SECOND CHANCE

By Evie Kay



ILLUSTRATED BY BRIAN DUKEHART

AN ADULT TV NOVEL

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"ANNIVERSARIES" By EVIE KAY

"Happy Anniversary, darling," Scottie Collins announced almost triumphantly to her husband, as she handed him a small gift.

Inside the tiny box were gold-like cuff links.

Pat Collins was suddenly awash with conflicting emotions. He did not know what to do. This was because he could not figure out what Scottie was celebrating. So he resigned himself to take his lumps by being honest with her by telling her that he did not know.

"Uhhh... I-uh,.. please forgive me, honey," he said in his quiet, soft voice. "I forgot."

"It's okay, Pat. I still love you!" she beamed, as she sat in his lap and gave him a hug.

"Uh, wait a minute..." Pat thought aloud afterwards. "Today isn't the day we met, got engaged, or married. Those I would not forget!" he proclaimed proudly and then added quizzically. "What anniversary are you talking about?"

"It's the anniversary of the first time you ever gave me a gift silly!" Scottie said, matter-of-factly.

"Honestly!" she huffed playfully.

Pat groaned slightly and it was not due to his wife's weight upon him.

"Scottie, I love you, sweetheart. You know I do. But I have to go out into a world that's ready to chew me up and spit me out. Being an investment broker is one big headache. Even though it keeps us very comfortable. Trying to keep abreast is almost a gamble every day. It's also difficult to serve other clients as well as ourselves, to try to stay solvent and beyond. If I could, I'd give you the world. You know that. But please! Have mercy on me about these anniversaries, while I try to remember the easy ones... okay?"

Hearing this, Scottie teased him further.

"Oh my poor baby! Does the mean ol' world play roughie toughie with my snookums? Listen, Dear, I know you're delicate," Scottie fawned, speaking seriously, as she played with Pat's mop of hair. "But if you're finding that you can't handle the pressures, why don't you try something else, honey? We'll get by, somehow."

With one brow cocked, Pat countered, "If I didn't know any better, I'd say you were making fun of me. Fortunately, I do."

Pat then looked Scottie in the eye, at which she smiled comfortably. He smiled back with a sigh, saying, "Sad to say, you're right. I'm just not rugged enough to handle the physical jobs. All I've got going for me is my brain.

"Since I've decided to earn our 'daily bread', what with you having had an equally hard time out there trying to find work, you've chosen to keep house. This is fine with me. I love you so much. If I thought that you were having just as bad a day out there as I am, or worse, it would tell on me twice as much."

"My brain hasn't been a mere alternative. It's worked so far. Let's run with it, honey. The sooner I get our just desserts from our investments, the sooner I can quit the rat race altogether. It's not impossible nor really that long from now. It's just a matter of knowing when to strike the hot iron!"

Although she became concerned toward the end, Scottie knew that she was teasing Pat mercilessly and now sighed heavily. But it was not borne out of exasperation, but out of pride for her husband. She truly loved him with all her heart.

Since he was able to show his love by working hard for the two of them, it was important to Scottie that she show that she appreciated his efforts through her gift-giving. Hers was not an easy task; that is, until she brilliantly thought of celebrating their little "anniversaries".

Scottie was otherwise always the one who had to remember things for the house. Even for things Pat needed, like clothing. He would have gone about in rags, if she had not routinely bought him new things. So, it was more than keeping the house clean or cooking his favorite meal to show how much she loved him. As far as the latter... even with things he really enjoyed... he ate like a bird, anyway.

They had met fresh out of college and were quickly attracted to each other. To be perfectly honest, they soon found how compatible they were in more than just likes and dislikes. Only playfully had Scottie mocked her husband's slight build, for they were truthfully both personality-fragile beings, though physically they could have been twins .

As they had searched for work, Scottie had an idea to play the stock market with a portion of their then waning combined worth. It paid off in that they were able to stabilize their meager living conditions. Thereafter, Pat continued to play the market, to see if it would continue to play his tune.

It did.

Pat found that he had a natural affinity to be an investment broker. Finally, when neither found any employment, it was suggested, in light of Pat's 'talent' with the market, that he go into business for himself. He did and prospered reasonably, at least to the degree where he felt confident enough to propose to his then roommate, to which she accepted.

Now less than a year later after their vows, it has been just another day in the salt mines, but, as noted, they were doing quite well. With two cars and a house in the suburbs, along with several paid off charge accounts, Scottie felt that she could spoil her Pat rotten. And, as long as he let her pursue her little anniversary luxury, that was exactly what she intended to do.

It started about a month later, when Pat was dressing for work as usual. While going into his underwear drawer for a clean undershirt, he spotted a curious item that seemed out of place.

"Honey?" he said to his wife. "You seem to have made a mistake."

"Hmm?" she replied as she walked up behind him to peer over his shoulder.

"You put one of your camisoles in my drawer."

"No, I didn't," she smiled, as she came around to face him.

"Yes, you did. See? Here, look!" At that, Pat gently lifted the garment out of the drawer, by its thin, delicate looking straps.

"Try it on."

Pat just stared at her.

"Humor me."

Pat shrugged his shoulders and acquiesced. He trembled slightly as the cool satin fell softly over his nipples and about his body. His nipples were notably pronounced against the soft, glossy material.

"Do you like it?" she asked.

"Y-yes?" Pat answered somewhat positively, but with a little trepidation.

"It's yours."

"What do you mean, mine?" He was surprised to hear that reply.

"You're always making comments about my things. How nice I look in them. On a whim, I got this for you. You do like it, don't you?"

"Oh, yes!" Pat said positively. He then kissed her firmly on the lips.

"Whew! If I'd known I was going to get that kind of thanks, I'd have gotten one a long time ago!" she kidded. "But truthfully, our wedding anniversary's coming up soon, and I was running out of ideas with all of our other anniversaries!"

"Honey, I told you that it was okay, some time ago. That you didn't have to."

"But I want to do this," she pouted.

"Then, you go right ahead," Pat smiled, as he caressed her cheek, "whatever your little heart desires."

"You're not just saying that... about the cami?" she asked, seeking reassurance.

"Scottie, I like this so much, I'm going to wear it under my shirt today. Is that okay with you?"

"Oh, I just love you!" she exclaimed, as she hugged him tightly, feeling the softness of the camisole about her husband's slender body.

Within days, as he was preparing to dress for work, he found yet another surprise in his underwear drawer. Scottie had removed all of his formerly male underthings, replacing them with camisoles of varying colors. Along with matching tap panties that were cut in a briefer design than such panties usually are. "Another anniversary?" he asked, upon seeing them and not his usual underclothes.

"Nope. Not this time."

"Then, why?"

"Well, when you came back from work after wearing your first cami, you couldn't stop talking about how good it felt. Of course, I thought that you were just laying it on, to make me feel good. After all, we both know that it is feminine, but you insisted that it honestly made you feel good, and I like having you feel that way. I remembered those days you had come home bone weary from what you had to go through, I thought that if I could circumvent it, I was at least going to try.

"So, I did what I had to do... for our peace of mind. I even completed the tops with their appropriate bottoms. They're not quite boxer-style, being just a little more than your old jockey shorts. Still, a little like the camis, in feeling. So, c'mon. It's just between us... and, if it works the way I think it will, won't it be worth it?"

Pat did not say another word as he shucked his pajama bottoms and donned his first pair of new tap panties, to be followed by the matching camisole. He smiled at her when he had them on. She knew she had made the right decision as he accepted not only that day, but regularly, wearing the soft, sensuous underclothing, not asking even once for his old clothes back. And so it went for a while.

Although Pat worked more or less for himself, he also follow a normal work schedule, and so, later, about two weeks away from their first wedding anniversary, they came up with a rare four day holiday weekend. Because their primary anniversary was so close, they deliberately planned to do nothing special, saving any celebrating for the big day a couple of weeks later. Even Scottie had been sufficiently reined in, not celebrating any other 'mini anniversaries'.

Still, sitting around doing nothing, quickly took its toll in boredom. With the two of them in their feminine underwear at the time, Pat stared at his wife sitting on their sofa as she painted her toenails and fingernails a shiny metallic pink.

Finally she looked up and caught his stare, just as she finished her last toe.

"C'mere," she said, patting the cushion beside her.

Pat complied, wondering what she wanted. But, when she began painting his fingernails, he predictably started to grouse.

"Don't be a baby, Pat," she admonished "I'll take it off before you have to go back to work in a couple of days. But the toes stay!" she giggled.

Yet, she suddenly took some remover and cleaned off the nail she started with and then jumped up and scurried into the bedroom.

"Where y'going?" he asked, rather puzzled.

"I just remembered. I got some glue-on extensions. We'll do the whole manicurist bit!"

Pat started to object, but by then she was out of sight. "It surely won't do to argue when she comes back," he mumbled softly to himself with a silent chuckle.

When she returned she started on his nails, play-acting as a manicurist.

"Soooo, Miss Collins, how have you been? I haven't seen you in a while." she said as she prepared Pat's hands, buffing and cleaning each nail, before applying, shaping and polishing each extension.

"Oh, you know how it is, dear. Life for a woman on the go is never easy," he rejoined, playing along, as he artfully waved his free hand femininely.

That made Scottie drop her emery board. "Pat!"

"What?"

Scottie now looked at him curiously. "Did I imagine it?" she said aloud.

"What?" Pat repeated.

"That voice!"

"What's wrong with my voice?"

"No, not this voice! The one you had a moment ago, when I called you, 'Miss Collins'."

"Ohhh. You mean this voice?" Pat asked, as he executed a feminine voice, flaw-lessly. "I was just playing along." He returned to his masculine timbre, saying, "I apologize if it disturbed you. I won't do it anymore."

"No! Oh no! Please, I want that voice! I like it! It's fun! I just didn't know you could do it so well!"

"Let me understand. You want me to talk like this?" he said, attuning the feminine voice once more.

"Well, after all, 'Miss Collins', doesn't it make everything perfect?" Scottie asked as she grasped Pat's fingers again, to continue working on them.

"Yes," Pat replied thoughtfully, with a bright smile. "I guess it does." As Scottie continued to work on his nails, they discussed many things, mostly feminine, like clothes, make-up and such. He never realized that some of the topics discussed would come back to "haunt" him later.

Pat "played" with his "new" voice and Scottie was thrilled. Of course, he ended up that weekend with long, glistening nails done in the same metallic pink as hers. They didn't go anywhere, but found great enjoyment in each other.

On the night of their wedding anniversary Pat came home from work especially chipper, because of it. Scottie wanted to plan the whole evening. She told Pat that all she wanted him to worry about was her anniversary gift. He thought that he had never seen her so excited as the day drew near.

Now, it had finally arrived.

When he came home, almost immediately he was greeted by a resplendent Scottie. She was wearing a blue strapless gown that ended at mid-calf as it conformed enticingly to her shapeliness.

"Go into the bedroom," she instructed. "Everything for you to wear is on the bed. I've got to check dinner for a minute, and then I'll be in to help you."

Pat wanted to ask why he would need help, but, before he could open his mouth, she was back in the kitchen. With a chuckle, he then casually walked to the bedroom. What he saw when he arrived there was indeed laid out on the bed and had him stunned.

Not only was there a clean pair of his tap panties, but, instead of a camisole, there was a padded bra. Along with this, there was a garter belt, and a pair of dark stockings. At the foot of the bed, there was also a pair of bright red pumps with two inch heels.

Alongside the underthings, there was a crimson satin-and-lace dress. At the waist, there was a lacy flaring tier that further emphasized its curve while the lacy bodice mysteriously covered the bust line as the dress left the arms bare.

While he stood there surveying the complete feminine costume on the bed, she tip-toed up behind him, and, reaching quickly around him, hugged his waist and asked, "Like it? It's the one we talked about that day when I played manicurist. You were so enthusiastic in describing it. I was surprised that you remembered it, when we had both saw it, passing the dress shop the week before.

"Imagine how I felt when I found it in your size! Besides, we are so close together with a few obvious differences, you weren't that hard to fit, anyway, but..."

"Scottie, honey..." Pat cut her off. "There's something you ought to know..."

"Oh, Pat!" she exclaimed. "You're not going to spoil it for me! Please don't!"

"I wouldn't do that and you know it. I love you, especially on this day," he said softly. "But..."

"Then, 'but', nothing!" she swiftly beamed. "No more talk! Well, I want you to talk, but I don't want to hear Patrick Collins. On this special day, I want to get to know my new girlfriend, 'Patricia'. I've given Patrick enough gifts all these months. So, all of my anniversary gifts are for her tonight.

"Okay, sweetheart?"

Pat smiled broadly, and replied, "Sure thing, sweetheart," in his now-familiar feminine timbre.

But suddenly, he said, "Omigosh! The gift! Scottie, I left your anniversary gift at the jewelers and they're closed by now!"

"Calm down, Patricia," she said impressed by his voice not having changed from the feminine even with the obvious stress. "You're continuously impressing me with how versatile that voice is. But anyway, it's okay. My husband can give me his gift tomorrow. After all, this works out perfectly, as now I have you completely to myself tonight.

"Now, sit. 'The manicurist' is about to turn into 'the beautician'. I even bought you a new wig. Then, we'll have you ready to eat..." At this she smiled wickedly, adding, "along with dinner." She was very happy that her husband did not react negatively. It was just that since that day, weeks ago, after doing Pat's nails with him using his newfound feminine voice, she was strangely thrilled with him.

It was then that Scottie was genuinely ecstatic in giving him the original camisole gift months ago and happy that she was able to extend it even more, with the panties and matching sets. It was at the latter occasion that she became very curious, to see just how much further she could take Pat into femininity. The nails had been another step when he had also been able to do the marvelous female voice impression. Thus, in spite of his obvious masculinity, he already became "Patricia" to her from then on, even if only in her mind.

At dinner time, they made their appearances, well, two women seemed to do the final table setting and serving.

Then, during dessert, amid subdued lighting, she looked at him in his feminine finery, seemingly seeing a handsome if not beautiful woman across from her at the table, and asked, "Do you mind if I call you 'Trisha' instead of 'Patricia' when you're dressed like this? It'll be sort of a nickname, just between us girls, keeping you totally separate from Pat."

"Are you implying that you want me to dress like a woman for you again after tonight?" He just had to ask.

"Well, I particularly bought the kind of wig that would be cool enough for you to even sleep in, if you wanted to. And..." there was a hesitation, "Would you?" Scottie implored, gazing into his made-up face framed by the lengthy, stylish blonde wig.

"You said that you had more presents for me? I mean... 'Trisha'?" It was his way of saying that it was all right.

Right then, Scottie left the remainder of her dessert, good as it may have tasted, to rush out through the living room to where she had packages stored away in the hall closet with Trisha immediately behind her, They carried them into the living room where both were soon tearing away wrapping paper from boxes that hid teddies, shoes, different kinds of panties, and brassieres with specially-inserted padding along with blouses, skirts and a dress or two.

Even a "standby" wig was also unpacked, in case something happening with the one Trisha was presently wearing. She had even bought him jewelry including bracelets for his slim wrists as well as his trim ankles. There was also a delicate yet versatile gold watch that could go from wrist to a chain around her neck.

Needless to say, Trisha was overwhelmed by it all, and was moved to tears. "I'm going to have to take tomorrow off, just to match these gifts in quantity for you."

But Scottie said, "Forget that. You're all the gift I want, Trisha. If you really want to balance the scales, though, take tomorrow off anyway. Let's go out together, Trisha and I, making a day of it. We can even pick up the gift that Pat already bought for me. I'd just like to spend a little more time with you, before you have to go away for a while."

"Okay," Trisha smiled warmly, as he agreed. She enjoyed his enthusiasm over her gifts, not questioning where it came from. That night was a night of complete femininity. He wore a teddy instead of his usual pajamas and they celebrated almost as vigorously, if not more so, than they had on their wedding night a year before.

On the next day, Pat was "sick" and stayed "home" as the couple, Trisha and Scottie, went out in public as two females. Trisha appeared to Scottie to be remarkably at ease in being feminine which brought her great joy.

There was some amazement for Scottie early on such as when Trisha 'properly' rearranging her crotch to disguise its masculinity to emulate a smooth femininity. But she chalked it up to some natural penchant and common sense similar to marketing ability. Of course, she figured that he was also trying very much to please her since she obviously wanted Trisha's company about as much as he wanted hers.

Trisha was utterly feminine overall, even back home, when they returned exhausted from their outing. Not once was there even as much as an exaggerated or overly-feminine gesture or word that could be considered as perhaps 'homosexually swishy'. Trisha was naturally the way 'she' is. For the moment, however, Scottie was full of love having receiving her jeweled charm bracelet that Pat had bought her.

Earlier at the jewelers, right in front of Trisha, she had ordered a second charm bracelet, just like hers, one for her girlfriend. Pat's original plan in giving her the bracelet, had been to give her an additional trinket each time she "remembered" another anniversary. In return, however, there was a joke in that she wanted to immediately double her pleasure in ordering Trisha a duplicate bracelet.

Although it was readily but sadly resigned on their anniversary night for Trisha to 'reappear' only on special occasions, almost every other day thereafter, Scottie always found some excuse for Trisha's return. For example, on one day, Scottie wanted Pat to let Trisha try on some women's jeans and tee-shirts. Of course, because Pat was only wearing camisoles to work underneath his shirts, the feminine shirt also necessitated wearing a bra instead of a camisole, to go with his panties.

Another time, she bought her 'proper' women's sneakers to go with the jeans. On yet another day, she wanted to get Trisha's opinion on earrings, which even led to them going out and getting Trisha's ears pierced. Trisha was leery of doing it as it would show, but Scottie merely poo-pooed it and said that no one would care and it wouldn't make a difference if they did as it was now fashionable for men to have pierced ears. He acquiesced, but reluctantly while looking at the two studs penetrating each earlobe.

Each time, as Pat would give in to Trisha's reappearance, Scottie would insist on him not speaking to her until Trisha was completely there, and not just in voice. She would even be impatient if Trisha took too long to get ready. After the women's sneakers gift, Scottie even sat Pat down for nightly make-up lessons, just so that Trisha would be ready with a minimum of time on 'her' own.

Having Trisha these nights meant that she had Trisha all that night long, even after the make-up had been removed. She even slyly extended Trisha's presence, by buying her sleep wear other than just teddies to wear at bedtime, (whenever she could). But it

never lasted long enough for her even though Trisha did learn her beauty lessons swiftly.

Then, soon enough, it came. Trisha Collins demanded a captive audience one night after dinner. They were both wearing women's jeans, sneakers and lacy tee-shirts with Trisha's quite notably pushed out by a full bra. But the reason for the demand was that this was the day that her ear lobes had finally healed and she had received her first pairs of real earrings. A slightly weighty pearl-and-gold set and a "closed" hoop.

With great flourish, well, as much as can be had, she got Scottie to remove the original studs and replace them with these earrings, reveling in the difference in feeling. Trisha fingered the jewelry in her ears a moment before speaking again, already commanding Scottie's full attention.

"Scottie, there's only one way I can say this. I hope it doesn't make you feel strange, but it's just that you've been finding every and any excuse to get *me...* Trisha... 'out of the box', so to speak."

Abruptly, Trisha caught herself, then quickly added, "Before I say anything more, let me ask you this. Why am I so important to you? That is, to be Trisha. Another woman would be disgusted in having her husband so feminine. For a while, you went on a tremendous 'anniversary' gift kick. I appreciated it, I really did. Especially when you let me off the hook, to have to counter your every gift with gifts of my own. But, when you 'invented' Trisha, I felt that I owed it to you to be her every time you wanted her around because of your gift-giving..."

The way Trisha was talking, Scottie felt as if her world was coming to an end. She nervously... and a little sadly... cut in, to say, "A- Are you telling me that I went too far? That you don't want to be Trisha anymore?"

"Oh no, Scottie!" Trisha exclaimed, as she quickly grabbed Scottie by the shoulders and hugged her tightly. "I have my reasons why I'm asking, but I have to know yours. Please, ... will you tell me why you're so into Trisha?"

Scottie eased away from Trisha's embrace and wiped stillborn tears from her eyes, as she began.

"These years with you have been fantastic. Especially this last one of being married to you. If not for you, I would've somehow been a mere secretary somewhere. I had college credentials to do so much more, but the jobs just weren't out there. Meeting you... falling in love with you... with you wanting to marry me, I wanted to make sure that you loved me forever.

"So, I invented the anniversary thing. When I bought you your first cami on a whim, an idea grew from there. It grew because of the fact that we were already officially in a new crowd. After a while I saw that the crowd of our financial bracket... mostly clients of yours... were just a stuck-up bunch of rich rootie-tooties; I couldn't stand them. Still, I was lonesome for friends. You know... women I like and vice-versa.

"But any girlfriends of my past were long gone and it just wasn't worth the effort to seek them out. As I didn't start out with money, they might now feel the same way about me as I felt about our new group. "It was easier to just create you to be my girlfriend. And, you turned out to be more than I could ever have imagined." Scottie paused long before continuing. She was looking lovingly into his eyes mouthing words that did not come out at once. Pat just waited until she had it all together.

"I had Pat when I wanted sex and I was steadily having Trisha the rest of the time. I had you both at the same time. Beginning from those 'make-up nights' after I got you more feminine sleep wear, you would get ready for me when you came home, and it even lasted after we went to bed. It also felt great that my girlfriend had a 'little something extra' to sexually please me. Trisha was the best friend I ever had because I knew that she loved me... in more ways than one."

"Aww, honey, I'm touched." Trisha then very intimately and tenderly kissed her.

When they broke, Trisha grinned at a realization and said, "Y'know, even though I've worn the clothes at bedtime... and occasionally the wig when I didn't have to go to work the next day... otherwise, I thought that it was always Pat in bed with you.

"This is the first time that I know of that you've let Trisha really kiss you."

Scottie blushed but said, "Does this mean that Trisha will be kissing me again?"

Trisha knew exactly what Scottie meant. "Scottie... honey, that's why I wanted to talk with you. I needed to know how you really felt about Trisha.

He squared his shoulders, causing his ersatz breasts to protrude even more. "Y'see, I've been doing something for almost a week now and I had to catch myself when I saw the enormity of what I had done."

"What did you do?"

"Well... no more beating around the bush. Scottie, the truth is, I like being Trisha. As of tonight, I'd like to be Trisha full-time, putting the old 'Pat Collins' to rest."

Scottie's eyes lit up. This was what she'd wanted when she asked about Trisha kissing her again. Now that everything was out in the open, she sincerely wanted Trisha around all of the time. But reality did check in. "But what about the job?"

"That's the other part. I'm at a lull in the business. Being that it is a business of one, it is largely due to my contacts that I stay in business. I've discovered that my line of work is by word-of-mouth on both ends. So, as I found myself getting more comfortable with Trisha, I took a chance in hiring her for the job."

Scottie's eyes widened, "How did you do that? Not once did you leave for work in a dress!"

Trisha just smiled, "This past week, although Pat was there physically, on a whim it was Trisha that answered the phones. As I said, things were slow. So, out of boredom, I answered the calls as her... even drumming up new business.

"By the end of the week, my phone-callers were arriving to do business with 'Pat Collins, the woman'. I was shocked that my frivolous action had attracted so, ... well, so many ... people. I then told them that Trisha... as she preferred to be called... was out for the rest of the week. But that she would return on Monday. I called myself a made-up male name, saying that I was filling in for the remainder of the week.

"You know? I couldn't just tell them the absolute truth. Besides, as Trisha, I would be giving them the same good job as I would as Pat. So, it really wouldn't make that much difference in job performance. In any event, we just can't afford to turn away so much new business. I didn't know what else to do but to be Trisha for the job. It was no problem... except in finding out exactly how you felt about my being Trisha on a longer term basis."

"This is great!" Scottie exclaimed. "I love you, Trisha!" she said as she clasped her girlfriend's hands tightly.

"You're letting Pat go awfully easily..." Trisha said softly.

"Hey!" Scottie shouted, as she swiftly patted Trisha's flattened crotch, "We've already been in bed together, girl! By now, you should know better that there are no alternatives in that department! I've already been able to go into your panties for whatever I needed! ... As far as Pat's concerned, that's something a woman normally doesn't have!"

"Well, anyway, as far as my older customers that are still with me are concerned, if they can't handle it, I'm not the only one in the book. But I have been making them money and that's why they came to me in the first place. That should have nothing to do with my preference for the way I act or dress!"

"Enough! Stop!" Scottie announced. "You can still have your wigs until your hair grows out more fully. But let's see what hair style we can put this hair of yours into, for now."

And so, the "real" life for Patricia Collins officially began, even as the life for Patrick Collins ended. Or more correctly, there was only Trisha Collins.

It wasn't long thereafter that Trisha's mother, Emily, called long-distance, just to chat with Scottie and find out what was going on with their young family. They talked for quite a while, for they had long since made a very amiable friendship as in-laws. As such, Emily refrained in being a "stereotypical meddling mother-in-law", but she did like to occasionally call and chat and see what was new. She opened usually with "This is your nosy mother-in-law, what are you doing to my son?"

She was kidding when she said this, of course, and they both knew it, but regardless, her visits in person or merely over the phone were rare.

The present call was going along just fine. That is, until Scottie slipped in calling Pat "she." Then, when she stuttered in correcting herself, Emily just laughed, "He finally got back into skirts, I see."

Scottie did not understand what Emily was talking about for the moment. Then, it suddenly hit her. But, for the sake of Scottie and Trisha's secret, as she grasped what Emily was saying, Scottie feigned ignorance.

Emily then said, "Patty was a beautiful girl, once she began dressing up. We'd have great times together. Just like you and I now, Scottie. I'd even get a kick out of being a mother who looked as young as her daughter.

"Patty's father, Craig, was such a macho man. But Pat was always a frail child. Still, Craig wanted Pat to be the same as him.