holding out an object. “I believe this is yours.”

When Dan reached for it the pompom came with his hand. He blushed and scowled at the same time. Cleopatra dropped something into his hand. It was a tube of lipstick. Dan looked at it with disbelief and clenched his fist around it. "Where are my keys?"

"I don't have them. Evidently when Paula dropped you off she neglected to leave your keys. I believe her plan was to keep you stranded with only your good looks to get you home. You will need to make friends with someone in order to get a ride home, get money for a taxi, or stay at somebody's place for the night. Of course, if you create a scene I'll have you arrested. That's incentive enough for you to be a good boy, or should I say girl."

The man next to her chuckled.

"Oh I am neglecting my duty as hostess. This is Dr. Mystico, the world famous magician and comedian. He's here to break the ice, to entertain you and make you feel better."

"Dr. Mystico. I've heard that name before."

"You're probably thinking of the Amazing Mystico and Janet. The man who can raise entire blocks of apartments merely by hypnosis."

"I don't think so," said Dan.

"To avoid copyright infringement should I ever become famous, I'm using Doctor instead of Amazing. I need a shtick. A comedy fake magic act. I'm testing the persona before I do the act on the road. I'm opening at the Comedie Haus next week. But enough about me. What is your name, you sweet young thing."

"Dan."

Dr. Mystico bopped Dan on the top of his head with his wand. "No no no, that will not do. Halloween is a time for make believe. If you're going out dressed like a cheerleader, you need a cheerleader name. Like Buffy, Bambi, Trixie, Suzi. Especially with those hooters."

Dan stared at the man.

"Buffy. I like Buffy. I think you should call yourself that."

"Listen," said Dan. "My girlfriend just left me, I don't have a ride home and my keys are in her apartment. Could you just leave me —"

Dr. Mystico bopped him on the head again. "This is no time for negativity. Tonight you are going to be Buffy the Cheerleader. You are going to have fun."

"I don't want to have —"

Bop. "Evidently Dr. Mystico is going to have to hypnotize you." He waved the wand in front of Dan's nose. Dan stared at him in disbelief.. He heard Cleopatra off to the side trying to stifle a laugh.

"You will watch my magic wand. Your eyes are glued to the movement of my wand. You cannot take your eyes off my wand." Dan watched the wand in fear for Dr. Mystico using it on his head again. But Dr. Mystico was waving it in circles and from side to side. Dan wanted to get up and leave, but he had nowhere to go. He began to feel dizzy and slightly nauseous. Evidently the concoction Paula mixed for him had not yet gone

through his system. Maybe if he closed his eyes he could pretend that goon wasn't there.

“. . . Eyelids heavier and heavier. They are closing. They are closed. You are now asleep and attentive to my suggestions.” A pause. “Holy crap, I think it actually worked.”

“How can you tell?” asked Cleopatra from far away.

“There are a few tests, like having him raise his arm involuntarily, things like that.”

“Well try it. I want to see if he's hypnotized.”

Dan ignored them as their voices receded in the distance. It was peaceful sitting there with his eyes closed. So calm, so relaxing. He felt his worries disappear. He wanted to sit like that forever. Someday, he thought, he might just get even with Paula. But not right away. Not now. It was too peaceful sitting there.

Suddenly he remembered he was at a party. Someone was talking to him. “Can you hear me?” a voice said. It was that damn Dr. Mystico. Dan opened his eyes.

“Now, tell me your name.”

Without hesitation, Dan replied, “Buffy.”

He thought about it. Why did he say Buffy? It seemed natural, he suddenly realized. He was dressed as a cheerleader and Buffy seemed like a good cheerleader name.

“So Buffy, would you like to do a cheer for us?”

“Do you want me to?” said Dan eagerly. He noticed that most of the costumed parties were standing nearby, watching him. It would be fun to play a trick on them, to play at being a cheerleader. The party was dull and needed some livening up. Doing a cheer or two would certainly liven things up. Maybe he could impress that French Maid.

“Yes we would. All of us here would like to hear you do a cheer. Would you please do a cheer for us?”

Dan jumped up. A memory of an old high school cheer came to him, one the cheerleaders used to do during football and basketball games. Dan had watched them do the cheers many a time, but when he began doing the cheer it seemed to him that he had practiced the cheer many a time in the gym, learning and perfecting the steps, gyrations, and words with the other cheerleaders. He did not find it odd that he had never done the cheer before in his life, nor that he hadn't even been a Hornet Cheerleader. The words and actions popped from his memory and into his muscles, spurring on his routine as he needed them, with high kicks here, sticking out his butt there, and ending the whole routine with a big split.

He almost pulled it off. He had to alter the split at the last second in order not to hurt himself, but when he finished he had done the routine as perfectly as he'd seen the real cheerleaders do.

Dan suddenly felt thirsty. He began another cheer. “Gimme a D. Gimme an R. Gimme an I. Gimme an N. Gimme a K. What's that spell? DRINK. What's that spell?”

DRINK. What's that spell? DRINK. Yay!" He jumped up, making an X with his body, while shaking his pompoms.

"Vodka and orange juice okay?" said a man standing behind the bar, wearing a bowler and handlebar mustache.

"That Would Be Just Great," Dan chirped, grabbing the glass with both hands and drinking half of it. Maybe this party would turn out all right after all. He began to feel lightheaded and everything took on a hazy, rosy glow. He wanted to do another cheer. He suddenly knew them all, every single one, down to the last step, the tiniest gesture, and each and every word. It felt like he had been a high school cheerleader a long time ago, and the skills were just now coming back.

For the rest of the party Dan didn't have conversations. He gushed. He used phrases he never thought he'd use. He turned sentences into cheers. He suspected it made some of the other guests sick to their stomachs to hear his unbridled enthusiasm, but continued to act in character as the night went on, becoming the empty headed cheerleading cliché.

"Gosh, That Would Be Swell!" he said when some Zorro offered to freshen up his drink, noticing that the Saloon Girl had a sour look on her face, though others, most notably a GI in helmet and camouflage, were laughing.

He heard someone whisper to Zorro as he was leaving to fetch drinks, "That's a guy, you moron."

"Bullshit," said Zorro, before he left.

It was nearly two thirty and most of the guests had left. Buffy the cheerleader was drunk and still trying to do cheers. Cleopatra was ready to shoot her. The saloon girl grabbed Buffy by the arm. "As an ex high school cheerleader, you make me want to puke my guts out," she said. "Would you mind giving it a rest?"

"Gosh," Said Buffy, trying to wave the pompoms. "I can't. I'm positively bursting with energy."

"That's what I was afraid of. The party's over, so you don't have to be Buffy the pain in the ass any more. Do you have any place to stay tonight?"

"There's my apartment, but I've forgotten where it is. Golly, I can't think I have so many cheers running around in my head."

"That's okay. I can take you to my parents' place tonight. You can stay there so long as you don't throw up in the guest room."

"That would be swell," said Buffy. "Why am I talking like this?"

"Because you've been hypnotized. Come on, the car's this way."

"What's my name?"

"Dan. You're Dan, remember?"

"But I so much wanted to be Buffy."

"Yes, we all do," said the saloon girl. "But most of us get over it."

“I know you,” said Dan/Buffy. “Your name’s Debbie. “We went to high school together.”

“Evidently, since you’re wearing Hornet Blue & Gold and know all the school cheers.”

“You don’t remember me, do you?”

“No. But Paula told me all about you.”

“She doesn’t like me anymore.”

“Don’t you get all weepy on me.”

“We were in Mr. McIntyre’s Algebra class in 11th grade. I sat in the back. You were surrounded by football players.”

“If you say so. Get in the car.”

They eventually made it to Debbie’s parents’ house. Buffy’s personality eventually dissolved. At one point Dan said, “My throat is sore,” to which Debbie replied, “I should think so, the way you’ve been screaming in falsetto all night long.”

“We can call Paula tomorrow to get your keys and stuff,” Debbie said when they entered. “I’ll try to find you some decent clothing unless you like that cheerleader shit. I don’t think any of Dad’s clothes will fit you, but I might be able to find something useful.”

Dan found he couldn’t remove the breasts or the pompoms because of the adhesive, but he could barely get out of the skirt and shoes and put on a pair of sweats. That gaff thing had given him all sorts of trouble the night before, and he was glad to be able to get rid of it. In the end he put the sweater back on and went to bed, the wig off but his hair sticking out in all directions because of the bobby pins.

It was late the next afternoon when Dan discovered that his apartment building had burned to the ground at approximately 3 AM the night before.

II

When Dan woke up he couldn’t remove the fake boobs. One of the pompoms had come off during the night and had taken some skin with it, but the left one was still firmly affixed to his wrist, which annoyed the hell out of Dan whenever he moved his arm up to his face. Dan wondered what kind of adhesive Paula had used. He rooted around the garage and in the basement looking for solvent, but couldn’t find any.

He was surprised he didn’t have a hangover. But he sure was thirsty, so he downed three big glasses of water by the time he finished searching for solvent. He would probably have to soak them off in the tub. He inspected the boobs. They were made from some kind of rubbery material, vaguely skin colored, and felt much more like Nerf footballs than those silicone pads Paula had. He peeled a tiny corner from one and noticed that half the adhesive stuck to the skin, while the other half stayed with the boob, pulling the skin with it. He decided they could wait.

At about four in the afternoon Debbie stopped by. “Hello,” said Dan, who was watching a football game on the couch. He was not so much interested in the football

game as the routines the cheerleaders performed whenever the camera panned over them.

“Uh, hi,” said Debbie, looking nervous. “Why are you still wearing the cheerleader getup?”

Dan looked at the sweater. “It’s kind of cold in this house,” he said. “And the sweater is warm.”

“You’ve still got boobs and nail polish on.”

“I couldn’t get them off,” said Dan. “They’re stuck on too tightly.”

Debbie shook her head. “I think my mom’s got some polish remover in her bathroom.”

“I was afraid to go in there,” admitted Dan.

“Oh.” She paused. “Brad’s meeting me here. He’s bringing you your car.”

“I don’t want to talk to him,” said Dan.

“You don’t have to. However, I have some bad news. It’s about your apartment? Are you insured?”

“Yes... What happened?”

“The news people say somebody fell asleep with a lit cigarette in one of the other apartments and started a fire. It burned the whole complex down.”

“Oh my God! Was anybody hurt?”

“The fire alarms didn’t go off. I think there were seven or eight people killed. There’s probably going to be a lawsuit.”

“That’s horrible!”

“Did you know any of your neighbors well?”

“No. I was only there three months and I spent more time at Paula’s place than I did at my own. I guess she really hates me.” He waved a pompom.

“It gets worse,” Debbie continued. “Brad thought you were going home after the party, so he took all your clothes there.”

“That’s going to cause a small problem. No clothes, no place to live. I guess I’ll have to run around in sweats until I get new stuff. I’m insured, I’ve got money in the bank — I was saving up to buy a house, you know — my severance pay, credit card . . . oh shit.” What Debbie said finally sunk in. Brad had taken his clothes home. Including his wallet. Inside of which was his bank card, two credit cards, driver’s license, social security card, and \$28 in cash.

“I called my parents and explained your situation to them. They said you could stay in the guest room for a few days until you find a new place.”

“Thanks... Although to be truthful, it will probably take more than a few days to get my replacement credit cards and stuff.”

“Well, look at the bright side,” Debbie chirped, attempting to speak in a cheerful manner. “You still have your car.”

“I hate that car!”

Brad came and went, leaving the car in the drive and a number of pictures of the party on the coffee table. Dan wouldn't talk to Brad, but after they left Dan looked at the pictures. He looked good. He couldn't believe he could move like that. He began to get hard. If only Paula had been able to see the value playing cheerleader, they'd still be together.

This brought on a bout of melancholy. He didn't even have Paula any more. All he had left was his car and all the sexy clothes he'd given her. He considered retrieving them. They were his only memories of Paula. In fact, they were the only clothes he owned. He didn't think any would be more comfortable than that cheerleader sweater, but what the heck. He knew of a consignment shop where he might be able to get a few dollars cash before his replacement cards came in.

Dan brought in each of the boxes from the car. It was dark, so nobody could see his fake boobs pushing the cheerleader sweater out as he went outside. As he brought them in he started dwelling on a certain cheerleader costume he once bought for Paula.

Dan had once gotten Paula one of those sexy cheerleader costumes from the catalog. It was a generic pro team cheerleader costume in black, white, and silver, with a skirt, a low cut top that bared the midriff and had long puffy white sleeves, and some cheesy pompoms. He wasn't sure, but he thought the costume might have been made for strippers.

Dan pawed through each of the boxes looking for the costume, searching past the skimpy see through nightgowns in black or pink, the one floor length satin movie star gown and robe he bought her in hopes she would go for something more elegant, the corsets, the black push up bras, the satin thongs, g-strings, and crotchless panties, the garter belts, and all the stockings that went with them: black, nude, fishnet, pink. For some reason he had gotten her a lot of pink things, despite the fact that she had dark hair and didn't like pink. But when he got her that blonde wig she had flipped out completely and wouldn't speak to him for days.

One box held nothing but shoes. There were five inch black patent pumps, black high heel sandals, black stacked heels, a pair of pink marabou slippers that went with the gown, more four and five inch pumps in other colors: fuschia, navy, pink, gold, silver, and purple.

The long box held more things from her closet: the harem costume, French maid's dress, authentic cheerleader costume she had worn the previous Halloween, nurses outfit, some skimpy skirts and low cut dresses and tops she never wore if she could help it.. He looked at that Halloween costume, which he knew was too small to fit him, and looked in the last box.

It had more sexy underwear as well as the cheerleader costume he was looking for. Dan removed it from the box and ran his hands lovingly along the silky material. A wave of dizziness suddenly overcame him. He put his hand on the dresser to steady himself. Images of Buffy the Cheerleader passed through his mind. Images of not only the previous night, but games, events, pep rallies. There was the playoff game in Junior year when it started sleeting in the middle of the third quarter and the sleet pelted

Buffy's unprotected legs and face, stinging the skin as they hit. Dan remembered how much it had hurt and how he had big red welts on his skin after the game. There was the big basketball game against South when the air conditioning failed. The two weeks of cheerleader camp, and sharing stories and chocolate with the other girls in the bunkhouse. Dan closed his eyes, and within a few moments the feelings of lightheadedness and disorientation passed.

Dan wanted to wear that costume. Ever since he'd been a little girl he'd wanted to be a cheerleader. High school, college, pro sports team, that was his goal. In the back of his mind he knew those thoughts and feelings probably came from the depression he was succumbing to, but at the moment he imagined himself in Buffy's shoes and it felt good.

Dan slipped out of the sweater and put the top on over his head. Of course it didn't fit perfectly, and you could see the pasty colored boobs stick out, but that didn't matter. He wondered if he should wear a bra, but the fake breasts were light enough so that he didn't need one. He looked at himself in the full length mirror. The sleeves came up to mid forearm and the bare midriff effect looked a little too bare. The matching skirt didn't fit either, but he zipped it up as far as he could and felt himself grow aroused. The material didn't feel at all like that high school outfit. This was silkier, like most the stuff he had tried to get Paula to wear.

He knew he should be wearing shoes. He didn't think the white Halloween tennies would be appropriate with this outfit, so he grabbed a pair of black stacked heels from the box of shoes. He knew Buffy would want it that way. He put his feet into each shoe and tied up the laces, feeling himself growing harder as his penis rubbed against the smooth material of the panty. He found some old makeup in the bathroom, and carefully applied it, including blue eyeshadow, red lipstick, and tons of mascara and foundation. He was amazed he was able to do it and still stay within the lines. Then he donned the blonde wig. When he finished he didn't look like himself. He didn't feel like himself. And he wasn't thinking of Paula.

During the party, Brad had taken a picture of Dan/Buffy doing the full splits. There wasn't much that Dan knew about anatomy, but he did know this much. Guys weren't supposed to be able to do the splits. It was something to do with the pelvis. Just like guys weren't supposed to be able to stand straight against the wall and bend over to touch their toes without bending their knees. Dan wanted to do a split. Of course, walking in those heels proved difficult, but eventually he got the hang of it and later on, standing in front of a mirror, attempted a split. He did it. How odd, thought Dan.

Dan stood up and took one last look in the mirror. What he saw was a blonde bimbo with humongous breasts in a cheerleader outfit. Dan did a double take. Although the room was filled with shadows, the breasts looked completely real. Dan squealed, waved the pompons, and kicked above his head. "Oh my God, oh my God/ what is hap'ning to my bod?" Even his voice had taken on the timbre of what he had previously considered to be an annoying high pitched teenage girl. But on him, he admitted, it sounded fine.

When Dan went to bed he decided Buffy needed to wear one of the nightgowns to sleep. The big boobies didn't look to be going anywhere, so he pulled the big satiny

pink floor length gown on over his head and felt the smoothness of the material on his body. He shivered, and smiled. He didn't bother to remove the makeup or wig and with a self satisfied smile fell asleep.

That night he dreamt about cheerleaders. In each dream Dan was cast as a blonde cheerleader, in one dream a high school cheerleader, a college one in another. In one dream he was both a Laker Girl and Dallas Cowboy Cheerleader.

Buffy made a small appearance in the morning, but the realities of the situation caused Dan to push her from his mind and get down to business. He removed the fake breasts while in the shower. One had fallen off as he lathered up, and Dan found himself crying as he stared at it. Then he shrugged and pulled the other one off.

Dan didn't really have anything to wear, so he decided to wander around in the nightgown, robe, and panties. It felt good, sitting there in the overstuffed chair in the library, all soft and sexy as he made the necessary calls. When someone at the other end put him on hold, Dan found himself fantasizing about cheerleaders, more than half wishing he could have been a cheerleader in high school.

"You can't send it to my apartment," Dan explained to the woman at the other end of the 1-800 number. "My apartment doesn't exist. It burned down. Yes, in a fire." He felt like crying. He had never been so frustrated before. It was the same with the bank, the credit card companies, the state driver's license people, and the insurance company. "No. My policy was in my apartment. My apartment burned down. Therefore, my policy burned down. And no, I don't have any ID so I can prove who I am. By a stroke of bad luck, all my ID went down with the house."

Eventually he got them to send his replacements to his PO box. One of the credit card companies already sent his statements there, but for the others it was like pulling teeth.

Dan had nothing to do while he waited. No money. No clothes he could wear, except for those gray sweats and an old sweatshirt Debbie's parents were sending to Goodwill. The only shoes that fit were the white tennies, and the socks that went with them looked way too feminine. He couldn't even pull down the sweats to cover the little pink striping. So he had nothing to do but hang around the house, watching television and reading old magazines. Debbie's dad subscribed to Money and Field & Stream, but Dan found those magazines boring. He didn't care about landing a marlin or hunting for elk in Montana, and as for building a retirement plan that's right for you, Dan found the graphs and breakouts distracting, the text nearly incomprehensible.

Dan found the various fashion magazines of the girls much more interesting. Debbie had subscribed to Cosmo and Glamour, while Diane had Madamoiselle and Y&M. Their mom subscribed to People.

During the next few days while he hung around the house, Buffy periodically urged Dan to put on a cheerleading outfit. He discovered that more cheerleading memories came to him, and although he realized it was just his overactive imagination supplying him with material, they seemed completely real. The memories had a quality about them that bouyed Dan. After suddenly remembering the words and steps to a certain cheer, then practicing it until he got it right, Dan felt better about himself. Losing his

job, house, girlfriend, and other sundries didn't bother him. It felt like someone else those events happened to.

On Thursday Dan received his replacement bank card, which said "Dana Lisch" on it. Figures, he thought, as he called the bank to straighten it out. The woman he talked to at the other end apologized and said she would have it fixed.

"Will I be able to use this one until I get the new one?" he asked, explaining his situation.

"I don't see why not."

So Dan got some money from the cash machine and went out and bought another cheerleader outfit.

III

On Friday Dan received one of the replacement credit cards. It had the name Lana Disch on it, as did the three fashion catalogs he received. He had bought things from the catalogs before as presents for Paula, and had been only slightly perturbed when the name said Dana Lisch instead of Dan A. Lisch. But now everybody seemed to have transposed the D and the L from his names.

Dan's plan had been to stop by the PO box before going to the store to buy clothes he needed but totally spaced out of his mind the day before when he stepped inside the lingerie shop. When he saw the gold cheerleader costume, all thoughts of jeans, shoes, underwear, and shirts went from his head. It was sleeveless, which meant he didn't have to worry about sleeve length, and had pompoms to match.

"Will this be a gift?" the saleslady asked, a brunette with large breasts and too much makeup that Dan barely noticed.

"Umm . . . kind of," he replied.

"May I interest you in some boots to complete the ensemble?"

Boots. He hadn't thought about that. He was thinking of wearing those gold pumps, but with a costume like this, boots did seem more appropriate.

"Yes, you may interest me in some boots," he said, trying to remember what size to get. Paula had told him once about shoe size conversions, and he didn't want this woman to know that he was getting the boots for himself.

She showed him some white go-go boots that went up to the knee. "What size do you need?"

"Let's see," he said, hoping he was making an adequate impression of trying to remember his girlfriend's shoe size. He was a nine and a half, and if he remembered correctly, the conversion between men's and women's shoe sizes was 1 ½. But which way? Would that mean he would need an eleven, or a . . . nine and a half, eight and a half, he began counting in his head.

"Seven," he told her.

Later on he realized that seven was exactly the wrong size as he tried to wedge his feet into the boot. But the store was closed and in his hurry to get his new purchase home he had forgotten to buy men's clothes, which didn't matter anyway, as he had run out of money and couldn't make another cash machine withdrawal until the next day.

But when he got the mail at the PO box the next day and discovered the name change on his new credit card he went straight home to complain. He called the 24/7 hotline and pressed numbers until he got a human. He had decided to wear his new cheerleader costume with the boots that made his feet feel like sardines, but which, he discovered, he was getting used to. He found that wearing the cheerleader costume made it easier for him to deal with the people at the other end of the line. In the past, he had been tempted to slam the phone down in frustration. This time, though, as he waited, he used the time for putting on his makeup.

"I'm sorry ma'am," the woman at the other end of the line said.

"I'm not a ma'am," said Dan. "That's the problem. The card should read Daniel A. Lisch, not Lana Disch."

"But our records show —"

"I don't care what they show. Your records are wrong. They've flipped my initials. Dan Lisch. Lana Disch. Get it?"

"Not really," she said slowly.

"Dan A. Lisch. Translated into D-a-n-a Lisch. Transposed into Lana Disch. Do you understand what happened? There's been a series of typos."

"I'm sorry ma'am, but we can mail you a form to fill out."

"I told you, I'm not a ma'am."

"Whatever you say, ma'am — uh, sir."

They promised to send him a form which he could fill out and return. But until then his card would read "Lana Disch."

Dan was so frustrated he went through his whole cheerleading routine before getting ready for bed. He took a bath and shaved his legs, as the hairs were starting to scratch against the nightgown. He had worn it every night since he first discovered how comfortable it was, and how easy his sleep had been.

On Saturday Dan went into the den to watch the college football games. The fact that there were football games on didn't seem to interest him except for the cheerleading aspect. There was also a cheerleader championship rerun on cable, as well as a cheerleader movie.

I'm becoming obsessed, he thought, while he practiced routines in his new outfit in front of the mirror. Much of what he did were not so much routines as sexy dance steps. He shook his hips, wiggled his ass, shook his foam titties, and slinked, kicked, and jumped. He discovered it was getting more difficult to get turned on unless he did less cheerleading and more dance floor slinking.