



Reluctant Press presents:

My Life II:
BEAUTY QUEEN

Charlotte Mayo



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALEXANDRESSON

A 'HER TV' E-BOOK

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My Life: **Beauty Queen**

Part two of the DRESS CIRCLE trilogy
By Charlotte Mayo

CHAPTER ONE

It was just like the old days. I planned to have a day off work and go to a village called Guisborough where I had located a small dress shop called Philippa Jane's that sold cocktail, and evening dresses. The aim was - and this was ambitious to say the least - to go to the shop dressed as an attractive, young lady and, after trying on half the stock in the shop, actually buy a ball-gown. Such a scenario had always been a dream of mine and one of my favourite 'dressing' fantasies. What about the voice? I hear you say. What about the deportment? What about *everything*? That didn't figure in my madcap, off-the-wall, zany, wild, mental, foolish, deranged scheme. The fantasy of going into a changing room and trying on a lovely dress completely transfixed me and the fact that I would, in all certainty, be read by the assistant and assorted others along the way and probably not be served at all didn't even cross my mind.

It was late November 1989. The day before the 'big day' I creamed my legs and arms with Immac to make them perfectly smooth. I then prepared my clothes. I tried on my new pair of black patent shoes with 3" heels, they were a perfect fit. Fortunately, I've been blessed with small feet (size 7) so can I buy women's shoes off the shelf. I got my Danimac coat out of the wardrobe and I then laid out all the other things I intended wearing: my silky blue camisole, white blouse, skirt, bra, panties, stockings, suspenders and corset. On the day itself I awoke at 6am. I bathed and then I greased back my hair. I wet-shaved,

moisturised and then powdered my face. It took two hours to apply make-up. Next, I pulled on my blonde wig. I've always liked looking like a girl before I start dressing; so, having finished in the bathroom, I wrapped my negligee around me and walked to the bedroom where my en femme clothes were neatly placed. I took each article of clothing that was either laid out on the bed or hanging on a hanger in the wardrobe and watched my reflection in the mirror as I dressed.

I put on my panties, pulled up my stockings, attached my suspenders, tightened myself into a corset, fixed my bra, added fillers into the two pouches, pulled on a blue silk camisole, buttoned up my white silk blouse, stepped into my black leather skirt and popped the button before pulling up the zip. Finally, I slipped into my shoes. Then for the finishing touches; I applied false nails, earrings, jewellery and perfume.

After many glances in the bathroom and the bedroom mirrors I put on my Danimac coat, buttoned it up, tied the belt, picked up my handbag and opened my door. Having locked it, I walked out into the communal hall, down the short corridor and out of the front door onto the path, bathed in warm winter's sun.

I strolled to the end of the path not feeling as nervous as I had expected. A woman pushed a pram around the corner and a car was reversing. Neither seemed to take much notice. I walked on. A sense of calm and tranquillity enveloped me. I'd convinced myself I looked good. I made my way along the street to a cab company called Jet Taxis who had a corner office. I had decided that a taxi was a better option than my white company car as it had a logo on the side, clearly identifying the union I worked for. Anyway a taxi was more fun. I walked up the steps of the taxi office, pushed open the door and walked in. Two Asian men were playing pool. They stopped. Gapped. Amazed. Mouths dropping to the green beige of the pool table. A small, plump, pimple-faced blonde girl of maybe twenty-years old stood behind the customer service hatch; her eyes never left me as I made my slow, deliberate approach, walking, I hoped, like a model on a cat walk. I reached the hatch. She looked me in the eye, holding my mascara covered eyelashes and immaculately made up face in her sight, drinking in my feminine beauty – just as the two Asians were doing. She smiled, I smiled. Then, in a coarse Northeast accent asked,

“Where do you want to go, Mister?”

Downfall, downfall, downfall and so early. “A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a fucking horse,” I felt like saying in true Shakespearean tragic fashion. In fact I said,

“Guisborough.” My voice was so soft it was almost inaudible.

“To where?”

“Guisborough.”

“Where?”

“Guisborough,” I squeaked.

The younger of the two Asians, who had been playing pool, said he'd take me.

“Thank you,” I said in a male-ish voice which sent the other, older Asian and the girl controller into fits of laughter. The Asian's hands slipped down his pool cue as he covered his face to conceal his mirth. I felt like crying.

I followed the first driver out to his car and got into the back. I wanted to go home. To abort. Mission abandoned. But the car was speeding out of Stockton with me sitting passively on the backseat, shaking with fear and perspiring like an Eskimo in a Turkish bath during an Istanbul heat wave. All I wanted to do was pull my wig off, ditch my nails and my stupid clothes and dive for cover behind the thickest shrubbery on the planet. And I couldn't even grip the door handle to release some of my tension; those nails, those damned stupid false nails.

All the time the young, slim driver was making furtive glances in his rear view mirror. I wondered if I would end up being taken to Guisborough or a police station. A police station seemed more likely because the driver had not a clue where Guisborough was and constantly asked me directions. I replied in a mincing voice -mimicking a kind of camp Kenneth Williams on speed.

When we finally reached the outskirts of the town I told him about the shop and he couldn't find that either and had to jump out of the car to ask pedestrians the way. The problem was it was now lunchtime and the streets were packed with school children and shoppers. Finally, we arrived in the High Street but couldn't find Philippa Jane's dress shop. In the end, the taxi driver told me to get out and try and find it myself. Fearing he might drive off and I would be marooned in this tiny market town with no way back, I told him to wait. I eased out of the car seat and ran along the street looking for the shop. And yes, I do mean ran – 3inch heels, in a tight black skirt, in a Danimac coat, I *ran*.

My nerves had been shredded by the, "Where to, Mister?" The last thing I wanted to do was to be ridiculed on the streets of this market town in the middle of winter. I ran blindly for a while, then looked at a couple of shop doors whilst a couple of hundred (or so it seemed) people stared at me. The thing with being a transvestite is that there's no hiding place - if you get caught, you get caught, you get caught - for 'getting read' is too tame an expression for what happened to me in Guisborough. Just writing about it now, over fifteen years later, makes my palms clammy and my heart pulsate.

Having glanced at two or three shops, I ran back to the car and demanded that the driver take me back to Stockton. I was now sweating and flustered and I could hear laughter – lots of laughter - and I could see people staring at me from across the road. So this was what it was like to be a freak.

The driver, being a friendly sort, became really concerned that he had driven me all this way for nothing and that I couldn't find the shop. He tried to be helpful. He asked me to tell him exactly where the shop was and so I pulled a tatty advertisement out of my handbag. He took the piece of paper and got out of the car. I buried my head in my hands and prayed.

"Dear, dear God get me out of here. I promise *never* to dress in women's clothes again. Dear God, I'm so, so sorry," I prayed.

Mr Taxi Driver, meanwhile, had walked up to a bunch of sixth formers, who were standing near the boot of the car. He conversed with them. His window was down and I could hear laughter and the word 'transvestite' being bandied about as if it were a disease. Obviously it didn't apply to the taxi driver, who may have looked good in a dress, but at

that moment was dressed in jeans and a sweatshirt. He came back to the car and got in. He shrugged.

“Can’t find. You want to go and look again?”

“Please,” I said, gripping the back of his seat so tightly four false nails came unstuck from my cuticles and dropped down the back of his chair, “*take me home.*”

On the way back, all I could think about was getting inside my flat, locking the door, undressing and lying in a warm bath. The friendly driver continued to make furtive glances in his rear view mirror. At one point the controller’s voice came on the radio,

“Have you dropped him off yet?”

Embarrassed silence for a few seconds, followed by,

“How much did you charge him?”

“£10,” the driver said softly.

Again the girl’s voice came back on the radio. She obviously thought he had dropped me off. “It should have been £7. Buy us fish and chips on the way back!” Laughter crackled over the radio.

The driver looked in the mirror and shrugged as if to say, what’s £3? What he didn’t realise was that I’d have paid him £50,000 and regular instalments of £1,000 a month to be back in doors and lying in my bath.

Still, when he pulled up outside my Shaftesbury Street address he only charged me £5. I guess he felt sorry for me. I got out of the taxi and ran indoors with as much dignity as I could muster – which was none. Fortunately for me, the post thieves from upstairs weren’t on their way out and I was able to walk unhindered to my own front door. Once inside I locked it, undressed and jumped in the bath. Thank God, I was home. Safe. An important lesson learned - *fantasy never becomes reality*. But when it does it’s better than that as you will see later.

After a while I left the bath, dried myself and then went to my wardrobe to hang up the skirt and blouse. I’ve always loved the warmth that female clothes have after extended wear, the leather skirt felt particularly nice to my touch. Curiously, years later that very same skirt would get someone else into trouble when they went on a shopping trip. You see, it wasn’t me, it was the skirt - it was jinxed.

I put on my male clothes that suddenly felt so good. As I left the house to go to work for the afternoon (there was no way I could have stayed in the flat) a taxi was parked on the corner. The Asian driver watched me go. I got into my car and drove down to the bottom of the street so I wouldn’t have to pass him. I then turned right along the cobbled path between the rows of terraced houses and back onto the main road.

When I came home from work there were no taxis near the house and there were no other repercussions from my act of mindless recklessness – except one. When I was leaving the flat just before Christmas and packing up my car to go to a small bedsit around the corner that was cheaper, two working-class men, hands stuffed in donkey jackets, came out of a neighbouring house and walked up their path. When they reached the gate one turned to the other and said, in a voice too loud for my liking,

"I see the transvestite's leaving us."

I moved to a small bedsit because, by then, I knew my employment contract was going to expire in the February of the following year and that it would not be renewed. So, instead of looking for another job, I had started planning a trip around the world with my brother. Helen was not amused and, as the weeks passed, her mood deteriorated.

Just before I moved out of my ground floor flat, Helen and I went shopping in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. As we walked around the centre I told her I was keen to buy a pair of leather trousers. We went to a large leather emporium and I asked the young, slim assistant which trousers on the rack were men's and which were ladies. She said it didn't matter and handed me two pairs of trousers; one pair were men's the other pair ladies. Guess which pair I bought? It was a pair of size 14 ladies' leather strides. Of course, to go with the trousers I needed a pair of boots, so, next we went to a small shoe shop and I picked up a pair of ladies' ankle boots in a size 7. They were a 'pixie' style with winkle-picker toes and a turned down trim.

"What do you think of these, Helen?" I said in all innocence.

"They're ladies," she said.

"Yes, but I think they would go..."

A mature female assistant approached. She had a shock of white and black hair.

"Can I help?" she enquired.

"Thanks. Can I have the other one to this, please?" I asked.

The assistant huffed but took the boot.

"They'll look good under the trousers," I said as way of explanation to Helen.

"I suppose they're not much different from men's," she said.

When the assistant came back I tried the low-heeled boots on. They fitted so I bought them. As I paid I was still trying to explain myself to the assistant.

"I've just bought a pair of leather trousers and..."

The assistant stared straight passed me as she handed the change over. She had sussed out that I was a transvestite, even if my girlfriend hadn't. Occasionally, Helen would say things like, 'You take a lot of interest in women's clothes,' or 'I bet your mum thinks it's me that likes leather, not you.' (The latter was said with real venom when we were having a row). Or, once when I had made love to her, still wearing my leather trousers, she said, 'Was it the leather that turned you on?'

But she never suspected, or if she did, she never said.

That evening, following the day's shopping in Newcastle, I saw an example of Helen's flirtatiousness. We went to a nightclub in Stockton called The Mall and Helen dressed in her tan leather suit and a black top. I went to the toilet and when I came back, I saw some youth wearing a jacket and a kipper tie chatting to her. I stood watching; Helen was laughing and fiddling with the necklace around her neck. She made no effort to tell the lad she was with someone. In the end, I went up to her and the lad disappeared into the crowd. She told me he had touched her bum and asked her where she was from. I suppose I had

had too much to drink for I took Helen by the wrist and led her back to my rented flat. Once there we argued and she stalked off to the bathroom. I followed her, caught her by the arm, pushed her over the sink and gave her rump a few healthy smacks. I then went to bed. Helen emerged about half an hour later in her peach coloured negligee, rubbing her buttocks,

“That hurt,” she said. Even so, we still made love.

I went back to the south for Christmas, after which, Helen, my brother, my friend, Dave and his girlfriend, Louise, and I visited some student friends of mine in North London. Two of them, Gunn and another lad, had just come back from India and were keen to relate tales about what to expect there. We had booked the ‘Global Trip’ by this time and were due to depart in March. Helen spent the whole evening sitting on my knee, not saying a word. I could tell she was in a bad mood. When the dope circulated her mood worsened.

Later, we went upstairs to a messy, single bed. At 4am I heard a noise and awoke to find Helen dressed in her jeans and jumper, packing her bag.

“What the hell are you doing?” I asked.

“I’m not staying here, it’s too dirty, I can’t sleep – I’m going to find a hotel.”

I couldn’t believe it. This was the early hours of the morning in Edmonton, North London, one of the most violent and dangerous places in Europe.

I jumped out of bed and grabbed hold of Helen before she could get out of the door.

“Get back into bed before I spank you,” I said. She did as she was told and once back in bed I was aroused so I made love to her. I just loved playing the role of the masterful male. It was such an antidote to the ‘dressing’ and the ultra-feminine clothes I liked to wear. The macho posturing was a way for me to compensate for my feminine side. Helen often said she liked macho men: policeman, soldiers and firemen. She had actually dated a soldier briefly before we had met. I suppose, after my years of loneliness at Polytechnic, I wasn’t prepared to give her up because I appeared too soft. I can still recall a girl I fancied telling me that I was ‘too nice a guy to date.’ One of Helen’s biggest, unintentional compliments to me came one night after we had watched something on television.

“I can’t imagine you being gay; you’re just not a feminine guy at all,” she said.

Look in my wardrobe, love, I thought. I’ve always been good at hiding my double life and presenting as a ‘normal’ good-humoured, heterosexual male free from hang-ups and problems. Still, I take you back to my fantasy – me, a single guy living in a flat, scoring with lots of different girls and going out dressed. It nearly happened in Stockton, for in truth I chatted up quite a few girls in the Northeast but never quite cracked it.

Despite my threats, Helen’s moodiness continued unabated. She was finding ways of getting back at me for leaving her to go around the world with my brother. In retrospect I can see how selfish I was but back then I saw nothing wrong with it. I expected Helen to wait for me and then expected that we would settle down together. That was if I could ever find a way to tell her about my dressing. Anyway, she became more and more flirtatious and, that New Year’s Eve, when we were down Dave’s local pub in the Southeast celebrating the mid-night chimes, Helen again showed me she couldn’t be trusted. At the

end of the night, when everyone was filing out of the pub, a tall, bearded New Zealander who worked behind the bar came up to me.

“Hey, mate, don’t keep her all to yourself,” he said.

He then promptly grabbed hold of Helen, wrapped his arms around her waist and gave her a long passionate snog, at one point even lifting her off the floor – Helen didn’t seem to put up much resistance, in fact she responded in kind.

Things were becoming very uneasy between us. Two weeks before my brother and I left for Egypt, Helen and I were at my brother’s rented house in Leicester. Helen and I had gone out for a meal whilst my brother had gone to a club with some friends. We came back early in the hope of having sex in the back room which was where Rob had said we could stay. Once again Helen had worn her tan leather suit and I had worn my leather trousers and boots. Neither of us had been drinking and the night went pretty well until we got back to my brother’s rented house and went up stairs to bed,

“I’m going to sleep with other men whilst you’re going around the world,” Helen suddenly announced when we were alone in the bedroom.

I slapped her face. Helen was stunned, I said I was sorry and tried to make up to her.

The next morning she said. “I shouldn’t have said that last night. I thought you were going to make love to me after you slapped me.”

My brother and I travelled for six months, taking in Egypt, India, Nepal, Hong Kong, China, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Australia and America. In India Rob and I got conned into buying some carpets and gems which added a few thousand pounds onto our credit cards and in Indonesia I nearly drowned on Kuta beach in Bali after being sucked out to sea by a strong undertow. I really thought my number was up. Some Australian surfers glibly told me to swim along the coast and back in to avoid the undertow – this as I bobbed up amongst them whilst drowning. I swam on but I was getting pulled further and further out and gulping down salty seawater. It’s a strange experience to look at a beach and know you’ve not got the strength or the stamina to make it back, that, in fact you’re going to die. The intelligent part of the brain can assess the information before you logically: too far out, tired, waves too large; whilst at the same time the survival instinct says: *Panic!*

I splashed away aimlessly until my Guardian Angel arrived in the form of an Indonesian surfer who saw my plight and swam towards me with his surfboard. He told me to grab hold of the end and swam me back to the shore. I went to thank him for saving my life but, instead, spewed up several gallons of Pacific seawater. Later Rob and I read the Lonely Planet guide and realised that we’d been sunbathing on the wrong part of the beach and that every year a few people are drowned on the area of the beach we were on. If it hadn’t have been for my Indonesian friend I would have been one of them.

Other than those two incidents it was a successful trip. The two ‘transvestite’ highlights occurred in India and Thailand.

In Bangkok I persuaded my brother to see a transvestite show (Holiday Fantasy). Now there were lads who really could pass in public! And in Bombay, India, we saw transvestite prostitutes in saris on Falkland Street. Also, in Bombay, a teenage lad came up to me

whilst I was leaning against some iron railings, staring out to sea. The lad started feeling the hairs on my arms as if he were grooming a monkey. Of course, the hair had grown back by then and was crying out for a dose of Immac.

“You shave your arms,” the lad said.

It was a remarkably perceptive comment and I still wonder how he knew. At the time I was just pleased my brother didn't hear.

Helen wrote to say that she had finished with me but six months later, when I arrived back in the UK, I took her to Tenerife for two weeks and we got back together. She'd been as good as her word though, and had been unfaithful to me with two men whilst I had been away: a policeman and her best friend's separated brother who was some years older than her and a bit of a womaniser. I never knew the true tale about what had happened with the latter but the story Helen told me went like this. Helen's best friend, Rebecca, had moved to Bournemouth with her elderly parents who ran a care home. Helen and I had visited Rebecca there once before; anyway, whilst I was away, Helen had visited Rebecca again and Rebecca's half-brother, Mark, who Helen had never met before, happened to be visiting. Apparently, Mark lived in Bournemouth and offered to take the two young ladies out to a nightclub. He was in his thirties and a builder who lived in a large Victorian terrace which he was renovating, whilst his estranged wife lived on the third floor. Rather than disturb the residents in the care home, he offered Rebecca and Helen a room in his house for the night. Helen confessed to me that she had had a slow dance and a lingering kiss with Mark down the nightclub and that when the three of them came back to his house they had sat downstairs drinking and talking into the early hours. Mark's estranged wife had knocked on the ceiling because they were making so much noise. Helen also told me that the next morning the estranged wife and Rebecca ignored her and gave her dirty looks – I assumed from this that Helen had been unfaithful. The policeman Helen was less coy about; as far as she was concerned, at that stage we had split up and he was her boyfriend.

I moved back to Slough when we returned from Tenerife and tried to patch things up but it didn't work out. Helen thought I was applying too much pressure to her and wanted some time on her own. Finally, when my temporary job in Slough finished, I went to live with my parents. I still saw Helen at weekends and at least once in the week but things had changed. Even so, she still maintained an element of her submissiveness. That November, I went around to her parent's house to take her back to Croydon for a friend's firework party. Helen, as was usual, wasn't ready.

I went upstairs to use the toilet and saw Helen in her bedroom; she came out, wearing jeans and a thick jumper.

“James,” she said, “what do you want me to wear tonight, training shoes or boots?”

That was the Helen of old and I loved it.

“Boots,” I said decisively, “wear your boots.”

Seconds later I heard the zips of her high-heeled boots being drawn up the side of her legs.

On another occasion we were staying at my parents' house. I think it was my dad's retirement meal. Anyway, Helen slept in my bed, my sister in my brother's bed (He was still in the States), me in my sister's room and my sister's boyfriend downstairs. On the Sunday morning I was laying in bed waiting for my sister's boyfriend to finish in the shower. I knew everyone else was up, apart from Helen who was not good in the mornings. On a whim I decided to wake up Helen and pulled on my boxers and padded across the landing into my old bedroom. My bed was closest to the door, the curtains were drawn, I crept in. Helen was sound asleep. I slipped off my boxers and gently lifted the covers. In a moment I was in bed and on top of her. Naturally, she started to stir. I lifted her nightdress and slipped my erect penis into her.

"Wh...wh...what's going on?" she pleaded. "Get off me!"

It was too late. I had my wicked way with her before she was properly awake.

Later, she came down to breakfast, her hair wet from her shower, wearing tight jeans; she ignored me and just spoke to the rest of my family. As I took her home she accused me of "helping myself" and said she was annoyed as she hadn't wanted me to make love to her, and what if my mum or dad had come in?

That Christmas I was working, again temporarily, as an accounts controller for a mobile phone company. Helen had a new job too – as a PA in a large corporation. Her manager really liked her and one day gave her a company coat. It was a large, men's vinyl jacket with the company logo on it. Helen loved wearing it to work (I suspect because it hid her mini-skirts from her mum!) – she also enjoyed wearing a black bomber jacket of mine which I had left at her house one time. We were in London, Christmas shopping and had stopped for a coffee. I mentioned her liking for these two men's coats and also the fact she was dressed in jeans that day.

"You know what, Helen," I said, biting into a Chelsea cake. "You're a transvestite."

"What's a transvestite?" she asked.

"Someone who enjoys dressing in the clothes of the opposite sex."

She sat silently for a minute. "You don't really think that, do you?"

I laughed. "No, Helen, I don't."

A couple of weeks later it was her company's Christmas party and she asked me to collect her from work so we could both go back to her colleague's house to change. The colleague had kindly agreed to let us stay the night there.

Typically, on a Friday night, the M25 was grid locked and I arrived late at the company's Slough premises. Helen had left and gone back to her colleague's house. The security guard gave me directions to the venue for the Christmas party and said it was best if I made my way straight there and meet up with Helen later. This was before the age of the mobile phone and there was no way of contacting Helen, as I had no address or phone number for her friend. .

I got to the restaurant, changed in the toilet and went to join the other guests who were filing in. I found our table, sat down and waited; and waited.