

TRANSITIONAL STATES

By Misty Malveaux



ILLUSTRATED BY CHAS

A 'NEW WOMAN' NOVEL

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Across the fault line you peered
At what you did not
Understand

In the Valley of Decision I cried
Tears of emptiness
Unending

Into the future imperfect I fly
Unsure of beginning or end,
But with peace.
— c. l. hight

“Hey ho let's go-
They're forming in a straight line
They're going through a tight wind
The kids are losing their minds
The Blitzkrieg Bop”

- The Ramones

“I've got a secret I've been hiding under my skin...”
My heart is human, my blood is boiling, my brain I.B.M.

“Domo arigato, Mr. Roboto, domo...domo
Thank you very much, Mr. Roboto
For doing the jobs that nobody wants to
And thank you very much, Mr. Roboto
For helping me escape just when I needed to
Thank you-thank you, thank you”

- Styx

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“Across the fault line you peered”

- c. l. hight

A chill was in the air.

Across Route 1 and Interstate 95 traffic had thinned down to the point where a person just arriving might not realize how overcrowded this part of the world had become. An hour ago the roads were still long winding parking lots, clogged with angry and frustrated commuters who seemed to care less for their fellow travelers than some hapless insect they might idly step upon while rushing to or from appointments and meetings.

But by now the rush of those so anxious to get to the homes they barely knew – and the neighbors they did not know at all – was over. It was as if the city and the suburbs breathed a collective sigh of relief.

A couple of miles away, the clock bell on the tower of the National Masonic Temple in downtown Alexandria chimed seven. Darkness had descended upon the city unnoticed by the throng of commuters.

Now people filtered out of apartments and middle class homes to their destinations at restaurants and clubs. Some would stuff their faces in pretentious restaurants and snooty dining clubs. Many others would drown their sorrows in local watering holes while still wearing their government ID badges – symbols meant to convey the thought that somehow their lives were really worth something after all, that they were important somehow – to someone.

‘Meaningless lives for meaningless people,’ Paul thought to himself. Paul considered that his thinking had become increasingly negative in the last several months. He wondered.

Maybe it was just the drudgery of life for a technical editor in such a bureaucratic place. Paul was not a bureaucrat, although he certainly dealt with them on daily basis. The company Paul worked for was a contractor that prepared technical manuals for government offices, a group derisively called ‘Beltway Bandits’, as if they stole government money. The truth was, they spent much of their time begging for it.

Perhaps Paul’s recent bout of negativity was Jenny’s fault. She seemed to have much less patience with him of late. Maybe it was something wrong with *him*.

But this was Friday. Time to wash away the negativity. Time to bury the stress of the past week of working at meaningless bureaucratic jobs in Washington, DC.

The temperature outside had dropped precipitously since sundown. Pretty much normal for a February 11th in the Northeastern USA. For many, this would seem to be a good time to be in-

doors, sharing bodily warmth with a loved one...or a good glass of Scotch. But Paul wanted to be elsewhere, not to escape his wife or his job, but himself.

On Arlington Drive, just outside of Alexandria, Virginia, the normal warmth of Paul and Jenny's home seemed absent. Paul had forgotten to turn the heat up when he got home. Or was it something in their relationship that made things seem cool?

As close as the two of them had been – and as much as they'd been through together...and experimented with - Jenny was never totally comfortable with Paul's crossdressing. They had adjusted somehow, however, and despite ups and downs they had reached general agreement or compromise regarding Paul's "hobby." Whatever their differences, they managed them well enough.

Perhaps one should say that *she* had managed, for while Jenny was able to tolerate Paul's "hobby," and even find ways to enjoy it at times, Paul was beginning to feel that occasional dressing just wasn't enough anymore.

Even so, their relationship seemed as strong as steel. Despite the arguments and occasional discomfort, they would be together forever. That was the commitment they had made.

"I wish you could understand," Paul sighed, exhausted by the latest round of the great 'endless argument' which had come to characterize his marriage. Falling back upon the bed, he stared at the ceiling and confessed, "I wish *I* could understand."

There was a prolonged, somewhat uncomfortable period of silence in their bedroom.

"You don't understand?" Jenny queried. "Since when? Besides, I do understand. I think. I just don't want to participate every time. That's all. And what is it that you don't understand, Sweetie?"

"I *do* understand," Paul continued. "Sort of. I think that maybe I'm just over stressed at work. When I dress – that's the only time I feel relaxed these days. I don't entirely understand, but I know that if I don't get to let my female side out, I'm going to go crazy."

"Whatever," Jenny countered. "Anyway, it doesn't matter. You've been playing dress-up every other day, it seems to me. I just thought that maybe we could break the routine for a bit is all. My mistake."

Paul considered their situation. Marriage was a good thing for Paul and Jenny, at least when they first got together. Since they were both painfully shy and socially inept, it seemed an act of God that they had found each other.

Actually, it was an act of Pen Friends. But that was almost ten years ago. Everything seemed so much clearer then. A whirlwind romance turned into an engagement just three months after they'd first met.

Then there was Paul's tearful confession to Jenny of his innermost feelings. To some this revelation might have been shocking, but Jenny seemed willing to understand and adapt. They were best friends, after all. They had clicked from the first moment. Was there anything that could not be worked out?

“Monday is Valentines Day, you know,” Jenny reminded Paul. “But since we both have to work on Monday I though we should at least do something together tomorrow.”

“Damn, I forgot about that. Of course we should! Want to go out to dinner?”

“Tomorrow? Sure, I guess. I always like going to Outback Steakhouse. It’s expensive, but Valentine’s Day is a good excuse, don’t you think?” Jenny was semi preoccupied with getting ready to go out, but she was still interested in the conversation.

“Sure,” Paul sighed. “We both love that place. We need to talk more anyway.”

Were they not meant to be together. ...Were they not soul mates?

It was true. The first several years seemed like heaven on earth. Sure, Jenny would flinch a bit when Paul occasionally climbed into the marriage bed wearing a negligée, a wig, and lipstick. She had always said that she wanted a husband, not a wife. Yet they managed to have some fun, too. And Jenny occasionally remarked that it was kind of cool to have a secret girlfriend inside her husband.

There had been no real surprises, after all. Or at least that is what Paul thought. He had told her before they became engaged about his feelings. He confessed to Jenny that he truly felt like a woman inside, his tears flowing not from shame but from the anticipation that the love of his life would reject him.

She did not.

Early on in their relationship, Paul feared that Jenny had failed to grasp the depth of Paul’s feelings – and his desperate need. Can any non-transgender person understand the heart of those born with this rare condition?

But Jenny always tried to be a good wife, and she was remarkably understanding when it came to Paul’s situation.

Just as Jenny threw herself into their relationship, Paul tried to be a good husband, being attentive to her needs and thoughtful in every possible way – though in the latter regard he seemed to be slipping a bit of late.

Most important, Paul and Jenny had a deep, abiding friendship as well as love for one another, and this fact buoyed them both in even the most difficult times.

Jenny finally got the hook on her too-short skirt to hold. She reached for her Virginia Slims. Lighting a slender cigarette with her Bic lighter, she took a deep drag, tossing her head back and exhaling softly. The smoke curled up and hung in the air near the top of the dresser mirror.

“Well, I guess you can go out with your crossdresser friends tonight if you want, but I’m not staying home.”

“Where are you going to go?” Paul asked furtively.

“I was thinking of going over to the Cineplex down by Wal-Mart. There must be something worth seeing.”

Paul trusted Jenny. They’d been through so much together. But she did seem a bit more distant of late, and the times they spent together were shrinking.

Jenny stared into the mirror, fiddling with her earring. "It's really okay if you go out with your friends, you know. I probably shouldn't have said anything. I just, well, sometimes I feel kind of abandoned, you know? I mean, like I'm second place in your life."

"I don't want you to feel that way, Sweetie. And it's not true. You're never second place to me. I'll go with you to the movies, okay?"

"Um, yeah, I guess you could," Jenny pondered. "But I thought you really wanted to play dress up tonight."

"Well..." Paul thought about how to be diplomatic. "I was kind of looking forward to unwinding, sure. But I'm probably not going to go out anyway. So it's no big deal."

"Sweetie, I know how much that stuff means to you," Jenny said, trying her best to have empathy with her husband. "Sometimes it's easier on me if I'm not here is all."

Back in the 'old days' Paul and Jenny would play the dress-up games together. Jenny would even call Paul's female persona her 'secret lover.' Paul found that sweet. And lesbian sex was always better than the plain, boring male/female variety. It was slower, and more sensual. At least Paul felt that way.

Paul loved being treated like a woman and he loved the fact that Jenny would indulge his fantasies. At least she used to. It seemed of late that the game was getting old to Jenny, or maybe it was just Paul's imagination.

The first year or so of their relationship was so exciting, as Paul and Jenny got to know each other. After the initial shock of seeing Paul in female attire for the first time wore off, Jenny became somewhat intrigued by Paul's feminine side.

If nothing else, the female version of Paul was far more fun when it came to things like shopping and even chatting. Girl talk was fun

When Paul's female personality was in full bloom, he was more like a good girlfriend to Jenny than a husband. She found him – or 'her' - entertaining.

As time wore on, however, Jenny began to lose patience with Paul's crossdressing, at least on occasion. It wasn't that she hated it or anything. It was just that she wanted more consistency in her life. Lately with Paul, she never knew what she was going to come home to from one day to the next.

Ironically, this occurred at the same time that Paul was finding that dressing up was increasingly necessary to his sense of wellbeing – and increasingly inadequate. He wasn't really sure why this was happening, he only knew that all the internal confusion and unfulfilled dreams and desires seemed to be putting increasing pressure on him.

Meanwhile Jenny seemed to find her comfort more often in trips alone to the mall and to the movies. It wasn't that she didn't love Paul. She did love him with all of her heart. It was just that there were things between them that she would rather not think about. "Fear of abandonment" is what a marriage counselor once called it. She compensated for her fear by asserting her independence.

"No, no. I think I'd rather go alone. It's not personal, you know. I'm not mad at you. Sometimes I need to unwind, too. Right now, I just feel like being alone for a bit. Don't worry, I'll be back in a couple of hours."

“Okay,” Paul affirmed. “I’m too tired to go out anyway, to be honest. I think I’ll just mess around here for a bit, and then I’ll be waiting for you when you come home, okay?”

Jenny finished dressing, slipping on a long sleeve white pullover and stepping into her flat heeled black pumps.

Knowing Paul’s need to unwind and the characteristics of the way he liked to “play”, she took a single cigarette out of her half-empty pack and tossed it on the dresser. “I’ve got another lighter in my purse so I’ll leave this one for you.”

“Thanks, Sweetie,” Paul said, trying to sound disinterested although by now excitement was beginning to well up within him.

“Do you want me to pick up anything?” Jenny asked, giving herself a last inspection in the mirror.

“No, I just want you to come home soon so we can play,” Paul winked, although Jenny missed the suggestive gesture.

“Uh-huh,” Jenny replied absentmindedly. “We’ll see...”

With that, Jenny trotted out to the kitchen. There she grabbed her purse from the counter and an extra pack of Virginia Slims from the cupboard. Stopping by at the doorway closet, she selected her brown leather coat and headed out the door.

There was a muffled snapping sound made by the automatic latch as the door closed behind Jenny. For reasons unknown even to him, Paul breathed a sigh of apparent relief.

A slight blush of embarrassment and guilt swept over Paul. He loved Jenny. He should not be glad to see her go. No, no, that wasn’t it, Paul thought. He was just...relaxing. He was glad for a little peace and quiet. Yes, that was it.

It was a sign of things to come.

Paul made his usual tour around the house, confirming that the door was indeed locked and all window shades were properly drawn. Nothing must disturb his transformation ritual.

With Jenny confirmed gone and the curtains drawn, Paul tiptoed into the bedroom with the utmost care, as if to avoid waking some person who might be sleeping nearby. Perhaps the habit of getting dressed up quietly developed when he was a teenager and spent many a summer night practicing his makeup skills while his mother and father slept.

Paul needed to let his girl-self out, and he needed to do it now. The stresses of the past week, the temperamental outburst of Paul’s boss when the printer was late with a job, the nail biting tension of his increasingly long, harrowing commutes to and from work – all were forgotten for the moment as Paul focused on the task at hand. This was the time that Paul’s world finally balanced out. This was his “payment for services rendered.” Reaching the closet, Paul bent down and gently removed his treasured suitcase of goodies. Laying the battered old brown case carefully on the bed, he undid the worn gold-plated snaps and lovingly opened the case. A smile immediately came across his face.

In the case were Paul’s two wigs: a long, dark, curly one and a medium length wavy brown wig. The suitcase also held his small makeup kit, along with a ragtag assortment of female attire

including several short skirts, a bra, and ten pair of Hanes nylon bikini-cut panties in assorted colors. There was also a pair of dark gray slacks, half a dozen tops, a lime green sweater and two pairs of shoes: A pair of high heel pumps and a pair of flats – both in basic black. Oh yes, there was that all-important panty-girdle that was just a little too tight.

Suddenly the force of the moment overcame Paul. He began to remove his clothing in such a frantic fashion that it seemed that he was literally going to rip the male clothing from his body, leaving it in tiny shards like the aftermath of some natural disaster. Clothes were tossed left and right, hitting first the floor, then the lampshade on the nightstand.

Soon Paul was naked. He breathed yet another sigh – this time of liberation – then bent down to fish through the suitcase. He quickly found a cute pair of pink panties. This particular pair had a nice lacey trim that he loved. It was just the sort of extra touch that made him feel so feminine, so alive.

He sat down on the corner of the bed and slid his left foot through the leg opening. Paul pulled the panty up slowly, letting the soft texture of the fabric caress his leg. It felt so sensual, so delicious. A shiver went through him and he felt a tingle in his groin.

When the delicate garment reached his knee, Paul stopped to hike his right leg and place it through the proper opening, once again wallowing in the sensation of the soft, luscious material against his skin.

Once his panties were aligned at his knees, Paul stood up and began to slither the lacey under-thing up to his waist, giving a little wiggle of his butt as he slid the pink treasure into place.

Paul sidestepped to the right so that he could see himself in the dresser mirror. Noting a bit of a bulge, he pulled the front of the panty away from his waist, reached down inside with his left hand and gently pushed his penis and balls down low into his crotch. He then pulled the silky nylon panties up tight as he could, which created a relatively smooth front.

Paul let the elastic waist snap back into place. He then twirled in place, so that he could get a look at his butt in the mirror. Pleased with how his pink panties hugged his form, he wiggled again. It made him smile.

Two simpering steps back to the suitcase and Paul picked up his one and only bra, a Playtex 18 Hour model in 38 C.

Finding the hooks and eyes, Paul wrapped the slightly tattered item around his back so that the hooks came together in front. (Paul had never been able to master the art of hooking a bra behind his back). After he slipped the four hooks into their matching eyes, he slid the bra clockwise around his body until the cups were in the front. He then slipped first his left arm and then his right under the straps.

Paul did his best to position the cups so that they didn't look too empty, but he knew he didn't have much to put in them. Oh, he fantasized regularly about having lovely, full sensuous breasts. Sometimes when he was alone he would touch and massage his small nipples, imagining that some miracle might allow them to grow into the breasts some deep part of him felt he was meant to have. He'd even taken hormones he'd obtained from a friend a few years ago...for a whole month. Almost every day the thought of going "all the way" and transitioning crossed his mind. But alas, he had a "real" life with real responsibilities. He had to accept the fact that

his dreams and desires would never be realized. That was just the way God ordained it, he thought.

With a sigh, Paul reached back into the suitcase and produced his little purple makeup case. Sliding the latch sideways, he opened the case and quickly grabbed his lipstick – Maybelline ‘Wear N Go’ number 10, Sandy Rose shade. He then fished out his L’Oreal “Voluminous” mascara and black eyeliner pencil, followed by a small Revlon eye shadow kit containing six shades starting with light beige and descending to purple smoke.

The kit also held a half-used jar of Dermablend concealer, Chroma 2 shade, a tube of Almay ‘Sports Formula’ foundation (Light), and a round container of Coty Finishing Powder in “Translucent Extra Coverage.” There was also an assortment of beauty tools: Some brushes, a lip liner pencil Paul had never figured out how to use correctly and his L’Oreal of Paris “Jet Set” quick dry nail polish in a shade called ‘Snappy Perle’ – a darkish red with purple overtones. Not a professional kit, really, but it was adequate for Paul’s needs.

Stopping to ponder for a moment, Paul decided to skip doing a full makeup job for now. For a change, he wasn’t being obsequious when he told Jenny that he didn’t feel like going out – this time he really wasn’t in the mood to go to the club in DC where the crossdressers and transsexuals would hang out, with its too-loud music and pushy, half drunk crowds.

Paul carried the lipstick, mascara, eyeliner pencil and eye shadow kit over to the dressing table and plopped down on the ottoman which had served as its chair ever since an over-exuberant pillow fight a couple of years ago had broken the old wooden chair that had previously served that function.

This was Paul’s special time, a time – however brief – when he felt that he could be the real person he was on the inside. Lately it seemed that his irregular times alone were the only ones where he felt truly alive. More and more, Paul felt dead inside. He was a walking corpse, a robot, going through the motions of life.

That awful feeling persisted until Paul sat down with his makeup.

Where to begin? Paul thought to himself. Spreading his goodies out on the dressing table, he took a deep breath. Doing a full makeup job would be a waste since he didn’t feel up to go it out. The trick was to figure out the minimum amount of ‘getting pretty’ required to make Paul feel like a woman

Finally, he selected the Maybelline Wear ‘N Go lipstick. Leaning forward, he carefully drew the edge of his bottom lip, going slowly so as to avoid going over and making a mess as well as using the time to savor the lovely feeling of the shiny, slightly greasy paste. Drawing along the v-shape on the top lip, Paul filled in the details of the lip line carefully, polishing it all off with an additional coat.

Examining himself in the mirror, Paul made kissing motions in the air. He then picked up the eyeliner and leaned in further toward the mirror. Using his left hand as a brace against his cheek, the line of the lower right lid was slowly drawn. He did the left lash line next. For some reason, the left side was always harder.

Paul had to go to the bathroom to get some Q-tips in order to correct his mistakes. Sticking a swab in his mouth and rolling it around on his to moisten it, Paul carefully removed the over-run liner from his eyes. He examined himself in the mirror. Not bad, he thought. He had always

been very lucky in that he had no beard shadow to speak of, at least not as long as he shaved regularly. And his face had soft lines.

It was a magic moment. Paul was Paul no longer.

“Okay, Leslie, what shall we do now?” Paul spoke wonderingly to himself.

Leslie had been Paul’s name for his other half since he was twelve. He still wasn’t sure why he had picked it. He remembered thinking that he could change his name to ‘Leslie’ and then use it whether he was in boy mode or girl mode.

Also there was a pretty actress back then named ‘Leslie’ – at least he thought she was pretty when he was twelve. Now he couldn’t remember what she looked like. Now *he* was the only Leslie in his life.

“God, I wish I had one of Jenny’s cigarettes,” Leslie sighed. She only smoked when she was *en femme* for reasons she did not understand. He then noticed the forgotten cigarette that Jenny left for him.

Leslie stuck the Virginia Slims cigarette in her mouth, picked up the lighter and lit it, taking a drag and sweeping the cigarette away in her fingers with a feminine flourish. She sat back in the chair and thought about her femaleness. When the cigarette was half finished, Leslie stamped it out in the ashtray on the corner of the dresser. She then decided to go back to her suitcase and find something nice to put on.

Rummaging through the clothes, Leslie selected a short black a-line skirt and a light purple long-sleeve top that had a nice feminine cut to it.

“Oh wait, mustn’t forget the pantyhose!” Leslie announced to herself. She produced from her suitcase an unopened package of L’eggs pantyhose – nude beige sandal foot ones.

She sat down and carefully rolled up the hose, just as she had learned by watching her mother, and later Jenny. Fortunately she had shaved her legs the night before so she was ready for this. Halfway up the right leg, she paused to start the left, but as she slipped her toe in she heard the telltale ripping sound. Her toenail had caught on the fabric near the heel.

“Damn. Shit. I just bought these things!” Leslie threw a characteristically feminine snit. “Oh well, I’m not going out anyway. They’ll just have to do.”

