



Reluctant Press presents:

MY LIFE, Part III

Wedding Bells

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALEXANDERSSON

A 'HER TV' E-BOOK

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Reluctant Press TG Publishers

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My Life: Wedding Bells

**Part three of the DRESS CIRCLE trilogy
By Charlotte Mayo**

CHAPTER ONE

1996 was a strange year as I drifted in and out of the TV scene, depending on whether or not my brother was around. By March he'd flown off to California to be with his girlfriend and as soon as his back was turned I was up the stepladder collecting my suitcases and boxes from the loft and unpacking my creased garments. I contacted Mary about my wigs as they were now in an awful state, having been screwed up in a case for months on end. Mary had set up a small business retailing wigs to TVs and also re-styling them. I dropped my two wigs around to Mary but she felt that they were beyond repair so I agreed to return, dressed, and try on some different styles. That way I could see exactly what was really 'me', or Caroline to be more precise. On the day before the appointed time with the wig specialist I went on a shopping spree in Hanley. Amongst my purchases were tights (Superdrug), false nails and varnish (Boots), slip, bra and panties (Littlewoods) and, pure luxury, a pair of earrings for my newly pierced ears, for when I had returned to Stoke from South America I had taken the bold step of having both ears pierced and was now reaping the benefits in terms of being able to buy any ear-rings I wanted and not just clip-ons. They felt a lot better and they didn't come off when I moved my head.

After my shopping spree I returned home and shaved the whole of my body for the first time in over a year. It took three tubes of hair remover, two razor blade heads and one

and half hours. And then I needed to go back over every part of my body with an electric shaver.

Having applied baby lotion to my skin, I dressed in silky panties and pulled a pair of ten-denier black tights onto my legs, over which I fastened my waist clincher. Then, I attached my matching bra, popped my false breast forms inside the bra cups (having rubbed them between my hands to warm them) and put on my peach-coloured silk slip. Wrapping my cream coloured negligee around me, I sat down at my mirror and started applying make-up. When I was satisfied with my 'look', I buttoned up a new rose-petal pink silk blouse and the black leather pencil skirt that had been made for me in Bolivia. I tried on both my blonde wig and my brunette one before finally settling for the black wig I usually wore. I slipped my stockinged feet into black court shoes and picked up my handbag. By 7pm I was ready. I had run the bath to shave at 3pm! Do girls really take this long in the bathroom?

I checked the windows to see who was outside and then I left the house. Driving over to Stella and Mary's felt wonderful; slipping the car into gear and feeling my feet on the pedals, pulling up at traffic lights and the neighbouring car driver thinking I was female, boy; it was good to be dressed again. Or should that be 'girl', it was good to be dressed again?' When I arrived, Stella was dressed, too. He was seated at his computer typing out invites to the latest TV bash at Blackpool.

After some friendly banter, it was straight down to business. Mary gave me invaluable advice on what style and colour of wig I required and, with her careful guidance; I selected and ordered a reddish, brown bob. My hairpiece sorted, we started talking about my clothes,

"You'd look better in brown or tan colours as you've got reddish colouring," Mary said. To prove the point she let me try on a brown leather skirt of hers and a pair of low-heeled brown shoes. There was no doubting it - I did look better.

"I think your make-up should be reddish brown," she said. She wrote down some different colours that would suit me.

Then we chatted for a while about the scene and the forthcoming trip to Blackpool. Unfortunately though, she wasn't feeling well and went to bed early,

"Oh, and you can keep the clothes," she said casually as she went upstairs to bed.

In fact, I wore the skirt a few weeks later when I ventured out to Stella and Mary's party. By this time my brown bob wig had arrived and it made a huge difference - I really looked the part.

On the day of the party, I ran a bath in the morning, added in plenty of bubble bath and then shaved my body. Later, when it was time to get ready I applied make-up and slipped into my underwear, but, because it was daytime and my neighbour was in his back garden watering his plants (the neighbour on the other side this time), I wore a loose tracksuit over the top of my blouse and put the skirt, shoes, wig and breast forms in a bag so I could carry them from the house.

I drove to an industrial estate and got changed before going on to Stella and Mary's house. This time I parked in a side street a short distance away from the house so I could

take the evening air. It was mid- April and still light – the clocks had gone forward a few weeks previously - but I was confident that I looked convincing. I put my shoes on, checked my look in the mirror, applied a little more lipstick, sucked in my lips, pouted – then I left the car. My shoes clipped uneasily on the pavement. I walked on, up the slight incline to Stella and Mary's house. As I neared the corner of the road I passed a woman and a boy. They took no notice of me at all. Then it was down the steep drive to ring the bell of the famous white front door.

The party was quiet and, as usual, most of the guests were congregated in the kitchen. There was no Sandra or Alison but some of the Birmingham people had arrived, as had Della and Claire, a leggy, attractive TV from Liverpool; most of the others I didn't recognise; I'd been away too long.

Natasha arrived later with the drag queen Angelina, who owned The Club. Natasha had some sad news for me; apparently, whilst I'd been off the scene, Alison had died of a heart attack, possibly caused by the hormone pills she had been taking.

Later, we all went to the Club, at least Natasha, Madeline, Angelina and myself. I drove up on my own and parked in the car park.

The feel of cold air circulating around my legs was fantastic. I've always loved those walks to pubs, to houses, to clubs and tonight was no different. I felt very confident with my new look and felt sure I was more convincing than I had been for years. Once in the Club, I stood around the bar, chatting and drinking and making light-hearted conversation with Melvyn. I really liked the Club – the best TV venue I had been in - and the closest; whilst I had been away I had missed the personalities and the characters in the place.

That Wednesday night Natasha and I went back for more. There were a lot of students around and they kept casting furtive glances at us. It was like the early days when Wednesday night had been student night in Mates and we had received looks and comments. It was quieter at the bar, though, and I was able to have a long chat with Melvyn about my South America trip as well as the usual banter about football – not withstanding the insults we always exchanged. I reminded him of the time I had thrown an ice cube at his head to attract his attention and he had returned the favour by spraying me with lemonade from the hand-held siphon. That had been downstairs in the disco area, one night when I had too many.

Soon I was back in the swing of it again. And buying clothes too. One Friday I went to a small clothes shop near to where I lived and asked the assistant about a white blouse. The woman who served me showed me the blouse and said it cost £74 – a bit of a price for someone on the dole. I said,

"It looks a bit old fashioned!"

The woman snorted and walked off to put the blouse back on the rail. I left the premises. The shop's not there any more.

Quite often I would dress on my own in the house and on one such occasion Vicky came around to see me and knocked on the back door. My neighbour, who was out in the garden, very kindly informed her that I was in as he had seen me park my car in the garage. I heard this exchange through the open bathroom window where I was delicately trying to hold the eyeliner steady as I drew a neat line under my eye. Vicky banged on the

back door again and shouted my name. I ignored her and continued applying my eye make-up. Well, she wouldn't want to see me dressed in a peach coloured silky slip and boobs, would she? After a while she went away but such incidents bring it home to the TV what a tenuous path we all tread – how close to discovery we always are and, how bloody nosey neighbours can be.

A little later a similar incident occurred with my plumber. He had called around to service my central heating and having serviced it he went to walk into the back room to check that the radiator was warming up. Unfortunately, when my brother was away, the back room was used as my dressing room and garments and make-up were all over the bed. So I quickly said,

"I'll do that!" and walked into the room before him. He must have thought it odd, for I called out that the radiator was warming up and then didn't leave the room for ages as I packed away the things that were out just in case he did come into the room.

A few weeks later and Natasha and I were back in the Club, this time with Donna and Madeline. It was the usual good night with a return to the brisk banter and excellent repartee of Melvyn and his usual, "Look what the cat's dragged in!" greetings.

It was one of the last times I went there before my brother re-appeared from America and the TV gear was lofted once again!

By mid-June I'd completed my teaching course but still couldn't get a job. Apart from my articles for the spanking magazine, I'd got no further with writing commercially, except the odd letters to newspapers and magazines – 'fillers' as they're called in the trade. I was disappointed because after having had high hopes and dedicating a lot of time to writing I was achieving very little to justify the amount of input. I did have some surprising writing windfalls, though. Once I earnt a £100 from the Sunday Mirror for a true life confession about a girl who had slept with her best friend's boyfriend, who was a bit of a womaniser. He had then finished with his girlfriend but continued to sleep with the girl under threat of exposing her to her friend. It was a true story, but the "I" of the story was me and not the actual person. Of course, the cheque came made payable to "Caroline Marchment" and so I had to open a bank account under a female name, saying I was a writer. From 1995 onwards I managed to get a number of such snippets published though the £100 was the highest amount received. An amusing incident occurred when I wrote a letter to the Daily Express bemoaning working mothers and saying that I had a degree (true) and used to be a working mother (false) but was now at home (true) with the children (false). A few days after I had written the letter I answered the front door to find a young man standing on my doorstep with a camera wrapped around his shoulder.

"Is Mrs Marchment in?" he asked.

Fuck, thinks I, "No," I say.

"Only I'm from the *Daily Express*, she wrote a letter – we want to do a feature."

Now, I can bullshit with the best of them but this little fix called even my powers into question.

"She's taken the kids to MacDonald's." (Where else do kids go?)

"When will she be back?"