



Reluctant Press presents:

A LEAP FOR LIFE

Norman Way



A 'NEW WOMAN' E-BOOK

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Reluctant Press TG Publishers

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A LEAP FOR LIFE

By Norman Way

It was raining again. The windshield wipers were barely keeping up with the torrent. It was coming in sheets, whipsawing across the highway from west to east. It would let up for a little while and then continue. I was almost tempted to pull over to the side of the road for a few minutes until it let up.

I drove into my parking space and shifted the car into park. The weatherman on the radio announced that it would probably be an all-day soaker. I shut off the ignition and put the keys in my purse. Slipping my purse over my right arm, I grabbed my umbrella with one hand, the door handle with the other, and stepped out of the car just as the torrent increased.

I opened my umbrella, a sudden gust of wind nearly tore the umbrella from my grasp but I managed to hang on to it. I slammed the car door shut and walked quickly to the front door of the office building. Once inside, I shook the water off the umbrella and collapsed it as I went upstairs to my second floor office. My receptionist Cheryl was already there, reading a magazine. She smiled as I walked up to her.

"Good morning, doctor," she said. "Nice weather if you're a duck!"

"Good morning, Cheryl, it certainly is," I answered as I walked to my inner office and closed the door.

I opened the umbrella again and set it on the floor to dry. After hanging up my raincoat and hat in the closet, I sat down behind my desk. Cheryl had put the mail on the top of my desk. I sorted through it and tossed the junk mail half of it in the garbage unopened. I took out the letter opener from my top drawer and slit open the remaining envelopes.

I put several invitations to charity dinners in my purse along with a short letter from my son who was serving on an aircraft carrier based in Japan. The bills I set aside. I would write the checks and mail them when I left later that day. The phone buzzed and I answered it.

"Your eight o'clock is here," said Cheryl.

"Okay, send him in," I said.

I checked my appearance in the mirror of my compact, then replaced it in my purse as the first patient of the day walked in and greeted me.

"Good morning, doctor," the large black man said as he took his seat opposite me.

"Good morning to you too, Sam," I answered.

Sam Caldwell was a former high school football star. His linebacker build made him an imposing figure. A knee injury in his senior year had ended his hope of a college scholarship and of course any possibility of a pro career. He was now confronting a much more serious challenge.

His face was expressionless as always. It was his way of hiding his feelings, not unlike many men I was treating for the same thing.

"How have you been?" I inquired.

"Not particularly good. I'm making decent grades in college but my heart isn't in it. I'm sure I will be a competent teacher some day. It's just that this thing has had me torn up since I was a kid. I can't see any end to it. I was always pushed into manly things and driven to be masculine when I wanted to do just the opposite."

"You are in your second year of college now. By the end of the year you will have to declare a major. Do you think teaching will be a proper career move for you?"

"Not really but I have to do something. I like being around people. I loved the atmosphere of high school and college. Teaching would be sort of like an all-day social environment rather than a work environment."

"I see. I hate it when I hear somebody say 'I have to do something' because it indicates no interest in any particular field and you are just doing this to get 'some job'. Teaching jobs, by the way, are not as plentiful as you might think with all the school consolidations and budget cutbacks. There are more openings in major cities than small towns or rural areas but there can be problems there too."

"You mean like high crime areas and drug or violence-related incidents?"

"Yes. You are a likable person, Sam, and I think you would find it rewarding if you became a teacher. However, you should also be aware that 'nice' people like you are the ones who burn out first. I'm not sure you have the constitution to stick it out for the long haul. Besides, as you know, the teaching profession is not very high-paying. The good news is that if you pursue the change you are seeking, there would be more acceptance of it in a larger city like LA or New York. You would be judged by your competence in the classroom and not anything else."

"That's good to hear. I haven't really made up my mind yet but I have the rest of this and next semester before making my decision. I think I'll just plod along until then."

"I think it is a good idea for you to wait too. Now then, are you still crossdressing?"

"Periodically, though it is only in my apartment and only night gowns. Because of my size, I'm limited to buying clothes from websites that cater to larger women. I doubt if I

can ever find dresses or skirts that would fit me properly. My arms and shoulders are sizable and the nightgowns are loose-fitting. I feel relaxed and very feminine when I put them on. I just wish I looked like the women who model them."

"No kidding, Sam. So do a lot of women! If you should decide to begin transitioning, what did you have in mind for a wardrobe?"

"I guess I would be relegated to pantsuits for the most part. It would be better in the long run because of my size and still be within the dress codes of the school system. Heels are out. I found a pair of high heel slippers from an internet website. They were expensive but they fit me perfectly. I enjoy wearing them around the apartment with my nightgown but as far as work is concerned, I would have to stay with flats. I am just under 6'1" tall now. With heels I would be towering over everybody. I'm afraid it would just draw more attention to me than I want. Besides, a few hours in four-inch heeled slippers around the apartment is one thing, a ten-hour day in four-inch heeled pumps is another."

"Well said, Sam. Believe me, there are many women who agree with you on that point. Unfortunately, the majority of them were not given the choices you will have. Have you experimented with makeup at all?"

"Just once. I'm a very dark skinned black man. I have thick Negroid lips. If I was light-skinned or of mixed race, I probably could look more feminine. With a couple of years of hormones and my beard removed, I would still look like a large black man in a dress wearing lipstick and eye shadow. I would probably stay away from makeup altogether, at least until I can see the results of beard removal and the hormone treatments."

"I see. You know you have very masculine facial features. There is something called 'facial feminization surgery' but in your case I don't know if it would help that much. Of course you would have to have your Adam's apple reduced but do you think you would have a feminine appearance?"

"Well, I'm not so sure. It's hard to imagine exactly what I would look like. The problem is doing it is expensive and if I don't look the way I think I should, I would be unhappy. I mean, I know I can't look the way I WANT to, but I have to have a passable appearance. It's always been an aesthetic world and I doubt if that will change by the time I'm done."

"I agree. You haven't said anything to your family. What do you think will happen when you do?"

"I have no intention of maintaining any family connection whatsoever. Whenever, if ever, I decide to transition, I will stay entirely in the closet until it is completed. Then I will leave here and make my life elsewhere as if I had no family at all."

"I see. No doubt then that your family would not accept you as a woman?"

"My father would kill me first. He would see me as a freak or a fag and would very likely deny I was of his seed. I was his first-born son. I have no siblings; while my mother might be a little sympathetic, I am quite certain my father would blame her for 'mothering' me too much and I don't want that to happen. It is better that I disappear off the face of the earth than to talk to them about this."

"Okay. I guess that is all for today, Sam. I want to see you again in a month and we will discuss the hormone therapy and transitioning in more detail. See you then."

I stood up as he did and watched him leave my office. This muscular lad had a good head on his shoulders and was certainly capable of undergoing the changes he wanted to make. His excellent health would make his post-op recovery period shorter as well.

I was concerned about his ability to adapt to the female world. Because of his size and appearance, he would most likely fail in that respect. He could wind up dead by his own hand, be forced to either return to his male environment, or resort to porn or prostitution to make his living. If he did that, AIDS would probably kill him within a year or two.

I walked over to the window and watched as he walked across the parking lot. He still had that linebacker amble. I walked outside of my office. Cheryl was on the phone. I went past her to the machine and put a teabag in a cup. I filled the cup with hot water and pushed the teabag to the bottom with the spoon. My next appointment was in about thirty minutes so I returned to my desk and picked up the morning paper.

While sipping my tea, I read the paper and tossed it in the garbage can when I finished. Cheryl buzzed me as I finished my tea. I dumped the tea bag on top of the discarded paper and answered the phone.

"Mrs. DeVille is here," said Cheryl.

"Fine. Please send her in," I answered.

I put the cup aside and watched the elderly Mrs. DeVille walk slowly towards me. She had lost her husband of 52 years nearly a year ago and was having a difficult time. Her son and daughter had convinced her to sell the house and move to a retirement apartment. She hadn't been happy there and had not made many friends. She no longer had her garden and seldom ventured out. She looked tired as she took her seat in front of me and managed a weak hello.

I spent most of her hour encouraging her to interact with the other residents. I felt that she should stay busy with arts and crafts or go on the many trips the complex offered at very low cost to the senior residents. The more involved she was with others her own age, the better off she would be.

She was more withdrawn than when she first came to see me. I knew this was typical of men and women her age and I was a bit frustrated at not being able to get her to see all the things that were available to her. I wanted her to understand that she had not moved there to die but to live. She said she would try and I let it go at that.

I had an hour before my next appointment so I decided to write out the checks for the bills. The rain had let up so I decided to mail them myself. I picked up the dry cleaning on my way back to the office. I didn't have much left to do and I was looking forward to having dinner with my husband.

The rest of the day went by quickly. Just after three, as I was putting on my coat, the phone buzzed. I wondered what that was about since I had no more appointments the rest of the day.

"There is an attorney here, a Mr. Alden Swanson. He says he needs to see you right away," she said.

"Send him in," I replied as I took off my coat.

A portly man with thinning grey hair and thick glasses walked in carrying a silver urn and a briefcase. He set the urn down on my desk. We shook hands and he sat down.

"Dr. Rebecca Wilson, I am here on behalf of the late Jean Randolph. She passed away of cancer several days ago. It was her wish to be cremated and that I bring her ashes and this package to you."

He opened his well-worn leather briefcase and handed me a box about 18" by 12" by 4". When I opened the box, I found a book inside, similar in size to the old ledger books accountants used to make financial entries in. My heart was pounding as I looked it over.

"Thank you so much. I had no idea Jean was even sick. She was a good friend of mine and my mother. Mom passed away of breast cancer last year and I never knew my father as my parents divorced when I was very young. Excuse me, this is a bit of a shock. Did you know Jean at all?"

He shook his head.

"I was just about to retire when she came to me with a request for a will. It was one of the last things I did. This was about nine months ago. My associate called me when she died as she had specified that I should be the one to deliver these things to you. Apparently she had no family and few friends. I am sorry for your loss."

"Thank you, Mr. Swanson."

He got up and left my office. I sat there for some time looking at the book and the urn. I was lost in thought and did not hear Cheryl come in.

"Excuse me, doctor, it's almost four. You have no more patients today. I finished the billing. If there is nothing else, I would like to go home."

"Of course, Cheryl, you go right ahead. I have a couple of things left to do and I will be leaving too."

She was just out the door when the tears came. I reached in my purse for a tissue and wiped them away. I blew my nose and then opened the book. As I paged through it, I realized it would take some time to read the whole thing. I didn't want to be late for dinner with my husband so I closed the book and put it back in the box.

After replacing the cover, I stepped in the restroom to touch up my makeup. I put on my coat and hat, picked up my umbrella, and walked out the door. I would come in tomorrow to read the book. Tight now I didn't want to think about her as I knew more tears would come.

The restaurant had only a few patrons when my husband and I walked in. The hostess seated us and left the menus. She returned shortly with a bottle of wine and we placed our order. As we sipped our wine, I told him about Jean's death and he nodded in sympathy.

Twice during the course of the meal, he asked me if I was OK. I said I was of course but with my parents both dead, Jean was the last person who was really close to me other than my husband. He had been adopted at an early age and both his adoptive parents were dead now too.

Despite having a loving husband, a son in the Navy and a daughter just entering medical school, I felt very alone. I had grown up alone with no siblings and because of my parents divorce, there was no father figure in my life either.

I had met Jean just about the time I started school. She was a free lance writer and a good friend of my mother's. She had always been there for birthdays, graduations, etc. I considered her to be my second mom as well as a friend.

We finished our meal and went home. That night I had some more wine as I knew I would have trouble getting to sleep. I was right. Despite the alcohol, I kept reliving some of the things the three of us did when I was growing up. Those memories were some of the best times of my childhood.

We were *almost* a family. Mom had continued to date but never did remarry. Jean was always a great sitter. We spent more time outdoors than indoors. She was an avid hiker and we spent many happy hours at the parks in the area.

I was at her small apartment only a couple of times. She loved her new computer and she let me learn many things on it. She was always encouraging me and kept telling me to look on the bright side of things, no matter what.

When high school graduation neared, she told me to take some general college courses first before deciding what to do with my life. The best advice I ever got and the advice I give my patients is to "find something you like to do" and "never, EVER, take a job for the money." Those two things had stayed with me. I closed my eyes and sleep took over.

The alarm shocked me into wakefulness. It seemed like I had just closed my eyes. I got up and shut the alarm off. I sat on the edge of the bed a minute, then remembered that I was going into the office today to read Jean's book.

I dressed in jeans, a soft flannel shirt and sneakers. I made some toast and poured myself a glass of juice. I wasn't particularly hungry. When I finished eating, I made myself a cup of tea. I went to the front door and retrieved the morning paper. I couldn't get interested in that and finished my tea. I guess my mind was on the book in my office.

I got in my car and backed it out of the garage. The sun was shining brightly already as I headed for the office. Traffic was light this Saturday morning so I made the trip in about half the time it normally took me during the week.

I parked my car in the empty lot and walked to the front door. The floor crew was just leaving as I entered the building. The freshly vacuumed carpet looked good and the building smelled clean. I went upstairs to my office and unlocked the door.

As I entered my office, the urn on my desk was the first thing I saw and I felt my pulse quicken. I had promised myself I was not going to get emotional. I put the urn on top of the filing cabinet behind me rather than have it there in front of me as I read Jean's book.

I opened the blinds to let the warm sunshine in, then sat down at my desk. I took the book out of the box and set it down in front of me. My pulse began to elevate again. I sat back and took a couple of deep breaths and tried to relax.

I wasn't sure what to expect but I wanted to read this in its entirety before going home. It would turn out to be more than I bargained for. I opened the book and began to read. The black ink was faded but still quite legible. Jean had the most beautiful handwriting.

JEANS STORY

I have always felt this way. I can't remember a time when I didn't. At a very early age, I knew something was wrong. I was different. When I would stand naked in front of a mirror, I knew that thing hanging between my legs didn't belong there. I hated it. I detested it. It wasn't supposed to be there and I wanted it removed. It felt like it was in my way when I walked, stood or sat down. It made me feel uncomfortable. It wasn't a part of me. It belonged to someone else. I prayed to God to fix my body so I could be normal.

Of course my prayers went unanswered. I was mad at God for what he had done to me. What did I do to deserve this? How many others were there like me? Was I the only one who had been cursed like this?

My father gave me a ball and bat. I didn't want to play ball. I wanted a Barbie doll like my sister had. I wanted to dress her up and fix her hair. More importantly, I wanted to dress up and fix *my* hair.

I watched my mother put on her makeup and wondered what that felt like.

Mom would put her and my sister's hair in curlers and when the hair was dry, remove them. She would brush the hair until it shone. I wanted long shiny glossy hair like that too as well as pink ribbons or bows to wear in it. My father insisted I have a crew cut like his.

"It's more manly," he said.

I didn't feel manly at all, in fact I felt almost naked with such short hair.

When I started school, I excelled in my studies. I learned fast and enjoyed the academic challenges. I didn't participate in class very much so the teachers labeled me as "shy."

I hated recess. I was not very athletic. I disliked being around boys as they were loud and rowdy; the girls were quiet and soft spoken. I felt like I didn't belong anywhere, not with the girls or the boys, so I was alone quite a bit.

I spent more time in the library than the other students. I liked the quiet. It was easier to concentrate on my studies. When I finished my schoolwork, I would sit in the magazine section. I would choose a copy of a men's magazine and then hold it slightly down in front of me as if I were reading it while I glanced over at the fashion magazines.

I loved the way the women on the cover looked. Perfect hair, perfect makeup, perfect fitting clothes and of course those beautiful high heeled shoes. I imagined what it would be like to wear a dress and walk down the street in those high heels with the breeze blowing my skirts around me.

In the evenings, weather permitting, my father would take me to the nearby grade school. On the blacktop playground, he would pitch the ball to me and I would practice my swing or we would go on the basketball court and I would practice my dribbling and free throw shooting. I was never going to be a good athlete but I got better and better the more we practiced.

My father was a good coach, never berating me for my mistakes; he just kept offering his encouragement. I hated doing this. I wanted to be in the kitchen baking cookies with my mom and my sister but I wanted to get my father's approval so I continued.

On Saturdays, my dad would go golfing with his buddies. I liked helping my mom and my sister with the housecleaning and laundry. I got to put on an apron. This was a thrill for me. It was as close as I could get to being allowed to wear a dress.

The frilly apron made me feel like a real girl. The girl I secretly knew I was. I hated being an impostor. I felt dishonest. It was as if God had played a cruel joke on me. Nobody knew about it except me and I couldn't tell a soul. I felt trapped and imprisoned in this body that I knew didn't belong to me. It wasn't mine and I wanted out but what could I do?

Junior High was worse than grade school. There were twice as many kids, twice as much noise, crowded halls and classrooms and altogether too much congestion. Once again my only solace was the library. I would finish my studies and then daydream about being someone else, who was somewhere else.

The dress code was relaxed; I never understood why the girls wore jeans instead of skirts. Some of them wore makeup and occasionally in the lunchroom I would watch with envy as they would apply lipstick after they had finished eating.

I wanted to wear lipstick and eye makeup too. I wanted to have my ears pierced and wear an assortment of earrings like they did. I envisioned myself in a dress or skirt with a made-up face carrying my books in one hand with my purse in the crook of my arm as I walked down the hallway chatting with the other girls about fashion, makeup and, of course, boyfriends.

I never found myself attracted to boys. I knew that wasn't normal yet I never found myself truly attracted to any of the girls either. There were some girls I liked and some I didn't like. I felt more comfortable around boys, I guess because I was one.

I always felt a little uneasy around girls. Maybe because if I felt I was a girl, then liking one would indicate I was a lesbian. I was in a real conundrum trying to figure out not only what was wrong with me but what was I going to do about it.

I tried out for both the baseball and basketball teams but didn't make the final cut even though I had played some little league baseball over the summer. I took some golf lessons and found I was better at it than the other sports I had tried.

Dad was pleased when I made the freshman team. From then on, he took me golfing when he wasn't with his friends. I managed to beat him most of the time which tickled my mother no end. The freshman team placed third in the state tournament that year, missing second by one stroke and first by three. Mom and Dad were both happy with my prowess.

At home when I wasn't doing school work, I liked to page through the mail order catalogs and look at the latest women's fashions. I loved the lingerie and formal apparel section the best. I kept one finger in the men's section so I could flip the page back if someone came into the room unexpectedly.

Whenever my parents would go away and my sister was with them or gone somewhere with her friends, I would go upstairs to their bedrooms. I would try on my sister's panties or my mother's slips. I loved the feel of the tricot. I felt like a real woman. I got braver and tried on some skirts and dresses too.

I was also very careful to put everything back where I found it, just exactly the way I had found it so no one would be suspicious of anything. Later, when they returned, I would be watching TV or reading.

As my freshmen year drew to a close, I accompanied my sister and parents to the mall. Dad and I sat on a wooden bench in the middle of the concourse while mom and my sister shopped for her prom dress. I looked at all the beautiful gowns displayed in the window. In the very front were a dozen purses and matching pairs of high heel shoes.

I closed my eyes and imagined myself trying on all the dresses and pairs of high heels. I had long hair, earrings, and a perfectly made-up face as I walked back and forth through the store modeling the gowns to the delight of a private audience seated on both sides of the long aisle.

Back at home, my sister put on the dress she had bought and modeled it for Dad and me. The spaghetti strap dress was light pink in color and the hem was just about the knee. The pink chiffon was in tiers and fit her perfectly. She seemed to walk effortlessly in her four-inch heel shoes. I imagined myself wearing the dress and high heels. I wanted to look as gorgeous as she did.

A month after the prom, I got my chance and spent an hour wearing her dress over pink panties. I wobbled in her high heels as I walked back and forth across the upstairs hallway carrying her pink purse the way I had seen her do. The shoes were too big and the dress did not fit right but I loved what I was doing. I felt girly and so feminine, like I was one of the girls in the prom magazines I had seen in the library.

I turned sixteen that June and started driver's education. I was still too young to work but I wanted to get my license very badly. I would then be able to borrow my parents' car and get away by myself. Every kid's idea of freedom begins with a DL and a car. Then I would be able to go anywhere I wanted to, whenever I wanted.

I earned a little money over the summer mowing lawns. I played golf with Dad as often as we could. I was still unhappy about my situation. What made matters worse was that I was being pushed, molded, and formed to fit into a male world.

It was a world I didn't want to be in but it appeared to be the prison I would be spending the rest of my life in. The thought of it made me shudder. For a fleeting instant, I thought that even death would be preferable to the life I was facing.

At the end of the summer, my sister and I registered for school. She would be a senior and I would be a sophomore. If I thought Junior High was bad, Senior High was worse. It was even more crowded. It had nearly two thousand students in a school designed for thirteen hundred. I was miserable, to say the least.

Football and basketball players were the kings of the hill. Tennis and golf players like me were almost invisible even though the tennis team was one of the top two in the state and our golf team was rated fourth.

Once again I found my solace to be the library. I found myself reading not only for school assignments or enjoyment but to see how writers write. Most of all, I enjoyed writing themes for English class. I was thoughtful and creative. It pleased me that my writing always got high marks.

The local paper sponsored a short story contest and I won a hundred dollars for my submission. I began to spend more time creating characters and story lines. Another submission to a teen magazine brought me two hundred dollars.

It didn't take a brick to fall on my head to get me to realize that there might be a career opportunity here for me. It also got me some attention from my fellow students who were interested in writing. I was no longer as invisible as I had been before. It made me feel good to know my accomplishments were being recognized by somebody and I was being looked up to and respected by at least a few of my classmates.

At home I was still crossdressing. Whenever the house was empty, I would be in front of the mirror wearing my sister's or my mother's things. I wanted to wear makeup too but I didn't dare. These brief sojourns into femininity brought me a lot of enjoyment even though they were short-lived.

The bottles of perfume on my mother's and sister's vanities were of a delightful feminine scent. I fantasized about taking a steamy bubble bath, drying off, then dusting myself with the perfumed body powder before putting on my pink nightgown and sliding between my pink satin sheets to drift off to a deep and restful sleep.

Occasionally on Saturdays, I would bike to the mall and sit on one of the benches across from the women's stores. Closing my eyes, I would imagine myself wearing whatever was displayed in the window. I wanted to wear a tight skirt and heels while I walked thru the stores at the mall.

Underneath my frilly blouse was a lacy camisole and beneath the skirt was a matching half-slip. I had very little body hair but I wanted to be hair-free so I could enjoy the feel of nylons and the tricot half-slip against my legs as I walked.

I was getting more and more frustrated with my situation. I jogged and biked a lot. I began eating a little less. My weight loss wasn't immediately noticeable as I had purchased smaller size jeans. My buttocks had developed nicely and between my exercising and golf outings I was in very good shape.

In January, I won another prize for a short story in the local paper. The high school newspaper wanted to interview me but I said no. I didn't think I was an interesting person and I didn't want the other kids to think I had a "big head" now that I was not only a published author but had been paid for it as well.

At the end of the month, I got an interview for a part-time job at a large sporting goods store at the mall. Dad drove me to the interview. Afterward, as we walked down the mall, I saw a bridal-prom fashion show in progress. I wanted to stay and watch but I couldn't.

I envied the girls in the show. I would have given anything to spend an afternoon modeling those beautiful gowns and high heel shoes. What a joy that would be, I thought to myself, dressed in all the feminine finery, parading around in front of the assembled crowd.

That night I dreamed I was wearing one of those beautiful white satin gowns flared out with petticoats, walking effortlessly down the promenade area in four-inch heeled white pumps. Women looked up at me with appreciative glances, applauding as I walked by.

Some of the older women had wistful looks in their eyes as they remembered being young and pretty.

I hated my body. I wanted to change it and remove all the hair. Then I would rub lots of lotion on myself so I would be girly soft. This would enhance the feel of the white satin and the nylon hose on my skin. I knew I couldn't do that just yet any more than I could grow breasts to fill out the white satin bra cups or let my hair and nails grow to a feminine length. It made me feel heartsick of course. I was being unfairly denied my right to be feminine, to be myself.

The next day I was called at home and notified that I had the job. I would start the next weekend working in the section that sold a complete line of golf clubs and accessories. The pay was just above minimum wage plus a commission. It was a place to start and I got a substantial discount for myself and my family. Maybe the job would keep me busy enough to take my mind off other things. I had my doubts about that but I was going to give it a try.

I learned my job quickly and soon got a raise for my salesmanship. While I loved golf, I was able to sell tennis, volleyball, basketball and football items with the same authority and success as I did the golf products. Within another month, I was making as much as any two of the other part-time employees.

My job kept me busy and I banked most of what I earned. At home, I sketched a few more outlines for stories. I crossdressed when I could but with my job, I had less time for it. I enjoyed these brief times en femme and wished they could last all day.

I wanted to buy one of the pink tennis dresses at the store. I thought of wearing a pink bra and pink ruffled panties underneath the short-skirted uniform. Unfortunately I had to be satisfied with just looking at them as I walked down the aisle.

Some nights I didn't sleep well. I was thinking about all the dresses I could be wearing with high heel shoes and makeup. I also spent a lot of time wondering what I was going to do. Not just a career but about my "situation," for lack of a better word. Eventually I would have to take my place in the world but "as what" and "doing what" were still up in the air. My workouts and smacking a golf ball were good outlets for my frustrations.

Trying to find someone or something to blame was fruitless. I was just wearing myself thin over what I had no control over. Nevertheless, it was going to be my problem to solve for better or worse, that was for sure.

One of the girls who worked in the women's department had mentioned a ranked tennis player who had changed his sex and was now the recipient of a lot of unwanted publicity. She had called him a freak and we all laughed.

I stopped at the branch library the next Saturday after work and looked up both the player's name and the word "transsexual" in the card catalog. I found two books, one by a man who had gone to Europe in the fifties and came back a woman and another by an eye doctor in New York. Both books gave me a good insight into what I was in for if and when I transitioned.

Both books were at the main library. I didn't want to order them to be sent here so I jotted down the catalog numbers so when I got downtown, I could look at them without any

inquiring eyes. This was not something I could afford to be caught reading by someone who knew me.

It was late April when the golf team got going again. We were much better this year and we finished second in the state. My parents were very proud as I accepted the best score trophy with a four under par 68. I passed my final exams with high scores and would be working full-time at the store until school started again in the fall.

We were at the beach one Sunday when I saw a girl about my age walk by us. She was wearing a bright pink bathing suit and cap. Her finger and toenails were a delicate pink. The swimsuit flared out slightly at the hips to form a skirt. I was *so* envious of her. Her skin was flawless as well. I closed my eyes and wondered what it would be like to be her. If only *I* could look that good!

With the warmer weather, I was very busy at work. I had fewer and fewer chances to crossdress. The desire to do so was always there however and I missed not being able to crossdress more frequently. It had a calming and peaceful effect on me. I had to admit the thought of being able to live 24/7 crossdressed was my ultimate fantasy.

I had always been very conscious of the way women looked wherever I was whether at work, the beach or the mall. I was very critical of most of them because they didn't seem to want to look like women.

None of them seemed to care about their femininity. Few wore makeup. Most of them wore slacks or shorts without heels. I thought they should wear skirts or summer dresses like I wanted to wear.

In August, I sold another story to a teen magazine. I was happy to get published and the extra money was nice too. I also participated in a teen golf tournament and won it by three



strokes which pleased Mom and Dad very much.

The host of the tournament, a prestigious country club, sent me a letter thanking me for my participation and inviting me to fill out an application for the pro shop but I declined. This particular pro shop had quite a turnover in personnel. Part of the reason was the fact that many of the members were quite, well, "snooty" would be the polite expression.

I vowed to stay away from this particular club. I liked my job and was making good money for someone my age. I spent very little of it and continued to build a substantial savings account.

I registered for school. I would be a junior this year and my sister would be at a college several hundred miles away. She and my parents would be gone for three days to get her settled in her dorm room. I was in heaven. I could crossdress in her old clothes while they were gone without fear of getting caught.

I waited a full hour after they left before I got out her prom dress and high heels. I spent several wonderful hours walking around the house. I was up and down the stairs, back and forth across the living room. I smoothed the skirts of my dress as I sat down in a chair and got up again.

I felt just like a girl as I practiced feminine mannerisms. I had been so conditioned to behave in a masculine way that this behavior seemed unnatural at first but I continued. I kept wishing I could **be** this way, instead of just acting this way.

I got brave and used an old lipstick of hers I had found in the trash to see what I would look like with makeup. I looked even better with pink lips and cheeks. When I was finished, I scrubbed myself practically raw to make sure I got it all off.

I was quite happy with the feminine image I had seen in the mirror. I even wore one of mom's nightgowns to bed one night. The worst part of all this was that no matter what I put on, it all had to come off eventually and I had to return to being my male self again.

I was still socially ill at ease around girls. I hadn't dated anyone yet and though I had begun to masturbate frequently, it was always while imagining my self crossdressed in lingerie or glamorous dresses and heels. The relief was only momentary. I would go back to feeling lonely, out of place and more confused than ever about what and who I was.

That fall I met Morgan. She was a senior who had transferred in from the West coast. Her parents were divorced and her mom was a nurse at a large hospital close to where they were living. She had a strong personality and was an excellent tennis player. The tennis coach was glad to see her. Graduating seniors had left a team of mostly juniors and sophomores, most of whom were marginally talented.

The other girls in my classes were not unfriendly but Morgan showed a genuine interest in getting to know me. "I like quiet guys like you," she explained.

We had math and history classes together and also shared the same lunch break. I felt really comfortable around her and enjoyed talking with her at noon. We liked different sports but shared an interest in quieter music and environmental causes.

It was just before Halloween when at lunch one day, she asked me for a favor. She wanted me to come over that evening and help her with a project she had been working on. I agreed with out pressing her for any details.