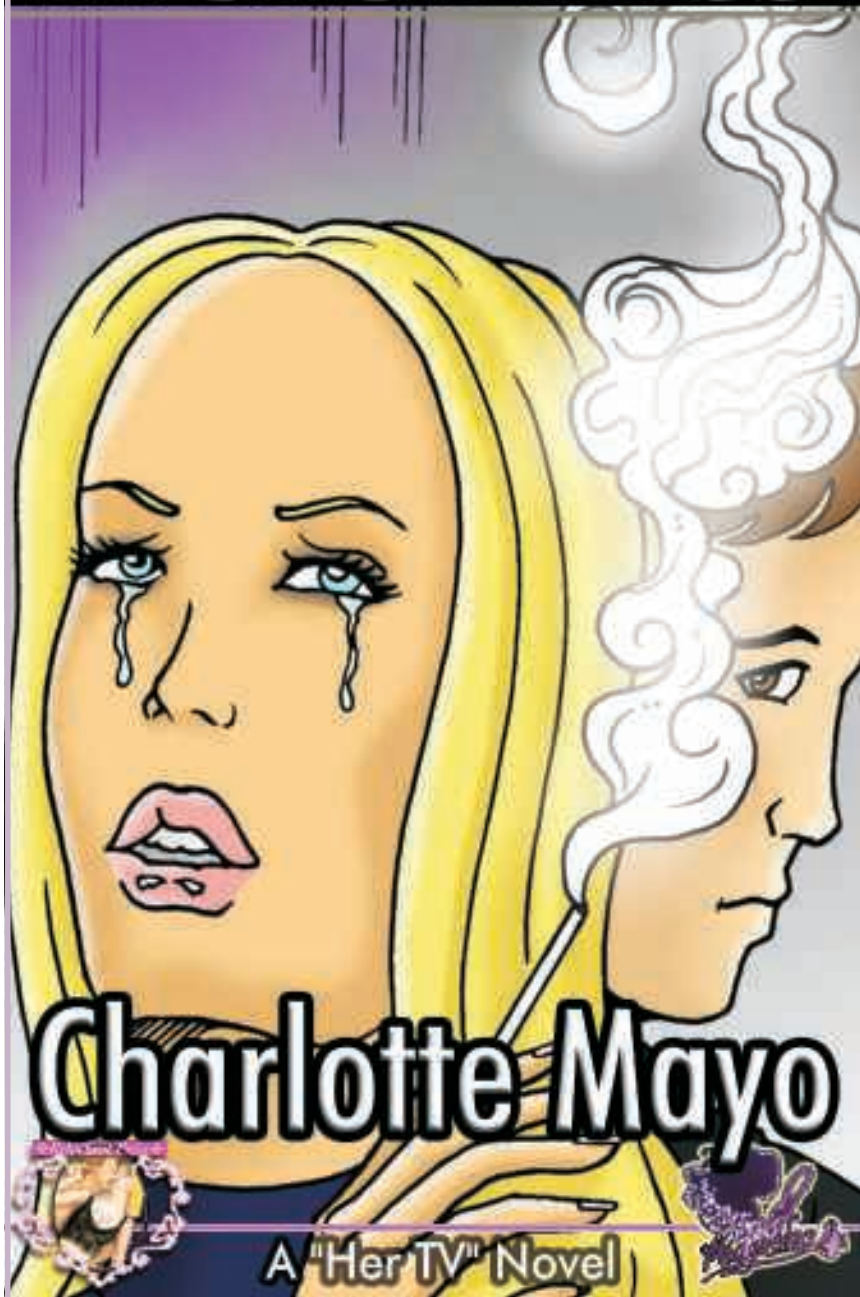


French Miss



Charlotte Mayo

A "Her TV" Novel

Reluctant Press TV/TS Publishers

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FRENCH MISS

BY CHARLOTTE MAYO

Preface

I was about sixteen or seventeen years of age and I was on a cycling holiday with a friend on the Isle of Wight. One day, we went to a newsagent and tried to look at some pornographic magazines which were always on the top shelf. We ended up buying a couple of magazines and took them back to our tent to read. One was a small, A5 size, magazine called Forum and didn't have any photographs so didn't interest my friend but I casually flicked through it and started to read a confessional piece by a young Frenchman who had come over to London in the 1970's to learn English. I think he worked in a hotel during the day but once a week he went to an English language evening class. Of course, like his great predecessor, Chevalier D'Eon Beaumont, this Frenchman had a penchant for wearing women's clothing and he asked the tutor if she would mind him coming to the lessons en femme.

The female tutor asked the class and the outcome was that they had no objection. I recall him writing about getting dressed and travelling on the London Underground to the evening class. One time he had worn a black jumper, a black skirt with splits up the sides and black, knee length boots. Whilst my friend gazed at the big busted models on the pages of the more conventional magazine, I imagined how nice it would be to be that Frenchmen – to get dressed up in sensual underwear, travel on the tube and attend an evening class, as a transvestite, with everyone knowing and not minding. It was the first time I had had any “contact” (albeit through the pages of a magazine), with a fellow cross-dresser and it excited and enthralled me no end. I remember the author was engaged to be married and was enjoying his brief sojourn in London prior to a return to France and marital commitments – indeed, whilst learning English, had been the excuse for travel to Britain – a chance to dress freely was the real motivation behind the journey over the Channel.

I kept that copy of Forum long after we had returned from our own brief, holiday and read the story many times over the years but, alas, it was lost long ago but here, I imagine his story...

Introduction

My name is Keith Ian Powys and I am the investigating officer in the Georges Marcel case. A search of Georges’ flat uncovered some diaries which I was able to remove without anyone noticing. I took them home and read them with a keen interest and, what I have faithfully reproduced here, is basically the story that was told in those diaries. After the investigation I returned the journals to his sisters but the diaries would not have helped solve the case. I apologise in advance for some of the grammar and spelling as I

translated directly from the original text: Georges struggled with his verbs and sometimes used French words which I had to translate, also he struggled with the past and present tense and sometimes there is a mixture in the entries which I, a mere amateur proof reader, found hard to correct. But first I will provide you with a bit of background, as told to me by Georges himself, who, as you will see, I became very well acquainted with during his brief time in London - I hope I provided him with some positive moments. Indeed, the reason why I was anxious to remove the diaries was because I knew my name would be in them and I did not want this information to be known publicly or to the police.

So, the situation, as I understood it from Georges, was thus: Georges was born in 1956 making him twenty in 1976 - or nineteen when he first came to London. He came from an upper middle class - or bourgeois - French family - and they lived in the suburbs of Paris. Emilie was the eldest child and then there was another sister who was two years younger than Emilie called, Sophie and then, Georges was a year younger than her.

From what Georges told me he was close to his two sisters and he used to play with them a lot. He, himself, was a slight, shy boy who did not have many friends. Emilie and Sophie were protective of Georges. Georges mother was well-organised and always well attired; well, she was a Parisian and she knew she had high standards to keep up - she passed her love of fashion and femininity on to her two daughters (and also unwittingly to Georges!). Georges father, in contrast, was a big, important man - he did something in the Ministry of Something or Other. He wasn't at home much - well, he worked late and he also had a mistress or two on the go - it was the French way - Georges told me that his mother knew all about his extra-marital affairs and didn't mind!

His long-standing mistress even phoned his mother and cried on her shoulder when Georges' father left her for a younger model – Georges' mother just took it in her stride, sure in the knowledge that her husband would not leave her. I guess, therefore, Georges didn't have many male role models and if he did, they were not very good ones; certainly he played with Emilie and Sophie a lot and went shopping with them and his mother so I guess he was shaped by the women in his life rather than the men.

From what Georges told me he was pretty average at school – he didn't make a fuss nor get into much trouble, he had friends and was fairly normal apart from the occasional forage into his sisters' and his mother's wardrobes. Apparently, his sisters and mother knew all about it from an early stage, something which is borne out by some of the entries in this diary. Well, I guess, Georges felt that he had three wardrobes to choose from – his mother's and two sisters, and they were all full of nice, feminine clothing – what could be better for a want to be transvestite! He told me that his sisters used to tell him off for wearing their clothes but they didn't take it too seriously – they thought it was just a phase he was going through and it was an "open secret". Georges told me that his mother used to say,

"Don't tell your dad," and that was that. It was just put down as something he did occasionally. I guess his mother hoped he'd "grow out" of it as parents often do. According to Georges there were times when he tried to stop because he felt guilty about wearing the clothes of sisters and mother – especially when he ruined them (he had once spilt soup down a brand new dress of Sophie's and she had gone ballistic) but, like all transvestites, it didn't matter how long he tried to repress the urge, he always came back to it, it was a compulsion. Being a good Catholic, he even confessed his urges to the priest who said it was

wicked and wrong and quoted Deuteronomy 22:5 at him:

“A woman shall not wear a man’s garment, nor shall a man put on a woman’s cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD your God.”

After, he tried to give up but it was no good – the lure of femininity was too great.

Georges told me that he had always liked Celia – she was a friend of Emilie’s from school and she often used to come around and play in the garden with Georges, Emilie and Sophie. She was three years older than Georges. She went to University and then she got a job in Paris in marketing – she was good at designs, very imaginative. Georges showed me some pictures of her the night I came around to his apartment and he cooked me dinner, he was very fond of her. He told me that when she came around to see his sister, she was always smiling and “smelt nice”. In the pictures, Georges showed me, she was cute, with very short blond hair, slim too, and fashionable, of course. Georges started dating her when he was a young man of eighteen and she was twenty-one – she was his first serious girlfriend and he was really keen on her – in fact he lost his virginity.

Georges had left school a year or so earlier and had taken a job in Paris – working at the Ministry as a clerk – the same place his dad worked. It was just dealing with paper and it must have been mind-numbingly boring for a person of Georges imagination and ability – for, to me, he was a very talented and resourceful lad as you will see from the diary entries when we get onto them.

Apparently, one night he told Celia, Sophie, Emilie and his mum that he fancied going to London to learn

English – his mum and sisters supported him and apparently Celia actually encouraged him to go (for reasons which would become apparent later – she had already become bored with poor Georges who, she felt, was immature and she was “two timing” him with a boy she had met at University whom she continued to see in Paris – she did not like to tell Georges due to her friendship with Emilie). Later, when Georges told his dad, he was dead against the plan.

“What? You want to learn English? Well, do it over here – you don’t need to go to England to learn it. There are plenty of classes.”

Georges had tried to explain that apart from learning English he also wanted to experience a different culture, have a little adventure. His dad had been forthright in his opposition.

“France is such a beautiful country, there is no need for anyone to leave France. Never. Why we have skiing in the Alps, beaches in the south, the best cuisine in the world – only a numbskull would want to leave France. You need to buckle down, my lad, and get on in life not drift around like some vagrant. What culture has London got, I ask you? None. The English are just a bunch of bone heads. If you go there then I’ll not give you one Franc towards your crazy plan.”

His dad was upset that Georges wanted to leave the dull Ministry job. His dad had been responsible for him getting the job and he had hoped that Georges, as the only son, would follow in his footsteps and make a great career out of it.

To Georges’ father, and people of his generation, there was no point in travelling – France had everything – as he had told Georges - beautiful beaches, ski resorts, the world’s best cuisine, fantastic architecture, the greatest arts and literature – what was

the point in travelling? Even if it were just over the channel – especially if it was just over the channel.

Georges suspected that Sophie and Emilie knew there was an ulterior motive – that he wanted to expand his “dressing” and knew he could not do that whilst living at home whereas if he went abroad, why he would be a free agent. In fact, when I met with Emilie and Sophie, to hand back the diaries, and his other personal possessions, they tearfully told me that they knew he wore female clothing and that it was one of his motivations for leaving Paris.

Apparently, once he had bought some pretty, lacy underwear, which Emilie had seen in his shopping bag. He had told her he had bought it as a present for Celia, however, when Emilie had asked Celia, a few weeks later, if she had liked Georges’ present she had said she had never got it so Emilie realised that her younger brother he had bought the underwear for himself. Emilie had told Sophie, of course, as they were very close and they had giggled like school girls at their brother’s peccadilloes.

Apparently, Sophie and Emilie would show each other dresses Georges had worn (and ruined) and even argue with each other about whose clothes he preferred. But at the same time, they both felt sorry for him, and protective of him, especially as they knew that their dictatorial father would give him a good hiding and disown him if he ever found out. Emilie even read up on “transvestites” when she went to The University de Lyon to study her arts degree and she tried to broach the subject with Georges but he would clam up – perhaps if he had talked... well, things might have turned out differently... maybe he would have stayed in Paris which would have been better for him in the long run. Travelling to London? Well it was a risk. He knew no one. He had no friends

and had limited language but our Georges was a brave young man. Maybe too brave.

In preparation for his journey, Georges had written to a number of hotels in London (Emilie had helped him translate the letters to English) and one had said they would employ him in the kitchen – washing up and preparing food – the chef, Claude, was also French and was keen to talk to someone in his native tongue.

So, aged just nineteen, Georges took a train from Garde de Nord station to Calais and then a ferry to Dover and then another train to London. All he carried with him was a small, brown suitcase held together with a belt as it was so full to bursting. That morning he had kissed his mother, Emilie, Celia and Sophie “goodbye” at the station. His obstinate father wasn’t present at the send-off insisting that Georges was making a big “mistake” and stating that he had brought “shame” on the family by quitting the Ministry job. On the morning of Georges’ departure, he had walked into Georges’ bedroom, at 7am, before he had departed for work, and said a cold “Goodbye” – and, without awaiting a reply, he had gone. His father couldn’t understand how a job as a washer-up in a hotel in London was better than being a clerk in the Ministry with the possibility of promotion and a full pension but he didn’t understand Georges and never would.

When Georges left Paris he promised to write, of course, but his letters would conceal his true intentions – and they would not tell his family much about what he was really doing in “Londres” – no, that would be left to his dairies. Enclosed, here, are extracts from those diaries which I wish you to publish as I believe they include important cultural and historic information which is of relevance to the transgender community today.

On arrival in London Georges went to a youth hostel in London with bunk beds and communal facilities. Then he found the hotel where he was to work. It was called The Marlborough. He was shown to the kitchen and introduced to the chef, Claude, who shook him warmly by the hand and spoke to him in French. Georges started work the next day. His sisters tell me he had never kept a diary before he left for England but I suspect he wanted to record his road to femininity and possibly, because, he was on his own, keeping a journal helped him feel a bit closer to humanity. He stayed in the youth hostel for a couple of weeks but soon he was looking for lodgings... so his diary entries begin...

The Diary of Georges Marcel: 1976.

Thursday, 19th February, 1976

Today I find the perfect lodgings! I have been looking and looking and today I came up “trumps” as the English say! Perfect! A downstairs one bedroom flat in a Georgian property on Arlington Road just off the High Street in North London. The house had been converted into flats or apartments but the one I choose was in the basement – the landlady, Mrs Sullivan, showed me several flats that she owned and this was the fourth one. As soon as I saw it, I knew it must be mine! There are black railings and then a marble path to the blue front door but my set of rooms are reached by steps down from the path to a subterranean world where my rooms are based – below the pavement! It was the old scullery and kitchen when the house was a grand house in the early Eighteenth century. The rooms, though dark, are self-contained with a living area, which consists of a front room and dining area with a kitchen area incorporated in the dining area plus a bathroom and a bedroom. The apartment is sparsely furnished with

an old, red settee and an armchair in the front of the apartment and also a sideboard and then a table and four chairs in the dining area – the dining area is half the space of the front room and next to it is the bedroom and then, along the bedroom/dining room wall there is the kitchen area with a large fridge, a sink, a cooker and work service – at the back is a bathroom with bathtub, sink and toilet. Both the kitchen/diner and bathroom have windows looking out onto the courtyard where the steel dustbins are kept – each has a number corresponding to the flats. There is a door on the side of the building behind which are stone steps leading up to the rooms above – this gives access to the courtyard and is also a fire escape for the rooms above mine.

Mrs Sullivan, who is the land lady, is pleased I have a job and a letter also from the Ministry which states that I am “honest” and “reliable” and she agrees to take me on. I pay a deposit and a month’s rent in advance. I can’t wait to move out of the youth hostel and into my new apartment. I am so excited when we sit at the dining room table and complete the paperwork. At one point she says to me,

“You’ll rattle around a bit in here on your own, really this is for a couple... perhaps with a child.”

“I’ll be alright,” I say. And I know I will be. I am already starting to make plans! My transvestite days are just around the corner.

Friday, 26th February, 1976.

My mother has sent me the money I need to establish myself in the flat. She says, in her note with the cheque, – “don’t tell your sisters or your father!” Fortunately, I have always been my mother’s favourite being a boy and the youngest so, whilst I have proven a disappointment to my father, to my mother I am

still her “blue eyed boy” which is perhaps another reason why she brushed off my trips into her wardrobe!

Saturday, 27th February, 1976

I move out of the awful dormitory lodgings in the youth hostel which I have been staying in for three weeks now and into my own place at last! It feels so great to put the key in the door and know I can't be disturbed. Even though it is only rented I feel like it is mine. I put my suit case on the bed and take out the coloured shirts and work trousers which I hang up in the old wooden wardrobe on wire hangers that have been left behind by the previous occupant. The wardrobe smells musty as does the whole flat – being below pavement level it does not get a lot of air and it dangerous to leave the windows open at the front – also I think it is a bit damp. The land lady, Mrs Sullivan, told me that no one wants flats in London these days as London is down at heel. She says,

“I can never see a time when property costs much in London – big cities have had their day.”

Which I think is right for it is the same in Paris – though Paris is a lot nicer than London and still people want to live their but even so some areas are a not nice places to live. Also, it is much the same in New York.

She told me it has been hard to let the large apartments out. She says there are not many people like me that want a whole place to themselves and are prepared to pay the extra rent. Single rooms are more popular but Britain is going through a big recession and no one wants to live in London, she says. Mrs Sullivan told me that most of the people who want rented accommodation are immigrants but she would rather rent the flat to a nice French lad than

some of the “coloureds” who play loud music and smoke pot if she has the choice. Still, she doesn’t know about my kinky perversion! Maybe that would put her off! Who knows! I do not intend to tell her.

I hang up my bell-bottom trousers and close the wardrobe door. At the bottom of my suitcase is a small, zipped bag, it contains the only female clothes I own in the world – a white, silky, baby doll nightie and a pair of red, French knickers, laced in black and a pink slip – I had bought the garments in my lunch hour, when I worked as a clerk in Paris, on the pretext of buying them for Celia. When I was living at home my first attempts at buying female clothing had not been successful. I had asked Emilie to buy them and I then pretended to give them as gifts to Celia but, had, of course, kept them. However, my scheme came unstuck when Emilie had asked Celia if she had liked the matching bra and knicker set I had bought her and was greeted by bemusement by Celia – earlier Celia had shown the same reaction when my sister had asked her if she had liked the knickers I had bought her which she had seen in my shopping bag. Emilie had, needless to say, guessed that the items were for me. Even so, she told me about the bra and knicker set and so Celia did not become suspicious, I had had to quickly wrap up the offending items and tell Celia I had “forgotten” about them – fortunately I had not tried them on. That won’t happen this time – no one knows Celia... she is just an anonymous girl in Paris.

Anyway, I place the female clothes neatly in a drawer and set out some of my cutlery and plates, dishes, cups and glasses which I bought in a charity chop before I moved in. Then I walk to a small super Marché called Tesco and buy some bacon, eggs, tomatoes, baked beans, bread, sauce, salt and pepper and milk as well as a bottle of white wine. I then go to a newsagent and buy some John Player Special ciga-

rettes and matches. I come back and place the food in the fridge and in the cupboards – which still look very bare and could do with a good clean. In fact, the whole apartment looks sparse as I have so few belongings. I have a small transistor radio which I listen to as I open the wine and pour myself a glass. Then I take the cellophane off the cigarettes and light one up. I sit at the small table smoking and drinking; thinking about the great days ahead. God, it feels good.

Monday, 1st March, 1976

I return to work a happy man - having my own place for the first time in my life – and my own income has released the inner Christina in me. I have long hair and a slight figure and already a guy, mistaking me for a girl, has pinched my bum on the tube! After work (I am on earlies and doing the breakfasts which I enjoy as I start at 7am and I am finished by 2.30pm) I went shopping and bought some Gillette razors and more food from the Tesco super Marché and then went to a department store where I purchased lingerie (pretending it was for a girlfriend) – then I spent a night in the bath shaving all my hair off. Once I am smoothed skinned, I peel on stockings and attach them to a suspender belt and then pull on my black and red French knickers – next I add the bra I had bought today in a department store and roll up some old clothes I had torn up to make a bust. I start to make a list of things I need like proper boobs, lingerie, skirts, dresses and blouses – there is so much to get – I am so pleased mum has mailed me some money to furnish the flat – most of it will go on female clothing. Then I wrap a cream coloured silk negligee around me which I bought today also and potter around the kitchen making myself my dinner which consists of beans on toast. So, dressed I sit and listen to my transistor radio – I have decided to buy a bigger radio. Fortunately, I can often get breakfast at the

hotel as, when we have finished plating up the breakfast for the guests and the morning chef has had his breakfast, there is normally some spare for the kitchen staff so that is good.

Tuesday, 2nd March, 1976

I don't dress tonight as I have seen a shop selling second hand televisions and they bring it around to me and set it up – I also buy a better radio from the same shop which is on the High Street. I called in there yesterday when I was out shopping.

Wednesday, 3rd March, 1976.

I'm on early shift all week so when I finish, I do a bit of shopping and buy a make-up kit which I pretend is a present. Then come home and have a bath, I paint my nails a nice crimson colour (I have bought nail varnish too) and then, dressed in my lingerie (I now have a Rose pink nightdress) I practise make-up on my face. The practice goes well and I am pleased with the result.

Thursday, 4th March, 1976

When I come home from work today, I discover a pile of mail order catalogues! Freemans, Kays, Great Universal and Littlewoods! I have ordered them from adverts in the paper as I wish to start buying clothes.

Friday, 5th March, 1976

I write letters home to mum, Sophie and Emilie telling them that I am settling in well. I am off tomorrow and intend to take the letters to the post office and buy some stamps for France. I also went to the pay phone, which is called a phone box, and call Celia but she didn't seem that enthusiastic about

hearing from me. I think she has gone “cold” on me but I do not care.

Saturday, 6th March, 1976

It is my first day off and I am pleased of the break. The hours are long and irregular but the job is OK – I actually like the morning shift best – doing the evening shift is tough as I have to catch a bus home late at night but that doesn’t concern me too much. I know when I have time off, I can have a long bath, a shave and a practice session with the make-up or with wearing the clothes when they arrive for, I have ordered already from the catalogues! Of course, like most, transvestites I long to go out en femme – to walk along the street, that is the dream, that is my motivation. I know to do it I will need a wig as my hair isn’t good enough, like most men’s hair it just doesn’t have the same silky feel and shine as women’s hair does. I see a lot of men on the tube, and in the street, with long hair and they still look like men.

I have discovered a big, thick paper published once a week called Exchange and Mart where you can buy pretty much everything. In that I found adverts for transvestites and cross dressers services as well as clothing – a number of the adverts for lady’s clothes state: female callers only - I guess a lot of transvestites use the small adverts. However, through the Mart I have found an advert for a theatrical agency. I contacted them earlier in the week and made an appointment and on Saturday – today - it is the day of the appointment. I take the tube to East London, the lady who serves me knows, of course, for I guess I wasn’t the first person that had pretended that I was taking my first steps on the boards but was actually taking them on the pavements! I give the lady a long story, in broken English, but she realised I was a transvestite and it was a bit stupid really – sometimes it is better not to have the language as people

make allowances. In future I will tell the truth – it is the best policy. She tries various wig styles on me until we settle one which suits me – it is dark brown and shoulder length and quite curly. I can't wait to see what it looks like with my full make-up.

Monday, 8th March, 1976

Today, I receive a letter from Celia saying she wants to finish the relationship. She blames me for being away for so long. She says the twelve-week English course, that I had originally intended to sign up to, has become two months and I am no nearer starting the course, which is true but the courses run throughout the year and I am determined to get myself – or get Christina – organised before I begin it. I have told the family it is tiring as the flat is unfurnished (partially true) and I have to buy things for the flat and the hours at work are long and irregular.

Tuesday, 9th March, 1976

When one door shuts another one opens – on my break I was telling this waitress at work, Fiona Nelson, about Celia and she could see I was upset (I was more upset than I cared to admit – I was really smitten by Celia) anyway, she suggested we go for a drink when we finished our shifts so we could talk about it. So, we went for a drink in the small pub around the corner from Marlborough Hotel. She said she liked my French accent – she found it sexy. She could speak a little French which she had learned at school – she actually had what they call an O' Level in it - and with my limited English we kind of communicate. We agreed to go to the movies on Friday. There is a film showing called Jaws which is very popular and she wants to see. I have mixed feelings about dating as it will curtail my dressing but being a red-blooded Frenchman, I need to satisfy my carnal needs so I am happy enough. She likes the fact I have

my own flat as she lives with her parents so I am guessing she also has some carnal need to satisfy! I know there will be explaining to be done – the shaving – the smooth skin – it is hard to justify but as the English say “I will cross that bridge when I come to it.”

Wednesday, 7th April, 1976

“Are you one of those homosexuals?” Fiona asked me when I finally plucked up courage to tell her about my dressing habit – she had found her way into my bed by then and we had enjoyed many passionate nights together. Of course, she had asked about my hairless state the first time... and the second and the third time... we had made love and I had fobbed her off with some lame excuses but I knew, eventually, I would have to tell her. I have gathered, from what I have read about transvestites, that this was a fairly normal response.

“No,” I reassured her, “I just like women’s clothes.”

“It’s odd,” She said. “I’ve never, ever heard of that before, perhaps it’s because you are French.”

We were sitting in her car, having come back from one of our regular trips to the cinema; Fiona likes the cinema.

“No, it’s not that,” I say. “Men, all around the world do it.”

Whether or not she believes me I can’t say. I think there was a part of her that thought that my “dressing” stemmed from the fact I was French rather than being a universal language. I try to explain a bit more – about having two sisters (attractive and stylish) and a mother (attractive and stylish) and an absent father.

“OK,” Fiona says. “The important thing is that you’re not one of those Nancy boys,” she flaps her hand down at the wrist which is what people do to indicate a man prefers men. “I would hate to waste my time on a Nancy boy. I can’t tell my mum and dad though; they would think you were a Nancy boy no matter what I said.”

I like Fiona, she is a nice girl, slim, mousy hair with big, unblinking, hazel eyes and it’s nice to have a friend in London to do things with though it does mean “Christina” doesn’t come out as much as she should... and I am losing practice time. I am still desperate to go for a walk dressed.

Thursday, 8th April, 1976

The mail order agent brought around my first orders from the catalogues – I couldn’t wait to try them on. She is pleased she has another regular customer and she obviously doesn’t care about the fact that the clothes are for me. She asks me if I live alone and I tell her “I do” which kind of tells her they are for me. She says she works for all the catalogue companies so will bring all the clothes I order which is good. I tell her a good place to put them, if I’m not in, and also tell her the best times to call to catch me in.

Friday, 9th April, 1976

Both Fiona and I are off so we go to Greenwich for the day. We walk around the park and then go to a nice pub in Greenwich called The Spanish Tavern and have lunch – she is wearing a grey and black woollen mini dress and lovely tight, knee high black boots. I sit with my arm around her. The leather of my brown jacket creaks as it new (a catalogue purchase) - I also have a coloured shirt on with a large winged collar that I bought from Freemans catalogue. I am also wearing a new aftershave called

Brute which is popular with the men over here. I feel confident and have started drinking pints of beer which is the British style. There is a sign over the bar which says Ind Coop – the name of the brewery. The barman is big and burly and unfriendly. I can tell he doesn't like "youngsters". I kick my Cuban heeled ankle boot into the table as Fiona puts her arms around me and snuggles close. She tells me that she prefers me to "British lads" who she says are "only after one thing" and think that showing a girl a "good time" is "putting away eight pints in the local pub and then going for a bag of fish and chips after." She likes the thought that I am a tiny bit cultured and like museums, the theatre (when I can understand it) and movies (which are easier to understand and Fiona's favourite thing to do). And in turn I tell her I like the fact she is feminine and wears nice clothes – mini-skirts, boots, puff sleeved blouses, nice maxi dresses – I often compliment her on how she looks and she, in turn, accepts the compliments without realising there is an ulterior motive even though she knows about my "dressing" – she says I am the first boyfriend to do this.

"Some boys might say, "you look nice", Fiona says, "But they won't say, that's a really nice dress, like you do. You are so observant. I guess that's because you're French."

Being a transvestite has its benefits!

Sunday, 11th April, 1976

I go to meet Fiona's parents in Erith, South London. They are a nice couple, working class – her dad is a printer on a Fleet street national paper called The Sun. They live in a pleasant council house which is

clean and bright. A yellow and blue budgerigar chirps in a cage.

“So, Fiona, tells me you’re French, are you?” Mr Nelson says holding out his hand to shake mine.

“Qui,” I say. It is a joke that falls as flat as the beer he serves up. But after that less than promising beginning we get on well – or as well as we can do with my limited English, I find his London accent hard to understand – it is really cockney and not at all like what I have learned and he speaks fast, so fast. Fiona doesn’t have much of an accent and although she speaks softly, she also speaks quite slowly.

“The French are always on bloody strike, don’t you like doing a day’s bloody work over there?” He says.

Fiona is embarrassed she says, “Dad, leave it out. Georges is very hard working. Our chef says he’s one of the best workers in the kitchen.”

But Mr Nelson has more to say. “Now we’re in this bloody Common Market no doubt you’ll import your bloody French ways to us. Mind you, we have enough Commies and Reds over here in the Unions – take that Red Robbo and that Commie Arthur Scargill – hang the lot of them, I say.”

“I take it you don’t like the unions?” I say, not having a clue who he is talking about.

“Like the unions? They’ve got too much power, my lad, too much power; they are bringing this country to its knees. We need a tough Government to sort them out, not this Labour lot we have in at the moment.”

“Dad,” Fiona implores. “Please, Georges is my guest.”

Mrs Nelson pipes up in support of her daughter, telling Derek to “knock it on the ‘ead” in a strong London accent. I find a lot of English phrases very confusing!

Mr Nelson stops. Mrs Nelson brings in a sizzling roast chicken and roast potatoes. We all sit up at the neat dining room table and watch as Mr Nelson carve it and place slices on our plates. I can see what Fiona means about her dad would think I am a “Nancy Boy” because I dress as a girl – he will not like it if he ever finds out. Mr Nelson rides a scooter to work – a Vespa – he says I should get one and not have to wait for buses as I complain that in the morning I am often late as the buses don’t run to the timetable and I don’t like waiting outside the hotel for a bus when I finish the late shift at 11pm.

“That’s the bloody unions for you,” Mr Nelson moans. “That bloody London Transport lot are a lazy bunch of so and so’s – never done a bloody day’s work in their lives! That’s because they’ve got a strong union - the workers can go off sick and no one does anything about it. You need your own set of wheels, my lad. We bought Fiona a car when she was eighteen as we didn’t want her waiting for buses, didn’t we Mavis?” Derek says.

Mavis Nelson agrees that they did. “Especially with her working shifts in that hotel,” she adds. “We don’t want her travelling home on her own – you hear so many terrible things, rapes, murders, I ask you? I don’t know what the country is coming too.”

“It’s only part time till I find something else,” Fiona says. I know she enjoys the waitressing and she has told me she doesn’t want to work in an office but doesn’t know what she wants to do – she is a bit like me in that respect. We hold hands under the table and I rub my foot against her shoe, she is wearing a

nice black and white checked pinafore dress and has an Alice band in her hair; as I'm eating the roast dinner, I can feel myself getting aroused.

Monday, 12th April, 1976

My wig arrived! Well, I had bought another one from a mail order catalogue and a pair of breast forms too – I think I was “ripped off” as the English say with the first one which is not so good and cost a lot of money. I saw the adverts in the Exchange and Mart for the breast forms and the wig. With my wardrobe of dresses, skirts, blouses, boots and shoes I am now in a position to go out dressed en femme, which is all my heart desires. I spend my nights (when I am not with Fiona) trying on different outfits ready for the big reveal and also practising my make-up – I have bought a make-up set from a shop called Argos where you go in and order from a catalogue and then collect from another section. Also, I have bought some more make-up in other shops. Buying make-up is hard as it appears you are a “Nancy Boy” whereas clothes can be for a girlfriend. I have tried to get Fiona to buy me some things but every time I ask her, she asks me to explain to her why I like to dress in women's clothes – I don't think she quite believes it. She keeps saying to me,

“But Georges, we get on so well.”

I think she thinks I will change – either because I will “grow out of it” or give it up for her. But I won't of course.

Saturday, 17th April, 1976.

I'm not working but Fiona is – we have agreed to go out in the evening – she will call on me after work and get changed at my flat and we'll go out (she could have always borrowed some of my clothes but there's



no way that will happen). But it's the day I've been looking forward to all my life, a chance to go out dressed, en femme.

First of all, when I get up, I slip out of my slinky nightdress and put on a purple, satin dressing gown - this is always the case when Fiona is not staying. Then I run a bath and add some bath crystals. I slide into the water and give myself a lovely, all over shave with the Gillette razor: I shave my legs, my arms, my chest. Then I get out of the bath and pad myself down with a towel. Of course, there are cuts, and other blemishes, and my skin feels sore so I rub on lotions and as I do so I check for areas I have missed and go over them with my electric razor. Then, I tie my dressing gown around me and I make myself a cup of coffee and have a cigarette to calm my nerves. Finally, I sit down at the table in the kitchen/dining area at the rear of the apartment, where I have set up my make-up on a table.

It is a bit lighter towards the rear of the flat – the front is very dark. Firstly, I apply nail varnish and when it has dried, I go to work – dabbing my face with foundation before adding powder. I have learnt make-up skills from books I have purchased, some from second hand shops, some from charity shops and some I have bought new – I have quite a collection – I also ask Fiona about make-up. Finally, I add blusher, eye shadow and mascara and draw a line around my lips with a lip pencil. When I am happy with my look (the lipstick is to be added last) I go back to my bedroom and loosen my dressing gown. I pull on a nylon girdle.

My figure is that of a slim person (I have not eaten much since I have been in London – I usually have what they call a full English breakfast in the hotel – bacon, sausage, beans, black pudding, egg, fried bread, tomato and mushroom – how can the English

eat so much in the morning? And then just a can of soup in the evening). Fortunately, I am not very tall and I have quite delicate features, I remember once Emilie and Sophie made up my face and said how feminine it was. A good canvas helps the portrait but paints and brushes need to be good too as does the skill of the artist. Once I have finished my make-up, I go back to the bedroom and I sit on the bed and roll up stockings which I scrunch into a loop. I pull each one up my smooth legs. I attach the stockings to a suspender belt that I have placed around my middle. Finally, I attach a bra and add my life-like breast forms. They bounce and look natural, like a woman. Next, I pull on a short, red slip. My heart is beating fast. I have never felt so excited. This is what I have come to London to do – to dress as a woman and go out en femme - I am so, so close to achieving my goal.

Next, I put on a white, puff sleeved nylon blouse and button it up. A thin gold necklace sparkles at my neck, just enough, not over done – I have learnt from my sisters that “less is more” - for have I not been eavesdropping as they have discussed such feminine things? Then I open the wardrobe and I take a dress off a hanger, it is a thick, woollen pinafore dress, sleeveless and short – the bodice is tight and the patterned skirt slightly flared and there is a thin, black belt around the middle. I take it off the hanger and put my head thought the skirt. I have tried it on many times and found I could do up the clip at the back and, by attaching cotton to the zip, I could draw the zip up to the top. Then I fasten the thin black belt.

With the dress in place I arrange the blouse which covers my arms and my neck, I pull out the collar and fiddle with the puff sleeves to ensure it all sits nicely. I stand in front of the mirror. I must admit that I experience some sexual arousal when I see myself so dressed for isn't it just an overwhelming and fantastic experience?