



Reluctant Press presents:

Stevenson's Stories VI



E. B. Stevenson

A 'NEW WOMAN' E-BOOK

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STEVENSON'S STORIES VI: *Young Femininity*

by E.B. Stevenson

One-“BECOMING ANNA”

The summer of 1995 would be a time of change for me. Before that time, I had become one of Chicago's most eligible bachelors. After I graduated from college in 1986, I had joined my cousin, Carolyn Drake, in restoring an old movie theatre into one of the area's top nightclubs. We opened the place in 1989, after three years of renovations. The club featured everything from live jazz to female impersonation. I even bought a

home in the exclusive Morgan Park neighborhood, where I could hold my parties for charity. I was living the kind of life any 33-year-old bachelor would live.

On August 3, 1995, my life would make a major change. My twin sister, Heather Bruner Richards, and her husband, Mark, were on their way back to their home in Prospect Heights from a wedding in McHenry. They were heading eastbound on Northwest Highway coming out of Crystal Lake when they were involved in a head-on collision with a drunk driver. Both of them died instantly. Their four children would be cared for by my older sister, Denise, until the issues with their estate were settled. Little did I know what my life would hold for me.

The biggest surprise would come three weeks later, when I got a call from my lawyer, Steve Paul. "Eric, the court decided that you would best provide for your twin sister's four children," he informed me.

"This is a surprise!" I told him.

"In their will, they specified that you be the guardian of their children. They were very fond of you, Eric."

Heather and Mark had four children together. The oldest was their only daughter, Marcia, who was already eleven years old. Their youngest son, Michael, was four years old. The twin boys, Eric and Anthony, were both eight years old. Marcia and Eric had been honor students; Eric also took boxing lessons. Michael had already been enrolled in karate lessons. Anthony pursued more gentle pastimes, like reading. I had to set up four bedrooms for my niece and nephews.

I noticed one thing when they moved in with me. The first thing I noticed was that Eric was taller and heavier than Anthony. Michael was taller than most

boys in his preschool class. Marcia was already into the latest fashions that most girls her age wear. After they were shown to their bedrooms, Marcia asked if I could come into her room.

“What is it, Marcia?” I asked her.

“Would you please shut the door behind you, Uncle Eric?” she asked me.

“I’d take it this is a private conversation,” I added.

I shut the door behind me, and sat on a folding chair in her room. Marcia, in a pink top, a stonewashed denim skirt, ankle-high socks with pom-poms in back, and running shoes, sat on her bed. “Uncle Eric, I have a secret I need to share with you,” she said.

“What is it?” I asked.

“It’s about Anthony. For the past couple of years, he’s been secretly dressing in my old clothes,” she replied.

“Eight years old, and he’s dressing as a girl?”

“It started two years ago, just after he and Eric celebrated their sixth birthday. One Saturday afternoon, my parents weren’t home; they were planning for a charity ball. It was just me, Eric, Anthony, Michael and our 15-year-old cousin, Dana. That night, while Dana was playing video games with Eric, Anthony quietly walked to my room, and took the purple satin dress I wore when my Aunt Marianne got married. He then got one of my old pairs of tights, a pair of my dress shoes and an auburn wig of my mother’s, and went into his room to change into my old dress. When I saw him in that dress, I thought he made a pretty girl. However, Dana didn’t like it one bit, and forced him to sit in his room, dressed as a girl, until my parents got home. They were not very pleased when they saw him in my

old dress. They had a long talk with him, but that didn't help much. He then took more of my old clothes into his room, and put them on behind closed doors. Uncle Eric, I have a feeling this could lead to something a bit more serious."

"Thanks for telling me about this, Marcia," I said to her.

Because of the hours I spent at the nightclub, I had to hire a governess for my niece and nephews. After much consideration, I hired Annie Chang as their governess three weeks after the kids moved in. She came to this country from Thailand; she was skinny, five-seven with long dark hair, and in her mid 20s. She started working for me in mid-September. She spoke English, Thai, Spanish, Japanese, French and German. She would get along very well with the children.

When Annie moved in with us, I told her about Anthony. "He has a habit of occasionally dressing in his sister's clothes. Marcia told me about this when they moved in with me a few weeks ago. This started two years ago, when he put on the purple satin dress Marcia wore when my sister-in-law Marianne got married. He also put on an old pair of tights and dress shoes that Marcia also wore, as well as my late sister's auburn wig. Since then, he has occasionally put on Marcia's old dresses. He's considerably smaller than most boys in his class, so he can easily get into Marcia's old clothes."

"Thanks for giving me the heads up, Eric. Growing up in Thailand, I have encountered many young women who were born boys. We have a word for such girls back home. The word is *katoey*, which means "lady boy." I know that boys becoming girls at such a young age is more common back home than it is here

in the States. In fact, one of my best friends back home is a transsexual," Annie explained.

"If it comes to the point where Anthony decides that he wants to become a girl, then you're prepared to handle it," I added.

"I am prepared to handle anything. I was with my friend, Winnie, through her transition from male to female, and went with her and her boyfriend when she had her sex-change operation. I was maid of honor when she got married before I came to the States," Annie added.

"Anthony is only eight years old. I think that's kind of young to be thinking about becoming a girl."

"I agree. I think we should wait until he's at least eleven years old before making such a drastic, life-changing decision."

That moment finally arrived four years later. It was a warm, early summer evening. Marcia began allowing Anthony to dress up as a girl after he turned ten years old, as she was practicing to become a fashion photographer. When I came home late one afternoon from being at the nightclub for an inspection by the city's building inspector, Anthony was seen in a floral print dress, laying on top of one of Marcia's male friends in his bedroom, kissing him. Marcia was with her boyfriend, Don, in her bedroom, talking things over. I couldn't believe my eyes. While his blonde hair had grown to his shoulders, I discovered that he was made up to look like a girl. I somehow knew that he was gay, but I also knew there was something else behind this. I called Marcia to his room to show her what I was seeing.

“You make me feel so much like a girl, Nigel,” Anthony whispered.

“And you make me feel so masculine, Anna,” Nigel whispered back.

Marcia and I let them make out until both Nigel and Don left at four-thirty. Annie came into Anthony’s bedroom shortly after that. She inquisitively asked: “Anthony, are you thinking about becoming a girl?”

“Yes, Annie, I’m a girl,” he sheepishly replied.

“There are a lot of girls like you where I come from,” Annie added.

“I didn’t know that,” he added.

“Plenty of girls back in Thailand started their lives as boys. One of my best friends is a girl named Winnie. I met her when she was still a boy, living in the same middle-class Bangkok neighborhood I grew up in. From the time she was four years old, she knew she was a girl, trapped in a boy’s body. Her parents were supportive of her dressing as a girl; in fact, she started living full-time as a girl when we started secondary school together. After we graduated from secondary school, she met a young man named Robert, an American student at a local university. I went to college to study nursing. A year before I graduated, I was assigned to a hospital where sex-change operations are performed for an internship. One of the patients I took care of was Winnie. Robert accompanied her when she had her operation that summer. When I came back to Bangkok to finish my education, he asked her to be his wife. They asked me to be their maid of honor. The Thais have a term for girls like you. That term is *katoey*. It means ‘lady boy.’ If you do decide to spend the rest of your life as a girl, I am all for it,” she explained.

Later that evening, Annie called all of us into Anthony's bedroom. Marcia was already fifteen years old by that time. Eric and Anthony were both twelve, and Michael was eight years old. He was still in the floral print dress he wore, and made up to look like a girl. We were all wondering what the big news was. When we got into his room, we somehow knew the answer.

He explained: "The reason why Annie and I have asked you in here is that I've made a major decision concerning my life. You all know that I've been dressing in Marcia's old dresses since I was six years old. She's been taking pictures of me, dressed as a girl, for practice in fashion photography. This past winter, you may remember that I had my pictures taken in my mother's wedding gown. Today, I was making out with Nigel, a friend of Marcia's. While we were caressing each other and sharing hugs and kisses, I realized that I was attracted to boys, and that I love to kiss boys. I realized that I hated being a boy, and loved being a girl. I really yearn to be a girl all the time."

"You mean to say that you want to become a girl?" Marcia asked him.

"Yes, I want to become a girl. I feel that I am a girl," he replied.

"If becoming a girl is what you really want, more than anything else in this world, I won't stand in your way," Eric added.

"I will be behind you all the way if you decide to go through with becoming a girl," I assured him.

One of my friends from my college days, Beth Robinson, had become a top psychologist in the Chicago area, working with the transgender population. I brought Anthony in for an appointment a month be-

fore school was scheduled to start. She asked him a series of questions about his gender identity. When I was asked into her office, she had the news I had been expecting to hear.

“Eric, your nephew is, indeed, a transsexual. While Anthony has a male body, he really believes he is a girl. His mind and psyche are that of a female. He thinks and acts like a girl. Anthony has been dressing as a girl part-time for the past two years, and I think it would be a good idea if he started living, dressing and going to school full-time as a girl. He has already indicated that he wants to change his name to Anna,” Beth told me.

“What kind of school would be willing to accept transgender students?” I asked.

“There’s a well-known school in San Francisco that’s opening a branch school here in Chicago. The Rainbow School for Girls is opening a campus on the North Side. They’re taking new students even as we speak. I think it would be great for you to take Anna to this school,” Beth replied.

From this point on, I would be referring to Anthony as Anna, my niece. When we got home, I broke the news to Marcia, Eric, Michael and Annie.

“The diagnosis is official. Anthony is a girl, unfairly trapped in a boy’s body. In other words, she’s a transsexual. While her body is that of a male, he strongly identifies as being female. She’s attracted to boys, loves kissing them, and absolutely loves being a girl. There will be a lot of changes going on in the next few years. The first step is a legal change of name. He’s already decided on the name Anna, so her name will be legally changed from Anthony Kenneth Bruner to Anna Katherine Bruner,” I explained.

“What changes are going to occur, body-wise?” Eric asked.

“I’ve been reading up on transsexualism in my spare time. Anna will be treated with female hormones. As time goes on, she will develop breasts, have more pronounced buttocks, and assume a more feminine shape. She will be taking female hormones for the rest of her life,” Marcia explained.

“Will she be living full-time as a girl?” asked Michael.

“Anna will be living full-time as a girl when she starts her hormone replacement therapy. She will be seeing a psychiatrist and endocrinologist this week. She sees the psychiatrist tomorrow; the endocrinologist at the end of the week. We’re looking at the next couple of weeks when Anna will start living full-time as a girl,” I replied.

“She will be going through something called a Real Life Test for a year or two, so that there will be no doubts as to her ability to function as a girl. When she succeeds in this test, she will be a candidate for sex re-assignment surgery,” added Marcia.

“I will be enrolling her at a renowned secondary school for girls which will open a Chicago campus in August. It is known as The Rainbow School for Girls, and admits both genetic female and transgender students. Many of their transgender students have excelled in their academic endeavors, and have become successful in life,” I informed them.

A month later, I took Anna to visit the school. The headmistress at the school was a tall, middle-aged woman named Angela Smith. “Mr. Bruner?” she asked as she emerged from her office.

"I'm Eric Bruner, and this is my niece, Anna Richards," I replied.

"I'm very pleased to meet you," Angela added.

We reviewed her academic records, and looked at her academic requirements while in her office. "Will she need courses in feminine department?" she asked me.

"Yes, she'll definitely need that. She's early in her transition from boy to girl," I replied.

"How long ago did she inform you of her decision to become a girl?"

"She told me this about a month ago. I hired a governess from Thailand, Annie, just after Anna's parents were killed in a car wreck. Her mother was my sister."

"I read about her death in the newspaper."

I asked Angela about social events that take place at the school throughout the year. "We are planning three dances this semester and maybe more next semester. The first dance will be in early September: our annual dance to kick off the new academic year. These dances allow our students to become acclimated with their new roles as girls. We invite a selected group of boys from around the area to be our guests. Some of these boys are the brothers of our students. We're also planning dinner lectures for the parents and guardians of our students; the first one is planned for mid-October. Other social events are being planned; you will be getting a calendar of these events in the mail," she replied.

Angela then took me and Anna on a tour of the school. She would show us a building that's under construction. "The dormitories are under construction as we speak; we hope to have these up and running by the start of the spring semester in January. Funds for

this dormitory come from private donations, like the funding for the purchase of this campus," she told us.

"How long has this school been in existence?" Anna asked her.

"The Rainbow School for Girls opened in San Francisco in 1965. A group of philanthropists from throughout the Bay Area were concerned about the high number of troubled girls in the Bay Area, especially with the rise of the drug culture at the time. The school held its first classes in 1965; fifty-eight girls were in the first class, ranging in age from twelve to eighteen. All of these girls, who couldn't make it in traditional school settings, excelled at Rainbow. Three of the students who were in that first class were addicted to heroin, and did time in juvenile detention for possession. Rainbow's San Francisco campus, in the first five years, turned around the lives of over 500 troubled girls. Many went on to succeed in traditional school settings, nearly all of them went on to college or to learn a trade. We outgrew the downtown campus, and moved to a new campus on the southwestern side of San Francisco in 1972. That was funded entirely with private donations. Two of the features of the new campus are the dormitories and guest quarters, which we didn't have at our first school. As the 1980s dawned, Rainbow was also looking at admitting transgender students. San Francisco has a large transgender population, and there were an increasing number of transgender students who were having a hard time in a traditional school setting. In 1979, we began admitting our first transgender students. By the end of the 1980s, one out of every five students served were going through the transition from boy to girl. Today, one of every three students at our San Francisco campus has a diagnosis of gender identity disorder. Two years ago, our Board

of Directors decided to expand the concept into other cities. Last year, we opened a campus in Los Angeles. This year, we're opening a new campus on Long Island in addition to the one here in Chicago. Next year, Rainbow will be opening campuses in the Tampa/St. Petersburg area, St. Louis and Seattle. In 2001, we'll complete the expansion with campuses in Baltimore and Casper," she explained.

After the tour, I gave Angela a check for three years' tuition for Anna. I felt that this was the best place for her to continue her education and, at the same time, transition from boy to girl.

Sixty percent of Anna's classmates were going through the same thing she was going through when her first day of school arrived the day after Labor Day. She made new friends fast at the school. She had a group of four friends she always stuck to. Three of them were transsexual, the other being a genetic female who had been abused as a child by her parents; she was sent to the school by court order.

The first dance of the year was the second weekend after Labor Day. I had been asked to be a chaperone, while Eric was invited as our guest. When we were getting our suits on for the dance, Eric asked me: "How many of these girls are going through the same thing Anna is going through?"

"The school has 200 girls attending; 120 of those are going through the same thing Anna is going through. The other eighty girls have had a hard time making it in schools like yours, or have been taken from abusive environments. Most of these students have not learned to take the feminine role in social situations. You will be among a group of boys who will give these girls

their first experience taking the female role in social situations," I explained.

When we came out of my bedroom, Anna was waiting in the living room, in an orange strapless party dress. "You two look handsome tonight!" she complimented.

"You look absolutely gorgeous, Anna," Eric added.

Eric was dancing with his fair share of girls that night; many of the boys were eager to ask Anna to dance with them. It was when Anna and Eric were dancing together that I was approached by a brunette-haired woman. She was one of the few genetic females on the faculty.

"You must be the father of the brother and sister dancing on the floor," she said as she approached with a glass of punch.

"I'm their uncle. Their parents are dead," I corrected.

"I read about their deaths in the newspaper. I lost a friend to a drunk driver," she added.

"I'm Eric Bruner."

"I'm Emily Smith. I'm very pleased to meet you. I have your niece in my English class."

"It's a real pleasure to meet you, Emily."

We got to know each other as the evening progressed. Emily came to Chicago from Lansing, Michigan, where she taught middle school English at a school for troubled girls. She came from a middle class family, graduating at the top of her class from high school, in the top ten percent of her class when she got her Bachelor's and Master's degrees, and became one of the top educators of troubled youth. It was her repu-

tation and dedication that brought her to Chicago for her first job teaching transgender youth. I found out that we had a lot in common. Despite the fact she's nine years younger than I am, we both loved camping, hiking, walking along the lake, going to see live music, with an emphasis on jazz and classical music, as well as being around children.

Before the dance ended, I asked her: "How many of your fellow teachers are not transgendered?"

"Our headmistress is a genetic female, along with one of our guidance counselors and one of our assistant principals. The other assistant principal is a genetic male. We have thirty-six teachers at the school. I'm one of only twelve non-transgender teachers. Of those, I'm one of nine genetic females, and one of only two non-transgender teachers in the Language Department. Besides Tom Joseph, who teaches in my department, there are two other genetic male teachers: Mike Donnell in the History Department and Kevin Smith in the Math Department at this particular school. One of the genetic females, Lisa Wilton, is the feminine department instructor. She's a former fashion model. The other genetic females are Linda Holt and Paula Haig in the Physical Education Department, Stephanie Franklin in the Math Department, Megan Wilton, Lisa's younger sister, in the History Department, Sarah Johnston and Becky Majors in the Social Science Department, and Michelle Salter in the Fine Arts Department. All of the rest of our teachers are transsexuals," she explained.

Anna continued to excel in school over the next two years, as she continued to transition from boy to girl. She was the top student in seventh grade during the 1999-2000 academic year; she was tops in the whole school during the 2000-2001 academic year. She at-

tended every dance faithfully, excelling in her new role as a girl. She even took some of the younger students under her wing during the eighth grade. By the time 2001 began, Anna had blossomed into a beautiful young woman. Just five feet tall at the age of twelve, she grew to five feet, four inches tall by the time she turned fourteen. In February of 2001, she got her final recommendation for sex reassignment surgery.

Three days before Annie and I had to take Anna to San Francisco for her sex-change operation, I asked Emily to be my wife. She accepted my proposal. The day before we left, she asked Anna if she would be her junior bridesmaid. "I would be honored," Anna told her. Emily and I decided to wait until after Anna had fully healed from her operation before we tied the knot.

A week after the end of the academic year, Annie and I flew out to San Francisco with Anna. En route, Annie asked me: "Are you going to need a governess after you and Emily get married?"

"Of course, we will. Emily and I both work, so we'll definitely need a governess. Being an aunt is a new experience for her; she's the second of four children, and her older brother is a bachelor. I'll especially need help with Michael; he's been having the hardest time dealing with not only his parents' death, but also Anna's sex change," I replied.

We arrived in San Francisco early in the evening; Dr. Allen had her operation scheduled for ten o'clock the next morning. Anna was admitted to the hospital just after eight o'clock. I signed the admission papers and the authorization for the doctor to perform her surgery. I also paid for her operation with a personal check. At nine o'clock, Anna got up out of the wheel-

chair, and got on a gurney to be taken to be prepared for surgery.

Annie and I waited for six hours while Anna was being operated on. We both knew she would be a complete girl when she came out of the operating room. Right at four o'clock in the afternoon, Dr. Allen came out of the operating room.

"Mr. Bruner?" he asked me.

"How is she?" I asked him.

"Anna is doing just fine. What we did was remove most of her male sexual organs. We had plenty of skin, which allowed us to create her new female genitalia. She is in the recovery room; she'll be moved to a private room shortly," he explained.

Annie and I went up to her room around six o'clock in the evening. Anna's roommate was a young woman named Vanessa, who had her sex-change operation the previous day. Anna woke up just after seven o'clock, in moderate pain. "I feel something different in my body," she said, still groggy from the anesthesia.

"Anna, you're a complete girl now. The operation was a success," I assured her.

Vanessa woke up from her nap just as I told Anna about the success of her operation. "I'm Vanessa Collins," she said in an introductory manner.

"Miss Collins, I'm Eric Bruner. My niece, Anna Richards, just had her operation today. This young lady is her governess, Annie Chang," I informed her.

"I had my operation yesterday. I had dreamed of becoming female since I was in grade school; I'm glad I had the support of my mother and sister," she added.

"How old is Anna?" Vanessa asked.

“She’s fourteen years old. Her sister, brothers and uncle have been supportive throughout the process,” Annie replied.

“How long did you live full-time as a woman before your operation?” I asked.

“I began living full-time as a girl as soon as I finished high school. I have spent my whole life in San Francisco. I worked in my mother’s dress shop during my transition; I even did some modeling for her store’s newspaper ads. I even found a boyfriend while I was transitioning; Pete is so cool with the fact I was born a boy. He had never had a date, let alone a girlfriend, before he met me at a fashion show,” Vanessa replied.

“Anna has spent her entire life in the Chicago area. She began living full-time as a girl after finishing the sixth grade. I became her guardian after her parents were killed by a drunk driver six years ago. She’s my sister’s daughter. She’s going to be a freshman at the Rainbow School for Girls’ Chicago campus this fall. Even my fiancée, who happens to be one of her teachers, supported her transition. She’s back in Chicago to watch over my three other children while we’re here in San Francisco,” I explained.

“I’m originally from Thailand, and I’ve dealt with the transgender lifestyle firsthand. Winnie, one of my best friends, went through the transition and surgery before I came to the United States to become Anna’s governess. I knew Winnie as a boy when we were growing up together in a middle class Bangkok neighborhood. She began living full-time as a girl when we were teenagers; she had her sex-change operation while I was interning as a nurse at a hospital in Phuket. In fact, I’ve arranged for her to speak to the parents at Anna’s school this coming fall,” Annie added.

Two weeks later, Annie and I returned home with Anna. Emily was patiently waiting for me when I got in the front door. "How did it turn out with Anna?" she asked me.

"The operation was a success. She has her whole life as a girl ahead of her," I replied.

"That's good to hear, sweetheart," she added.

Emily and I married three and a half months after Anna's operation. Students in the Fashion Design class at Anna's school designed her ornate wedding gown, making her look like a princess. The bridesmaids' bright pink gowns were also designed by the Fashion Design class. Anna was especially radiant, looking like a young princess. All of the students in her classes were among the guests at the wedding and the reception.

Marcia graduated from high school the next year; she decided to go to college in California to become a psychologist, working with transgender patients. She spent her senior year at the Rainbow School for Girls after she was beaten and raped by a classmate at the end of her junior year of high school, deeply traumatizing her. With the help of my friend Beth, Marcia was able to recover quickly, and become an honor student, like Anna. Anna and Eric both graduated from high school in 2005; Eric, who grew to six feet, two inches tall, went to a prestigious all-boys high school; he was accepted at a university in Massachusetts. He was on a hockey scholarship, studying to become a psychiatrist. Anna, who had grown to be five feet, nine inches tall, went on to New York to study fashion design. Her modeling practice came in handy; she would work as a fashion model while going to school to become a fashion designer. Emily and I went

to see her modeling debut in Chicago: a benefit fashion show at the school the following spring.

By the time Anna finished fashion design school, Emily and I had a set of quadruplets; two boys named Eric and Carl, and two girls named Erica and Karen. They were born in the fall of 2008. Both Marcia and Eric were accepted in graduate programs; Marcia had completed her Master's program in the spring of 2009, became a licensed clinical social worker, and was accepted into a doctoral program. Eric began his Master's program in the spring of 2010.

In the summer of 2010, Anna announced that she was unveiling her first line of original designs. Emily and I were invited to New York, along with Lisa Wilton, her feminine department teacher, and Jenny Delgado, her fashion design teacher from high school. Emily and I decided to take the train to the Big Apple. When we arrived at Pennsylvania Station, we went straight to our hotel to rest.

The next afternoon, after Emily and I had lunch, we went to the auditorium near one of the major department stores, where Anna was waiting. "Uncle Eric, Aunt Emily," she yelled out excitedly as she motioned us in her direction.

Anna was in a royal blue dress with her long brunette hair down. "I'm glad you could come to the premiere of my first collection," she happily said.

"We didn't want to miss this for the world," Emily added.

Lisa and Jenny approached us a few minutes later. "Anna!" Jenny exclaimed as she noticed her.

"Miss Delgado, I'm glad you could make it," she said with joy.

“Lisa and I couldn’t have missed this for the world,” Jenny told her.



"I'm glad you could come, too, Ms. Wilton," Anna added.

We took our places in the front row of the auditorium. Emily and Jenny were in the chairs next to mine. Lisa went out on stage to introduce Anna.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I am very pleased to present a new designer to you. I have seen her progress as one of my students at The Rainbow School for Girls in Chicago. I knew, from the first time she showed up in my class as a seventh grader in 1999, that she would go on to great things. She designed her first dress as a high school freshman: a gown for her sister Marcia's prom. Among the other dresses she designed in high school were: a gown for a classmate's fifteenth birthday, a gown for the wedding of one of her teachers, and the dress she wore for her graduation from high school. She has appeared on this runway as a model, and apprenticed under one of the top fashion designers in the world. Today, she is unveiling her first collection of bridal and formal fashions for women of various sizes. Ladies and gentlemen, a young woman you'll be hearing a lot more from in the coming years, Miss Anna Richards."

She came out on stage, taking the applause and curtsying to the audience. "Are you ready for my first designs?" Anna asked the audience.

"Yes!" they yelled in unison.

She stepped behind the podium, where she announced her first design. "My first design is modeled by the beautiful Laura. This strapless ball gown is in emerald green taffeta, with white lace trim around the waist line. The skirt features white lace trim on the hem. Around the top of the gown is green lace trim. Green lace heart-shaped designs adorn the skirt, green

sequins are featured on the bodice, and green lace trim around the top of the gown.”

Laura walked down the length of the runway to show the beauty of the gown Anna designed, and walked right off stage to the dressing room. “This next design is for the big, beautiful woman, and modeled by Madeline. This sleeveless, ball-style wedding gown is in white satin, with tulle netting around the skirt. A white lace heart design, adorned with sequins, is featured on the bodice. Her bridal tiara is made entirely of diamonds, and a fingertip-length veil and blusher are attached to the tiara. Tiaras of rhinestone and cubic zirconia will be offered when this gown debuts in bridal shops next month.”

Madeline tossed the bouquet on the side of the stage where we were sitting; Jenny caught the bouquet. After walking down the length of the runway, Madeline walked right back up the runway toward the dressing room. The next model walked on the stage. “This party dress is for the taller woman, modeled by Becky. The dress is made of bright orange satin, with a white lace overlay on the skirt. The skirt extends to just an inch above her knees. The bodice features orange sequins; the short, puffed sleeves feature white lace designs on the puffed portion of each sleeve. A white lace rosette adorns the dress in back at the waistline. This design will also be offered in petite, misses’ and plus sizes, and in various colors.”

Becky walked down the runway, and gave the audience a somewhat seductive glance. She then sa-shayed down the runway, and back to the dressing room. A teenage girl was next with her design. “Heather is an honor student at one of New York’s most prestigious schools. She’s modeling a dress that’s

perfect for homecoming or prom. This dress is a halter-style dress. The skirt is navy blue taffeta, while the bodice and straps are navy blue satin. Antique white Chantilly lace adorned with navy blue sequins, decorate the bodice. The skirt comes down to an inch above her knees. This design will also be offered in junior miss, petite and misses' sizes.

Heather also flashed a seductive smile as she walked down the runway and back. As soon as she returned to the dressing room, a short, blonde-haired model walked onstage. "This design has the petite woman in mind. Pamela is in a white satin wedding gown. The skirt is overlaid with nylon netting. The skirt features a series of lace designs all the way around. Lace designs also adorn the long puffed sleeves, with a series of small pearls adorning the puffed portions of the sleeves. A white satin bow is attached in back at the waistline. The gown features a cathedral-length train with an intricate lace heart design in the middle. The floral spray headpiece features a fingertip-length veil and blusher." Pamela held the train of her gown on her right forearm while carrying the bouquet. When she made her turn back up the runway, two middle-aged ladies helped her with the train of her gown. She walked slowly back up the runway, showing off the train of her gown. She threw the bouquet to her right this time.

As soon as Pamela left the stage, Heather returned. "This design is perfect for the girl who's celebrating her fifteenth birthday. Heather is in a red ball gown. The skirt is made of taffeta, the bodice made of satin. Red lace and clear sequins adorn the bodice. The single strap, located on her right side, features a red lace rosette. The tiara is made of cubic zirconia, with a birthstone in the middle at the top. Your daughter will

be the center of attention as she turns fifteen years of age. This design will also be available in pink, fuchsia, royal blue, baby blue, turquoise, antique white and white."

As Heather left the stage, two young girls were modeling their dresses. "These are the two youngest girls in this show. Molly is a fourth grader, while Maria is a second grader at another of New York's most prestigious schools. Molly is in a red satin dress. Red lace overlays the skirt, while white lace adorns the bodice. The short sleeves are made of red satin, adorned with white lace designs. This design is also available in junior misses' sizes and junior plus sizes for the older sister, and for their mothers, in petite, misses' and plus sizes. Maria is modeling a bright yellow flower girl's gown. This sleeveless gown is made entirely of taffeta, with a bright yellow satin bow in back at the waistline. Both designs will also be available in other colors."

The second-to-last design was modeled by Becky. "The lovely Becky is modeling a bridal gown for the taller woman. This sleeveless design is made of white satin. It features white lace trim around the skirt, Chantilly lace adorning the bodice, and a chapel-length train. A walking-length veil and blusher cascade from a headpiece featuring a floral spray. This design is also being made available for petite and plus sizes. She will be the center of attention on her most romantic day."

The last design was modeled by Madeline. "For the larger woman, Madeline is modeling a baby blue ball gown. This sleeveless design is made of satin, and features white nylon netting around the skirt. Baby blue lace adorns the bodice with clear sequins; baby blue lace heart designs also dominate the skirt. This design

is perfect for the ball, the prom or even as a bridesmaid's gown."

At the end of the show, each model walked out on stage to a standing ovation, and curtsied to the audience. When Emily, Jenny and I walked backstage, we were met by Anna. "I am most impressed with your first collection," Jenny complimented.

"Why, thank you, Miss Delgado," she returned.

"You've come a long way since I first taught you in seventh grade," Emily added.

"Thanks for all the encouragement you gave me, Aunt Emily," Anna said with pride.

"I'm very proud of you, Anna," I said with joy.

"Thanks for being there for me, Uncle Eric," Anna excitedly said before she gave me a hug.

"Hey, let's not forget the teacher who taught you to be a lady," Lisa said as she returned from the dressing room.

"Thanks for teaching me to be a lady, Ms. Wilton," Anna said before she hugged her.

The models, back in the dresses they wore when they arrived at the show, approached Anna. "Are you going to introduce us?" Madeline asked.

"Eric and Emily Bruner, Jennifer Delgado, Lisa Wilton, these are the models who you saw today. This is Madeline Vernon, Becky Stephens, Laura Smith and Pamela Jarvis. The two little girls are Molly and Maria Collins," Anna informed us in an introductory manner.

"It's a pleasure to meet you. Anna has told me all about you all," Madeline said.