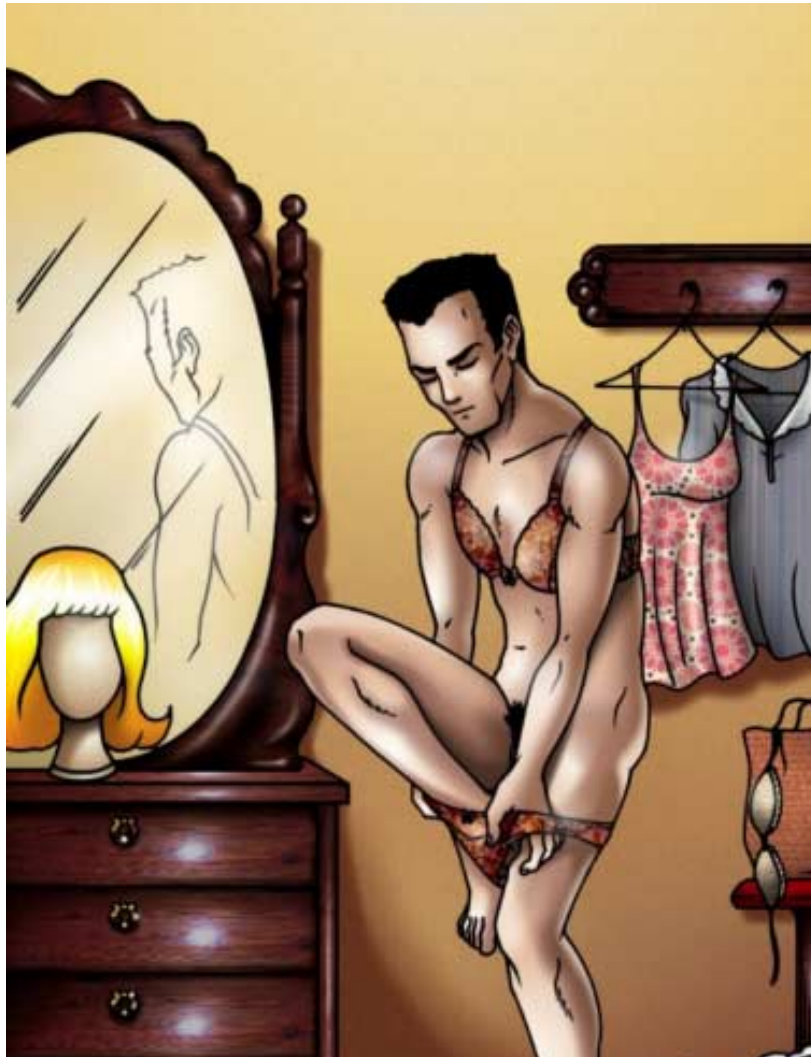




Reluctant Press presents:

Work It Out

Heather Berdrow



A 'NEW WOMAN' E-BOOK

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Reluctant Press TG Publishers

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Work It Out

By Heather Berdrow

The alarm I had set earlier was now ringing. It was time to head off to work. I've been at my current job for more than a couple of years. Being a nurse has its pluses, and its minuses. Long hours on your feet, grumpy patients, and the elitist doctors. But I still look forward to my next shift. Thank you, federal government.

I step from the shower, where I have shaved my legs and armpits. My face is already hair-free. I wrap my body in a big fluffy towel, and my head in a turban-like style. I put on powder and deodorant. Time to dress.

I slip a pair of silky white panties up my legs. Next, a white lacy bra around my chest; I can now fill the cups with my new silicone breast forms. These were expensive, but the natural look and feel was worth every penny. I roll my support hose up my naked legs, one at a time. It's a wonderful chore. I smooth out every wrinkle and seam. Now to hide my less-than-lady-like expansion. A pair of tight support briefs, 1 or 2 sizes too small should do the trick. My front is now smooth and flat.

Next comes the full slip. I place it over my head and let it fall down my body. I've already adjusted the straps, but I give it one more look. They have to lie flat, next to the bra straps. Finally, I step into my crisp white uniform dress. I pull the sleeves up my arms and arrange the hem, so it hangs just right, at my knees. I then button it up the front, somewhat hiding my pretty lingerie. A white watch at my wrist, and a pair of comfy shoes. Don't want the feet to hurt, if at all possible.

I stop at the mirror. The one by the front door. The hair is conservative; the makeup conceals my problem areas. Then I don a small silver caduceus, on a thin silver chain, falling just above my pseudo cleavage.

Today is my first day at work, dressed this way. I am in heaven. I grab my purse and sling it over my shoulder. I pick up the car keys, and head out the door. The feeling of the

cool Spring air on my shaved and stocking-covered legs just can't be compared to anything. It's just lovely.

I open the car door, toss the purse into the passenger seat, and slide into the driver's side. I smooth out my dress under me. Can't have a wrinkle the very first day. The car is started, put into gear. I am on my way.

But you know me. You know the male part of me. You have never seen, or met, the feminine side. If you see me on the street, I look like any other female nurse, headed off to work. But you ask, "How can this be? You're a guy in a dress. Isn't that a bit strange, even for you?"

How and why? Are those the questions rolling around your brain? I guess I should go back a few weeks to answer a few of your inquiries. A short while ago, I was working my usually assigned floor. I wore a pair of scrubs this day, you know, the unisex ones. Well, my boss called me to her office.

"Come in, Ken," she says. "And please close the door." I begin to wonder what's going on.

Did a patient or doctor complain? Did I pass the wrong drug, that other crazy day? What in the world is this about?

Margaret, the nurse manager for my unit, says to me, "You have worked here for several years now. Is that correct?"

I tell her yes. I can feel the sweat begin to roll down my back. I see my personnel folder open on her desk. My temperature is starting to rise. My blood pressure is also affected.

"I was going over your file here, and it tells me that you are an excellent nurse and employee. Very few complaints, and quite a few positive inputs from your co-workers," she tells me, with a smile on her face.

"I also know that you have shared a little of your personal life with most of your friends here."

Now the sweat is really starting to increase. On my forehead, my upper lip, and down my spine.

"So that's it. She knows that I am a cross dresser on my time off." I had hoped that just my friends knew about it. I never thought that it would affect my work.

"If you don't mind, I have Carol covering for your patients, so that you and I could have a meeting with Human Resources and the CEO," Margaret tells me.

My cheeks flush, but I think that all the blood in my body is heading for my feet. They feel very heavy about now. Both of them.

"I can explain, Margaret," I spit out, as we leave the safety of my unit.

Silently, we take the employee elevator to the business office area of the hospital. We enter H.R., and Margaret tells the clerk that she and Ken are here for a meeting. The desk clerk calls the head of H.R. and the secretary of the CEO, to tell them that the meeting will start when they all arrive.

Mrs. Grant, who runs H.R., comes out of her office, towards Margaret and I. She extends her hand, and grasps Margaret's. She then offers her hand to me.

"Hi, Ken. Thank you for coming. This way, please."

For whatever reason, no words can leave my mouth. It is as dry as the desert floor. My mind is screaming, but I am silent.

I follow the women into a conference room. They both sit and ask me to sit with them. My legs feel like Jell-O. I plop into a big, leather chair, and fear what is coming next. I don't see a hangman's noose, nor a guillotine, and no firing squad. But doom hangs over my head like a storm cloud. The far door opens. Mr. Roberts, the hospital CEO, strolls in, and takes a seat across the conference table. Now things are really getting scary. I know I can work anywhere, but if my license is revoked, no work anywhere. My wife and I just bought a new home. I *have* to work.

Mr. Roberts smiles at me, and then offers me his hand.

"Ken, is it? I've heard many good things about you. Would you like a cup of coffee or tea?" he offers.

I tell him that tea would be fine. My mouth and throat are so dry. He calls the H.R. clerk, and asks her for the coffee cart to be brought in. While we wait for the cart, they ask me a few general questions. Just taking up time, till the cart comes, and we can have a little uninterrupted time together. They ask about my job, my profession, and my private life. The beads of sweat that formed on my forehead are as large as buckets. At this point, I think that I am going to pass out.

The cart arrives, and we all get something to drink. I can barely keep the cup from rattling on the saucer, and spill its contents everywhere. Mr. Roberts looks right at me.

"You know, Ken, there are many new rules and laws that have just become effective. We, as a corporation, have to follow those rules to the letter, or we are out of business."

I tell him that I have heard about a few of them, but that I don't know them all. Here it comes. I have broken one of those new laws, and I am going to be hauled off, in handcuffs, any minute.

Mrs. Grant continues. "One of those new rules governs just how minorities of all types are treated, or promoted, within an organization." I have to breathe. I am holding my breath I discover.

"And one of those groups," she continues, "is transgendered individuals. We have all the bases covered, but this one." At this point, Mr. Roberts spoke up.

"This is where you can be of great help to our company. We know that you are a cross dresser, and have shared that info with some of your fellow employees."

I swallow hard. I can't blink. I am leaving my fingerprints, forever in the arm of the chair.

"What we are proposing, is that you fill can fill that void. We would like you to wear dresses and skirts to work. Go all the way. We want you to feel free enough that you can express your feminine side, in full public view. What do you think?" Mr. Roberts asks me. There are 6 eyes glued to me. Waiting. Hoping.

I take a sip of tea, to loosen my dry throat. "It sounds okay to me, but I would like to discuss this with my wife, before I make any commitment."

Mrs. Grant tells me, "Of course. We would expect that of you."

I then ask, "When do you need to know my decision?"

Mr. Roberts thinks for just a moment. "Today is Monday. How about by the end of the week, Friday. Is that enough time for you?" I tell him that is plenty. They are all smiles.

Margaret says, "I knew we could count on you. Do you have any questions that we can answer for you?"

I tell her that there are a million and one. But I would like to collect my thoughts, and get input from my wife.

Mrs. Grant then says, "Fair enough. When you are ready, we will be too."

The meeting ends. Mr. Roberts heads back to administration, Mrs. Grant to H.R., and Margaret and I back to our unit. On the way back, Margaret thanks me for listening, and considering their proposal.

"No prob, Margaret," I say. But we both know that the rest of the shift will be tough. I call my wife at a break, and fill her in on the meeting. She tells me that we can discuss it at dinner. I had a hard time concentrating that day, and on the ride home.

I park the car in our garage, then close the door. As I step through the utility room door, I can smell my favorite meal being prepared. Caroline, my wife, is busy in the kitchen. She hears me come in and meets me halfway. She puts her arms around my neck, and looks deeply into my eyes. I can feel her body heat, through our clothes. Talk about distraction.

"I think we both need a glass of wine, mind pouring?" she asks. After a quick hug and kiss, I head for the wine rack.

I pour two glasses and head for the dining room table. The meal is ready, and Caroline dishes it up, as I sit down.

"So, start from the beginning. Tell me everything that was said," she says. I spill all that I can remember. Not only what was said, but how I felt. The wine is working its magic. We both are becoming much more relaxed.

As Caroline is eating, I can see her stare at me, measuring me. Funny, that's what Margaret and Mrs. Grant had done earlier. I think, "Is it a girl thing?" We finish dinner in relative silence. We clear the dishes, clean up the kitchen, then head for the living room. We put on some soft background music, as we have much to discuss. No TV tonight.

"Well, what do you think?" I ask Caroline. She continues to study me.

"I know that you aren't 100% comfortable sharing Patty with the world," is Caroline's response. Patty is my femme name, when I dress. "But you know, if you dress more regularly, you would get more accustomed, and then you would project a more confident person to the world." Even though I shake my head, I know that she is right.

"We both know you'll never be a drop dead gorgeous woman, but you can be quite cute, when you really work at it. Part of a woman's allure is how she presents herself to those around her."

I can always count on Caroline's honesty and directness. She was making a lot of sense.

"Do you really think that I can pull this off?" I ask.

"Sure. But you'll need lots of practice beforehand. Not just the dressing but the makeup and the mannerisms. You'll have to perfect walking, standing, sitting, and driving dressed like a woman. There is a whole different world out there, Ken. More than just panties and skirts." I was learning a lot, just discussing it. "If you want to do this, we need to start tomorrow. You're off the next couple of days, then the weekend. Total immersion, that's what we need to do."

I think about it for a few minutes. I feel like I am being challenged by my wife. "Okay. If you teach, I'll listen and learn." She smiled an evil grin, then she kissed me.

"We are going to have such a blast," she cooed to me.

We took the rest of the evening to make plans, set schedules, and come up with questions for my bosses. I have never seen Caroline so focused before. I know she puts her all into everything she does, but this went way beyond that. We even went through some of Patty's stuff, to get an idea of what we had to work with. While we did this, my feet were cooling down.

The following morning, I called work, and talked to Margaret. "I am sure this is going to be difficult, but I like it here, and I want to work here for a long time to come. So if I can help the company, I am your girl," I declared. Margaret was just thrilled at the news that I had accepted

I told her, "At least a couple of weeks." Margaret then said that she would notify Mrs. Grant, and Mr. Roberts of my decision. She must have said thank you a hundred times, in that short 10-minute conversation.

Not long after my conversation with Margaret, Mrs. Grant called. She, too, thanked me for my contribution to the company. She asked if I and my wife could come in that afternoon, to work out a few small details. I checked with Caroline, then told Mrs. Grant that we would be there at 3 PM sharp.

I told Caroline what Margaret and Mrs. Grant had told me. She just smiled, then she picked up the phone, and called her work. She took the next several days off, as personal time. After hanging up, she looked at me. "We now have the most of today to begin your transformation." She marched me into the bathroom, and had me shave and use a depilatory lotion, as to be totally hairless. And so it began.

While I was in the bathroom, Caroline went into the spare room. This had become Patty's hideaway. All her clothes, make-up, and jewelry were there, as was the vanity, where I had placed my makeup. I wasn't great at it, but I could do pretty well. Caroline had other plans. By the end of two weeks, not only would I become proficient, but a master at makeup and fashion. Just like any other woman my age would be. I went into Patty's

room with just a towel around my waist and sat on the bed, watching what my wife was doing. She was looking at all the clothes I had collected over the last several years.

She began by boxing up the micro-minis I loved to wear. The sky high heels were next, as well as the short shorts, and the belly-baring midriff tops.

She said to me, "No woman in her right mind would wear this stuff, unless she was a hooker or a slut. And I didn't marry either one of those." She then told me that I would have to change my femme style, to something a lot more realistic. "You aren't going to be someone else's wet dream." Caroline really laid down the law.

She then started to compile a list of things I would require, for a long term change. Sensible lingerie, skirts with an appropriate length, and more age-appropriate tops and jewelry. Caroline inventoried the makeup she found on my vanity, as well as the shoes that she had discovered in the bottom of the closet.

"Not a single pair of non-hussy shoes," she grumped with a deep scowl. "We have lots of shopping to do in order for you to be ready," Caroline said to me. "We have a little to start out with, but that is *only* a start." With that, she handed me a pair of lacy panties. "Put these on, then we'll see what other treasures we can find."

When all was said and done, I wore the lacy panties, pantyhose, and a silky camisole. Caroline then had me put on a pair of jeans and a big shirt. Our meeting with Administration was just an hour away. After that, we had a date with the mall. This would take some getting-used-to. I usually just wore these things for a brief few hours, not all day as was planned.

Caroline and I sat down with Mrs. Grant, in the H.R. conference room. After the usual pleasantries, Mrs. Grant began. "I have several documents here for you." She then opened a file, and started to show us what they contained.

"First, I have a copy of the Federal law that has brought us here. Next, we have a list of things that are expected of you. The first thing on that list is you must dress professionally at all times. If you work your usual unit, a uniform dress will be worn. If working in Nursing Administration, business wear will be the order of the day. Next, you will make yourself available for any media coverage that this adventure might generate. This will include newspapers, magazines, and radio and television interviews. Additionally, this will be a 24/7 assignment. Whether at work, home, or in public, you will be a representative of this company, and we expect you to behave in this manner. Do you have any questions before we continue?" We answered no at this point.

The next document was a contract. "We have drawn up this contract, with the help and advice of our legal department. What it contains is the expected behavior, along with a new pay scale, specifically designed for this purpose. Also, as you can see, you will be granted a monthly clothing allowance."

Caroline and I scanned the documents carefully. When we saw the new pay scale and clothing allowance, we both nearly choked. I can only say it was substantial.

"And finally," Mrs. Grant continued, "is a security agreement. It will guarantee your safety during the entire term of the contract." After looking over the papers, we both signed where Mrs. Grant had highlighted. "I'll be back in just a moment," she said, after

gathering the papers. She left the conference room. We both silently held hands, and waited.

A short time later, Mrs. Grant came into the room, and gave us a large envelope. "These are your copies of everything that you signed. Please refer to them often," she said. At this point, Mr. Roberts entered the room. He too thanked us, and shook our hands. I introduced Caroline to the CEO. We then scheduled the start for 2 weeks away, on a Monday morning. Mr. Roberts conferred with Mrs. Grant.

"We both agree that this is very important to us. We would like you to take the next two weeks off, with full pay, and really prepare for this role."

Before the meeting ended, Caroline said, "I think we should have a new ID and name badge that reflect Ken's new position. And I think we should also have Ken's feminine name on the badge as well." Both Mr. Roberts and Mrs. Grant agreed, saying that they had not thought of that and thanked her for the suggestion. With the meeting over, Caroline and I left Administration, and headed to the mall.

Once we were in the car, we talked non-stop. The conversation didn't end until we reached the mall parking lot, and we entered the mall itself. Suddenly, I started to get cold feet. I began to fear what lay ahead.

"Don't be such a wuss, ken," Caroline chided. "With my help, and the practice we are going to do, Patty is going to do fine. You're a very good nurse, and changing genders is not going to affect that." I half-heartedly agreed. Then we headed for the start of a new life.

After a quick bite at the food court, Caroline brought out the shopping list and made a game plan. We had a few hours before the mall closes.

"That should be enough time to get this all done," she said to me.

She knew this mall well, and she knew exactly where we needed to go. Our first stop was a lingerie shop. There, Caroline showed me what was needed. She had me pick out 6 pair of silky panties, in various colors, a package of white cotton panties that I would need for work. Then we headed for the bra section. She had me select a couple of work bras, and a couple for public outings. We gathered slips, half-slips, and camisoles. Then she showed me the support garments that she planned on using. Briefs and panty girdles were on her mind. I protested wearing those, with the argument that I didn't need them, as my weight was appropriate for my height. Caroline then reminded me of my not-so-lady-like parts. I blushed slightly, and then agreed with her choices.

We stopped at the outlet store. After checking her list again, we headed for the Young Miss section. There, we picked up several dresses and a few skirts with hems that landed just about my knee. Not too long, yet not too short. We also picked up some blouses that matched the skirts we had chosen. As we headed for the register, I asked Caroline if we needed some nice pants, or a couple of pairs of jeans.

"For now, until you become much better at this, I think you should stick to dresses and skirts."

I was beginning to tire, so I didn't put up to much of an argument. Caroline had yet to catch a second wind. She was a pro at marathon shopping; I would soon come to understand.

We then headed to the department store makeup counter. There we picked up most of the supplies that I would need to get started in the proper direction. We also made stops at the shoe store and the uniform shop. We must have made a dozen trips to the car to stash our purchases in the trunk. It was packed to the hilt. After the several hours that she had guessed this would take, Caroline declared us done. For now at least. I complained about how much my feet hurt. She just smiled, as she reminded me of the heels that I was going to wear, as well as the other styles we had bought that I would have to get used to.

Once we were home, and the car was unpacked, we called out for a pizza. No cooking tonight. When I saw everything that we had bought, I cringed. At first, I thought that I had died and gone to Crossdresser Heaven, having spent so much on female clothing, with my wife's help. But the reality of the future reared its head directly in front of me. After the pizza, we hung up what would wrinkle, then headed for bed. I was asleep in minutes, as was Caroline.

We were up early the next morning. I was scheduled for my last day before the vacation. After my shower, I began to dress for work. I usually wore scrub tops, bottoms, and athletic shoes, to the unit. I came out of the bathroom, and noticed what Caroline was up to. I had hoped that I hadn't woke her up, as she could be a real grump in the early morning.

I went to the closet, pulled out a clean pair of scrubs, and lay them on the bed. I went to the dresser for a pair of briefs, the 'Tighty whitey' ones. When I opened the drawer, I found that all my usual undies had been replaced with the panties we had bought the night before. Just then, Caroline walked into the room, and saw the look on my face.

"I thought that you should start wearing feminine under things as soon as possible. Just to get used to wearing them all day long, every day." I shook my head, grabbed a pair, and slid a pair of silky, lime green panties up my smooth legs. That felt great. I always love that feeling after I first shave my legs. I started to pull the bottoms on, when Caroline cleared her throat, as she looked in my direction. I looked at her and said, "What?"

"Pantyhose and support brief, my dear, sweet Patty," she teased. When I reminded her that Patty wouldn't be here for another couple of weeks, she told me, "Not in my book, girly-boy. I took the next couple of weeks off, just to help you. So we are starting this morning on Patty." I nodded my head in defeat, and complied with Caroline's wishes. I finished dressing, grabbed a cup of coffee, and headed off to work.

All day at work, I could feel the pull of my pantyhose and the restriction of the control brief. I looked to see if anyone noticed that I was wearing feminine lingerie. But no one seemed to notice. A couple of trips to the restroom, having to pull my pantyhose back into place, showed me Caroline was wise in her suggestions.

I was very glad that we lived so close to work. I was very tired, as we had had a super busy day on the unit. The place was really hopping. I was so looking forward to my sweats and T-shirt. But it was not to be. As soon as I got home, I kissed Caroline hello and

headed for the bedroom to change. Caroline timed it just right. I had time to remove my shoes, scrubs, and pantyhose. I started to lower my panties, but she stopped me there.

"I just want my sweats right now, honey. It was a hell of a day," I shared with her. She shook her head.

"You're off now, for the next couple of weeks. Now you belong to me, Patty, and we start right now," she said with a high level of confidence.

"Just one evening, please," I pleaded.

"Not tonight, there is too much to do, and just so little time to get it done," she replied.

Caroline directed me into the bathroom. After a nice long, hot bath, I did feel better. I entered the bedroom. Caroline was sitting on the bed. She handed me a bra and panty set, and told me to put them on. So I did.

"I bought you a little present today," she mewed. I was handed a box to open. Inside I found a pair of silicone breast forms. The box read "C cup."

"Slip them into your bra, see how they feel," she said.

Once I had done that, I could feel the initial coolness, but soon, I only felt the weight they put on my bra straps. I also felt the movement. They seemed to jiggle a bit, very

"Now, that's better. Let's have dinner."

I put on a pair of heeled slippers and followed her into the kitchen. As I was chopping the lettuce for a salad, Caroline was behind me.

"You could use a little less weight. I think we'll be having more salads, less junk food."

And here I was, thinking I was in pretty good shape. I was glad Caroline couldn't see my face and the pained look I was wearing. I was very quiet during the meal. Caroline did most of the talking

After dinner, we both cleaned the kitchen, and retired to the living room. I made the mistake of plopping down on the sofa.

"I see that we are going to have a lot of problems, Patty," she said, as she looked down on me. "Women don't sit like that. You're going to need lots of help."

She was right, again. I had years of male bad habits to overcome. Caroline showed me how to smooth whatever I was wearing under me, hold my knees together, and gently place my behind on the sofa. She had me do it that way, several times, until I got it right.

"There is *so* much to learn," Caroline stated. As a young girl, she had been instructed in the same manner. She had many years to perfect it. I had but a couple of weeks.

Caroline left the living room, but soon returned with her manicure set. "One of the things that we can do to relax is do each other's nails. That can be so much fun, girl talk and all," she said to me. She had me watch her carefully; I would do her nails when she was done. I was amazed at the speed and accuracy with which she painted each nail. When she had finished, I now had a deep red coat on every nail. She perused her color selection, and chose a burgundy color for herself. She handed me the bottle.

"Your turn," she said with a bright smile. I was very slow, and methodical. I wanted hers to look as good as mine did. I was close to finishing, when I messed up on several

nails I had just done. She showed me how to remove the polish, and made me start once again. I did a much better job, but no faster than before. "That will come with practice, my dear," Caroline quipped.

Once our nails had dried, we decided it was bed time. My usual pattern was a little make-out time, some lovemaking, strip to my briefs, and fall asleep. This, too, would change. We did do a little kissing, but when I tried to take it further, Caroline stopped me. She did get somewhat hot, touching me through the nightie. A quick peck and she turned over, and was fast asleep, however. It took me sometime to get "there," wearing so much, but it came eventually.

It is now Saturday morning. I open my eyes and our room is very bright. As I try to stretch the sleep from my body, my nightie is a stark reminder of where I am. I look over and Caroline is already up. I sit up; smooth my short gown, put on a robe, then the slippers. I pad my way into the kitchen where Caroline is sitting, with a cup of hot coffee. I could tell she had something on her mind. She had that far-away look in her eyes.

I pour myself a cup, bend over and gently kiss her on the cheek. I properly smooth my robe under me, as I sit down on a kitchen chair. I guess my kiss brought her back to earth. She watched as I sat next to her.

"That was very nice. You really learn quickly. I can only hope that it will become a habit for you," she said.

"So do I, and soon," I replied. "You have a glazed look this morning, is there something wrong?" I ask.

She takes a deep sigh, then looks at me. After a sip of the Java, she says, "I think I may owe you an apology."

I look at her, "Why do you say that?"

"I have been up for hours, just thinking, and replaying the last several days in my mind." Caroline is quiet for a moment, to collect a thought. "I guess it comes down to power, Ken."

I was shocked that she would use my male name, not Patty.

"We have been together for a long time now, and have always shared everything. You even cook and clean something that most husbands refuse to do. And I love you for that. But after you told me about the offer from work, my mind has been in overdrive."

I remain quiet, allowing her to finish her thoughts.

"It's like I had all the power in our relationship, and I guess I let it go to my head. I have been very demanding and at times, somewhat cruel. We are both better than that. Please forgive me." I saw a tear fall down her cheek, as she looked down into her coffee.

"As far as I am concerned, there is nothing to forgive, sweetheart. I need your help now, more than ever. I think that if you have to drill something into my head, you have a good reason to. We love each other, and I don't think we could ever intentionally hurt each other. I know that."

I take her manicured hand into mine. "This is going to be quite an adventure, and I don't know anyone else that I would rather share it with, than you. You have the experi-

ence to save me from what could be a fatal error. Let's make a pact, right here and now. You teach, and I'll learn. No games."

We hugged each other for the longest time. I could tell she was sobbing. "Thank you for being so understanding. You really are my honey." We shared a long romantic kiss.

So from morning to late at night, Caroline imparted her womanly secrets to Patty. "Ken is away right now, please leave a message." As the days passed, I could feel the self-confidence build. Caroline and Patty even went out to dinner the following week. That was quite a test of all that I had been shown. Caroline complimented me on my make-up, dress, and mannerisms.

"I think you're ready. How do you feel?" she asked me.

"I guess I am about as ready as I'll ever be. Thank you for everything that you have given to me," was my response.

Patty's clothes were moved into our room and Ken's went to the spare room. Those first weeks, I never wore anything male. I had always been a sucker for silks and satins. So naturally that's what I wore most of the time. I even delegated my cotton panties to the back of the drawer, just in case. After our talk, we seem to have gotten closer than ever. She had a renewed sense of purpose, but with love and praise. She left the rod in the closet.

Nights were the best, though. Before the offer, Caroline and Patty had rare times of intimacy. Now, we loved to kiss, touch and caress each other, while in silkies. I vowed I'd never sleep in male briefs again. I always had a baby doll and panties with me. I came to appreciate just how much Caroline did for our little family. Cooking, Cleaning, and shopping. All while still working full-time.

So here we were. Back at the beginning. That's why I was up early today. I knew that it will take me longer to get ready for work. What with dressing, make-up and hair, I could spend hours. But I didn't have that long.

I pull into the parking lot and collect my purse and keys. One more check in the mirror. God, I hope I'm ready for this. I lock and alarm the car, and head for H.R. Mrs. Grant is there, waiting for me. She looks right past me, then at her watch. I know she is waiting to see someone familiar, not the woman that is approaching her. I extend my hand to Mrs. Grant, and introduce myself. "Hi, Mrs. Grant, I am Patty. I think you're expecting me?" I can see the recognition in her eyes, as the smile spreads across her face.

"Oh my. This is wonderful. You and Caroline have done it. You are so pretty," she tells me. "Please, follow me."

I go into her office to take my ID photo. After she takes the picture, she laminates it and put it on a lanyard. I place it around my neck, carefully, as I am aware of the delicate necklace that Caroline got for me. Next is my name badge. I see Patty Summer, R.N. inscribed on it. She pins it onto my uniform dress, and then unexpectedly, she hugs me close, like a long lost friend. I return her embrace. That's just what women do, you know. Caroline warned me that women are much more comfortable being physical with each other. I smile, thank Mrs. Grant, and head for my unit. I can feel her eyes on my backside, so I add a little extra wiggle, just for her. When I look back, she is wearing a lovely grin.