

ROAD TO FEMININITY

By Annie Warren



ILLUSTRATED BY BRIAN DUKEHART

A 'HER TV' NOVEL

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Switch To Survive

By Annie Warren

Chapter 1: Incident in the Woods

Spring had again returned to the land and winter had probably given it's last cold gasp. The air was again warming and the breezes cool and life was stirring, repeating the annual wonder of nature surviving the cold to rise and live again.

It was on one of those days, when nature seemed to be erupting from every leafy pore, that Kermit had talked Eileen into taking a day off from work to get out of the laboratory and come with him and perhaps even help him with his nature photography

The grasses were getting greener at such a rate that you could almost measure it from day to day. The trees had come to early leaf and some were even budding for blossom

He did not have to try too hard to get her to come as she was also quite interested in nature, although maybe not as much from the standpoint of photography as from the biological and botanical aspects, which she had studied in college.

Anyway, it was spring and a good excuse to get out into the woods.

Kermit was a freelance photographer. His work ranged from weddings to children to insurance shots to just about anything that would pay, and even to things that would not. His love was outdoor and nature photography even though it was not a money maker

Eileen, on the other hand was a chemist. She had been working for a bit under two years after graduation with a master's degree. Her position at the local pharmaceutical company was working in their lab testing and analyzing various of their products to certify their content, purity, etc. It was a sort of job perk (minor) that she got her free birth control pills, one of the many products produced by her company. She was well paid, even if on the bottom of the scale since she was still considered 'new' and, though unwritten and which rankled her no end, a woman. She was paid well enough, in spite of all that, to average a good deal more than Kermit on an average yearly income.

Both she and Kermit thus made moderate but adequate salaries.

They had both attended the same college and ended up in some of the same classes though his major, history, had been so very different from hers. In working for the yearbook, he found his interest in photograph.

After graduation they had married. She then attended graduate school while he went to an art institute on a scholarship where he earned an additional BFA, Bachelor

of Fine Arts, of course majoring in photograph. Then she got her job after getting her degree just as he finished his studies.

Things were going well until their lives were to be flipped irretrievably. But, to understand what happened, you'll have to know some more about them, and then we'll look at the incident.

To look at them, you'd think that Eileen and Kermit Pierson were just somewhat ordinary people. What befell them, however, and what happened thereafter were anything but ordinary. Yet, before that event changed their lives, if you were to look at the happy couple, they seemed to be two peas in a pod, looking a lot like each other as is so often the case with married couples.

Kermit, however, had a short but full beard of fiery red hair. On the top of his head his hair was a darker red, sort of a medium auburn, not quite as fiery but a lot longer, for he wore it long enough that it could reach the tip of his beard. He said that his long hair was for his "artistic image", and Eileen usually smiled when he said that.

In contrast, Eileen had relatively short cropped hair that was a dark brown. Eileen's hair was rod-straight while Kermit's had just a bit of curl, much to his usual consternation, especially on some of the damp days, since Eileen never curled hers.

They were both sort of average height though Kermit was actually a bit short for a man and she was a bit tall for a woman: so much so that should she have worn high heels, she would have been awkwardly a lot taller than he was since barefoot she was taller than he was.

When they got married, it was a small ceremony with just a few friends. Eileen had worn a simple white suit with white high heels, making her almost tower above him. He was the object of some simple, good natured kidding by some of his friends. After that, Eileen never again wore high heels, partially because of the kidding but also for the more practical reason that she simply found them uncomfortable.

Kermit had a slender build, not overly muscular nor lacking. In high school he had been on the track team, maybe not first string, but he had a fair ability and good agility. It was due to his track team activity that he had met Eileen.

They had been married 4 years and were what you could say was comfortable with each other and still very much in love.

In reality, Eileen was a match for him on several levels. She was every bit as agile and athletic as Kermit, for she had been on the women's track team. She was also slender with a good set of muscles, more than the average woman due to her athletics and due to continued aerobic exercising.

Thus they were quite well matched for each other, and at home they shared equally in all duties. By choice they had decided not to have children, so Eileen was on the "free" Pill.

As you have seen, the only place where they differed widely was in occupation.

Kermit loaded his camera gear into the back of their dilapidated old car. They had debated getting a new one, but always the argument had been settled by the “if it runs, why?” solution of status quo. Eileen brought her binoculars and tape recording gear for her part of the “field work”. They left early and spent the early morning by a lake where he photographed ducks and she observed and recorded with her long distance microphone.

At mid morning they broke off and headed back toward town. Just off the state highway was an isolated section of land with several dirt roads and an abundant life form collection which was to be the target for Kermit's camera and Eileen's recorder.

It was not far from the trunk road that Kermit pulled off onto a short dirt road he knew from earlier visits. It looped back to the road after a short penetration of the woods. At the deepest point, he parked at the base of a low hill. The road was firm and covered with leaves showing how seldom it had been used. They opened the car, had a few leisurely bites to eat and then picked up her recorder and binoculars and his camera gear.

By now, the presence of the car in the woods had ceased to be much of a disturbance. They did not slam the doors but eased them shut, lest they stir up the peaceful assurance that the woods had settled back into. Slowly and quietly they approached the top of the hill. Eileen adjusted the parabolic reflector on her long distance directional microphone to peak performance in order to home in on any bird calls or animal sounds that might be made, even distant ones. She put the monitoring earphone in her ear and swung the microphone slowly around. The woods came alive wherever she pointed the sensitive microphone.

Even with their care, as they approached the top of the hill, she recognized that there seemed to be some sort of a disturbed air about the sounds she was hearing and recording. It seemed out of proportion to what should have been stirred up by just their presence. When she softly mentioned it to Kermit, he said that he had also sensed it.

He had his camera ready but the woods seemed upset. He suggested that they go to the top of the hill and then wait for the woods to quiet.

At the top of the hill they silently scanned the tree tops for signs of life and all was astir.

Suddenly their attention was caught by a murmur and off to the right they saw three people, but something was not right.

Eileen trained her binoculars and simultaneously the attached microphone on them and both saw and heard what was going on. Suddenly it was clear what was amiss, two of them had guns. In a hushed tone she mentioned them to Kermit who then pointed his camera at them, using it more as a telescope.

The unarmed man was facing them, his shirt was open and a tie was loosely knotted around his neck. His hands were behind his back as if holding something out of sight of the other two.

Both Kermit and Eileen recognized him as one of the politicians in their city, one who was known as a crime fighter. What was he doing in these isolated woods?

Eileen's tape recorder which had been running, barely caught the conversation. She did not want to drop the binoculars to adjust the level. As they watched, one of the two men or both fired their guns and the politician was thrown back, splotches of red appearing on the front of his shirt as he fell.

The sounds of the guns firing was loud, but to Eileen it reached a point of pain and she yelped and yanked out the earphone. Her cry, however, had been heard, for both of the killers turned toward her. Kermit had also jumped ever so slightly when the guns fired and released the shutter on his camera, catching, as it were, the murder in the act, but blurring it by the motion of the jerking when he jumped. There was a whir while the automatic winder quietly advanced the film. By now they had turned toward the pair on the hill. Through his lens he had a clear image, showing them both full face on. He made a photo only later to realize that the telephoto had been TOO powerful; it had shown the faces but not the guns.

He recognized one of them as a very powerful business man from town. In shock he lowered his camera and looked at Eileen. She had brought the binoculars back up and gasped even as he watched.

Simultaneously with her gasp came a whirring sound and the sound of another shot. In an instant he realized that they were now shooting at him and Eileen.

Just as quickly she dropped the binoculars, turned and, grabbing his arm, yanked him to the side and down toward the car that lay at the foot of the hill. He was immediately galvanized into action and was on her heels as more shots were heard. A branch near him snapped and splinters showered down on him as he ran.

The two men had come charging toward the couple, firing as they ran. In the fleeting seconds they were visible, they missed their targets. On reaching the top of the hill, the businessman had seen them drive off and recognized Kermit's old car as Kermit knew he would.

Their anonymity was blown even though their safety was for the moment secure as they reached the trunk road and spun quickly into town.

Even as they swung out on the hard top they questioned each other as to what they should do. Cool thinking told them that they were in grave danger, but, due to the time factor, had a good lead.

They headed to their apartment where a five minute grab-and-stuff filled several suitcases. He also grabbed his cameras while she got her tapes.

Kermit dropped Eileen at the bus depot while he parked the car near the Amtrak station. While going to the depot. Kermit drew out their substantial savings, saying that Eileen's mother in California had had an accident and needed the money and they were going to go there immediately.

The banker asked if he had made travel arrangements to which he had said no and so the banker called and made reservations to fly there, much to Kermit's nervousness as time passed.

But all was set and he now had a double ruse for the businessman to check. Since he had been involved, it would take time for the businessman to get back, set up his alibi, notify his cronies in the police department and get everything straight.

It was this time lag that Kermit was depending on.

Even as he was talking, Eileen was purchasing tickets to the nearest large city. From there they could travel further

It took longer than he planned so he got to the bus depot even as their bus was waiting for final loading.

Their old car would be found near the train, the banker would say they had flown and, if all worked well, they had not been spotted on the bus.

But even as the bus pulled away they discussed quietly what to do.

Most simply they would have to disappear; that was all.

The killer had been excessively powerful and would go to great lengths to keep his identity and involvement secret. They had been close enough to see that their "witness" had what was probably a camera. When they found out it was Kermit, they would be sure of it. Kermit then posed an immediate threat to his safety and anonymity. No doubt even as they were speeding across the countryside, the tracers were at work trying to pick up their trail. It would probably not take long for them to do it

The connections of the man were long and powerful so the police would probably be in on it too. Their apartment would probably be visited within the hour and their flight noted. Their abandoned car hopefully would sidetrack them for a bit. Hopefully, by the time the bus arrived it would not yet be known exactly how they left. With luck, it also would not be known all that quickly where they had gone. They had to disappear or else they would truly disappear but not under their own control.

It was Eileen's cool head that provided one possible out. While Kermit had been at the bank, she had zipped to her company and "borrowed" a substantial supply of some of their "samples". As a result, her book bag sized purse fairly bulged with a number of large bottles. Best of all, she had not been noticed, almost a miracle in itself. But even if she had, she was known there anyway, so why should it be strange?

To set her plan in action, she suggested that they get a hotel room and laid out the onset of the plan to Kermit. She would rent the room and he would then join her there shortly thereafter.

He was to bring a safety razor and scissors and shaving cream. He stroked his beard thoughtfully and with a bit of regret but agreed that it would have to go. He wondered what her purse held but knew he'd find out sooner or later, probably all too soon, as it were.

They got off before the center of town avoiding the probable point of disembarking, just in case it was even now being watched. They then caught a tram into the center where he made his purchases as she checked into one of the largest hotels. She picked it as it looked busy and the coming and going of many people would cover their presence.

After fifteen minutes he called the hotel asking to speak to Miss Johnson, talked with her briefly enough to find out the room number and the easy way to get in. That was to simply walk in directly through the center of the lobby as if he'd been doing it every day for months.

Thus, nobody took any notice of him. If he had slunk in, he would probably have been spotted as "suspicious". He went to the stairs and, although it was several flights up, quickly came to the door and knocked. Immediately, Eileen opened the door and let him in.

The contents of the suitcases were heaped on the bed along with his and her gear. His negative file and her tape file were on the desk near a box and some paper. He came in and walked to the window. She went back to the desk where she was writing. She folded the letter and put it in an envelope in the box. He surveyed the city for a minute and then turned as she was putting the tapes and the negative file in the box. As he started for her. she stopped the packing and looked up.

"We can't carry these and the cameras and gear. I'm going to send them to Gabrielle for safe keeping. I know her well and know that they will be safe with her."

"But you know how much work and sweat went into those files. Are you sure they'll be safe?" A frown clouded his brow momentarily.

"I can think of no safer place, can you?"

He pondered a bit and then replied that he couldn't either. The professor was almost like a member of their small, young family. Surely if anywhere would be safe it would be with her.

"I'll go and mail this. I also have to make a couple more purchases. I'll be gone about a half an hour. In the meantime, why don't you take a leisurely bath?"

After the sweating he had done both from exertion and from sheer nervousness, the idea of a bath really rang true to his ears.

"That sounds like a good idea. Want me to finish sorting out the clothes while you're gone?" He cast a quizzical eye onto the bed where the clothes were piled and sorted somewhat randomly it seemed.

"No, I'll take care of that when I get back. But, be sure to shave closely." Before he could answer yes, she continued, "In fact, shave your whole body, except for the top of your head."

"What? My body too?" He looked at her questioningly. "What do you have in mind?"

"I'll tell you when I get back. Just be sure that your legs, arms and chest are as smooth as your chin."

She looked at him and up at his long hair.

"Oh yes, be sure to wash your hair."

Chapter 2: A New image

To say the least, he was puzzled by these odd requests. He did feel a bit gritty and, although the trip had been very short, the pressures of the day would be eased by a good leisurely bath.

Eileen left and he stripped down to shorts and ambled into the bathroom and turned on and adjusted the water to fit his liking. As it was filling, he checked the camera gear left. He still had a viable system and nothing was missing. He'd had to leave his enlarger but that was no real tragedy. It was like his car, old and ready for the scrap heap anyway, only the lens had been worth saving. Just as he finished his inventory he remembered the bath and rushed in to check it.

He stood a bit waiting for it to fill to the ultimate and then turned off the taps. The silence in the hotel room was on one side reassuring and on the other disturbing.

Where had Eileen gone and why had she made that unusual request? She must have had her reasons and he had not refused.

He tested the water and found it a bit hot. So, he got out his shaving gear and was about to lather his thick beard when he realized that it would never yield like that. He got the scissors he had bought and then spent quite a bit of time chopping at his beard. It was not heavy, his hair being fine, but it just took time. Then with deft strokes, albeit unaccustomed after such a long time of not shaving, he cleaned off his chin and cheeks of the remnants of his beard. He couldn't help it though, and left a mustache and long sideburns. Surely no one would recognize him like this; Eileen was right.

Having shaved, he then climbed into the water and soaked and luxuriated in the warmth that wrapped his body like a universal warm blanket. Yes, it did feel good. He washed his hair first, then his body and then pondered Eileen's strange request. Since she must have a reason, starting at his toes, he removed the hair from his legs, arms, chest and body.

He was still in the tub when she returned. By now the water had cooled considerably but was not yet cold. He had jumped at the sound of the key in the door, but her voice soon eased his momentary panic.

She came to the door of the bathroom and looked in. She frowned just an instant then told him that the mustache and the sideburns would have to go and that he should shower off and rinse his hair before leaving.

When he left the bathroom a few minutes later, he felt the cool air as it hit his hairless body. The air on his now nude chin was also quite unaccustomed.

Eileen had made a number of purchases, the extent of which he was soon to learn.

The cold air was uncomfortable with only the towel for protection. When he went to the bed to get some clothes, she stopped him.

“Wait, Kermie, we have to discuss things first.”

“But I'm cold.”

“OK, but don't get dressed yet, put on my robe, yours isn't here.” She handed him her nylon robe which was more of a peignoir than anything else.

He put it on, but it did not feel all that warm although the chill was off of him now that he was drying, and it did offer some cover.

'What do you want to discuss? What is your plan?'

"We are being hunted, right? There will probably be no safety in the law. You know how strong he is. So our only chance is to disappear until such time as it is safe."

"True, what did you have in mind?"

"We'll have to trade places." She smiled at him.

"With whom?"

"Each other."

"You mean, you become me and I become you? But our sexes are all wrong for such a switch. We'd be spotted in a minute."

"It is just that which should give us our cover."

"I suppose it will work if we could figure out how."

He started to ponder it, but she came back quickly.

"I know how."

She went to the dresser and got two glasses, a small bottle of wine, enough for two drinks, and two pills. She returned to the table where he was sitting, opened the bottle and poured two drinks.

"Here's how, if you will forgive a pun."

With that she handed him a glass and a pill. She took the other pill, placed it on her tongue and sipped the wine to get it down.

"Go ahead."

"OK, but I don't see how it will change things unless it's an instant sex change drug."

He copied her motions and felt the pill go down his throat with the wine. She was the chemist and knew what she was doing, and he trusted her.

'What's next.'

"Kermie, dear, you are just going to have to become Mrs. Helena Johnson, and I will become Mr. Thomas Johnson. With that she reached up and took off her engagement ring and then, for the first time since they had been married, took off her wedding band. "Take off yours, dear. "

With trepidation he slid it off his hand. He knew what she meant and knew that at least that part of it would work for their hands were the same size. He put his ring down next to hers. Except for the width of the band, it was the same size as the other two. His best man had made fun of, that. Little did he realize that it would ever matter.

She reached down, picked up her band and took his left hand in hers.

"Helena Johnson, with this ring, I thee wed." As she said this, she gently slid her ring onto the rig finger of his left hand.

He felt he should resist such an action, but it was possibly a way out. Going along with her actions, he picked up band and took her hand in his.

“Tom Johnson, with this ring I thee wed, for better or worse.”

She smiled and then said, “Good, we're married. I wouldn't want to live in sin with an unmarried woman.”

So saying she reached once again and slipped her engagement ring on his finger next to the wedding band. The hen looked strange, but it was done. A smile flitted across, he face, then she became serious as she squeezed his hand in hers.

“Oh, Kermie, I hope we can pull it off and that it is the right thing to do.”

“I thought I was Helena.” He said in an attempt at hum trying to break into her serious mood.

She looked at her hand with his ring on it and then at his hand with her band and engagement ring sparkling.

Yes, you're right. I must become Tom and you must be come Helena to me and the world. From this point forward, we cannot afford to make any slip like that again. It could b deadly if heard by the wrong ears. or if it got to the wrong people."

'You mean you're serious about this whole switch thing?

She looked him straight in the eye.

“Yes, Helena, dear. I am deadly serious! What we saw could condemn us to death. Doing what he did, he probate has connections to the underworld. We are likely to have both the police and his underworld cronies after us. We'll have to be constantly on guard. By the time we leave here you MUST be Helena and I MUST be Tom!”

He sighed and looked down and then noted the rings on his fingers and the gown he was wearing. With thumb and forefinger he picked at the gown, adjusting it and re-adjusting it.

“I guess I'll have to learn to wear this kind of stuff if we are to succeed. It sure does feel strange.” He let out a soft sigh and then continued, 'Well, let's get on with it. By the way what was in those pills? I don't feel any different."

“I got them from the lab while you were getting the money. I got what should be several year's supply.”

“Of what?”

“Hormones. ”

“Hormones?”

“Yes, we will have to pull for the long run and they will help us with the deception. At the plant where they are made, the workers have to wear protective suits, almost like astronauts. These contain powerful hormones that should help us, if we last that long. If the men don't wear suits, they start turning into girls.”

“Turn into girls?”

“You know, take on the secondary sex characteristics, become feminized, grow breasts, that sort of thing. They can't be girls, but they can look a lot like girls with all of the proper curves in the proper places. If this lasts a long time, you will have to do just that too.”

“You really are serious, aren't you?”

“Yes I am,” she said without dropping her gaze, “we have no choice. As we were yesterday, we'll have no chance to see tomorrow. Now we will have a chance. I won't have all that much of a problem as I've never really been that feminine. You, however, will have a lot to do not to look out of Place.”

“I guess so, what do we do?”

“I'll have to do all of the doing, but you'll have to learn that you can do it for yourself ”

With that she went to the shopping bag and brought out a box.

As soon as he saw it, he knew that the next several hours were sealed.

To begin with she gave him a home permanent and, while it was working, painted his finger and toe nails a darkish red that was subdued and not flashy. Then after his hair was neutralized and rinsed out, she plucked his eyebrows, ignoring his protests of pain. The result was two sharply arched and most feminine eyebrows. Along with his hair in curlers, he definitely was beginning to look very feminine even without makeup.

Where did you ever learn that stuff, Eileen? You never plucked your eyebrows since I first met you that I know of."

“Please, it's TOM! I know lots of tricks like this. I don't usually use them myself, haven't for years. A lot of my friends were always telling me what to do and how to do it. I listened and learned.” She grinned. “If you remember her, Gail was constantly frustrated with me.”

He remembered Gail.

She had been one of Eileen's friends that had always looked like she stepped out of the pages of some fashion magazine. She must have spent fortunes on cosmetics and cosmetic classes.

And now Eileen, er, Tom was passing it on to him. Whereas she hadn't, he knew that now he was going to be expected not only to learn them but also to use them. He gave a sigh of resignation and waited for whatever came next. At this point, with the permanent working on his hair and with his thoroughly feminized eyebrows, he knew that there was no turning back.

Besides, what did they have to turn back to?

His reverie was broken as Eileen/Tom showed him how to apply lipstick, blot, lightly lick his lips, and then reapply it. He then had to practice over and over on himself. It was not difficulty that made it awkward, just newness of an unaccustomed activity. The face in the mirror was losing familiarity as it became more and more feminine.

When Tom pulled out a pin and some earrings, Helena balked. “Oh no you don't; I'm not going to let you do that!”

“Now. Helena, you know that this is necessary.”

“But, Tom,” he was following her lead by practicing using their new names to have them “settle in”. “It's not necessary I could have the kind that you used to wear, with the clips. They looked like these, sort of.”

“I don't have any. We left all of them at home, remember? Anyway, these will be more convincing. I got a pair that will call attention to them and away from your face, lovely though it may be. Until you get used to your new role and gain confidence, you'll need all the help you can get.”

“But I don't want to, Tom... God, I can't get used to that name.”

“You're just going to have to, Helena. When I registered, I registered for my brother and his wife who would be arriving this evening after me, after some shopping. I told them that I would give them the key, and the manager agreed. So, at least for the stay here we are Tom and Helena Johnson. We can haggle about names later, but Kermit and Eileen have just got to disappear.”

He sat a bit dejected staring at his hands which now not only bore her rings but whose nails were also polished with a subdued but obviously deep red enamel. He had never kept his nails very short but after the ministrations of Eileen, er, Tom, they now had a slight tapering to give them the beginnings of a soft oval that did feminize them even more. In a pinch he would not have recognized his own hands. Even as he felt a sharp sting in one ear he thought of the line, “To know something like the back of your hand” and wondered how many people really knew the backs of their hands.

As she moved in front of him and scrutinized both earlobes, his thoughts changed.

“Maybe I should have just one? Lot's of women do that, you know, just have one ear pierced?”

“I could double pierce one lobe if you like, but you WILL be complete.”

When he shook his head and lowered his chin, she raised it up to scan both ears for the second placement.

“Well, maybe later, hmmm.”

With that she moved to the other side and pierced his other ear lobe, inserting the ring. These weren't the small sleeper balls that the beauty shops or jewelry shops usually insert but a sparkling cluster of something with an equally sparkling, dangling piece. When it was done, he found that he could immediately feel the difference at his lobes when he moved his head.

“They feel funny... There's no pain. I thought it would hurt.”

“It's a relatively minor wound, but will take time to heal. You'll have to wear those earrings all of the time for at least two or three weeks.”

“Two weeks?”

He shook his head a bit more violently. The rings in his lobes stayed stubbornly in place. Now he would have to wear the earrings for at least two weeks unless something happened to free them from this dread. Hopefully, any freeing action would be on the good side and not on the bad, like permanent lack of need for earrings, eating and

breathing. That was a sobering thought... Perhaps they would be there longer; he didn't know how long.

How was he ever going to get used to them?

Picking up the mirror he looked again at his face. Tom had, indeed, gone an awful long way towards turning his face totally into that of a woman. And she was right. The sparkle of the bangles did set off the face, make it more feminine. And then too, they detracted some of the attention from it. He noted the masculinity still there, but with the eyebrows and lipstick, the note was not all that loud.

"Now some more touches..."

She approached him with a painters pallet in miniature. The brush she stroked against one of the colors.

"Close your eyes."

He did and then felt the soft strokes of the brush on his eyelids. Then there was a pause and then something was applied to his eyelashes.

"OK, open your eyes and look up."

Close up he saw the brush that stroked a black color onto his eyelashes, upper and lower.

Then she stopped.

"Now, don't flutter your eyelashes, the mascara has to dry first or else we'll have to repeat the whole thing. And don't forget. You will have to learn to do this yourself."

It was odd, but he was now much more aware of his eyelashes. They seemed to form some sort of a dark cloud above his eyes, one that he could detect but not look at. He had to look in the mirror and was almost startled by what he saw. His eyelids were now a delicate shade of blue except just above the lashes where there was almost a bright blue line drawn. They set off the coal black of his eyelashes that now also looked thicker as well.

Damned if he didn't almost have bedroom eyes!

"Gee, honey, you should go into the beauty parlor business. If you can make your drab old husband as beauti..."

"Wife!" she shot back at him breaking his sentence. "You are my wife, Helena, and don't you forget it or we're dead, remember? Dead!"

There was a bit of fire in her eyes that suppressed any quip that he might want to give back.

"I'm sorry... Tom"

He looked again at the mirror and smiled a bit coquettishly, "If you can make your drab old wife look this good, think of what you could do for other women."

She caught the changed tone, came over to him and sat beside him.

"I'm sorry, dear, but we have to be strict with ourselves. There is no one else that can do that for us. If we fail, it could bring down the whole game about our ears, pierced or not. And that would be that."

She kissed him lightly on his cheek, but there was an edge of fear in her voice.

“Then I'm sorry.” He looked up at her, blinking his darkened eyelashes, pursed his lipsticked lips and gave her a long kiss on her lips. “I'll try to remember my place... one step behind and to the left, right?”

“Oh, you knuckle headed oaf!”

She smiled but not as wide as he would like to have seen her smile. She arose and went again to the dresser and put on his watch. Bringing him hers, she put it on his wrist, another mark of femininity. Next to his red nails and sparkling diamond engagement ring and wedding band, it looked right.

She then shucked off her clothes down to panties and bra, which she unhooked and took off. Other than just an ever so slight jiggling, her small breasts seemed to not even notice the absence of the unnecessary bra. She then pulled off her panties to replace them quickly with a pair of his shorts. From her purse she pulled out a comb and from the shopping bag a pair of scissors.

“OK, Helena, it's your turn.”

“What are you going to do?”

“I'm not going to do anything. *You* are.”

She looked into his now highly feminized eyes.

“Give me a hair cut, a man's haircut.”

“But I can't do that.” The look she shot at him told him differently, “OK, where?”

“We can do it in the bathroom. I'll sit in the tub on the waste basket. There should be enough room and that way we won't leave any evidence.”

They adjourned to the bathroom, taking a tee shirt and the shopping bag with them.

As they entered he was startled to see his new feminized self in the mirror. Outside, the small mirror had shown only selected parts. Here he had the full impact of his face altered to a high level of femininity off set by the earrings and curlers in his hair. The robe he was wearing did nothing to diminish the overall appearance of him being a bona fida woman.

In his younger years he and his brother had cut each other's hair, but that had been a long time ago. Tom's hair was not all that long, but it was also far from masculine cut; beauty parlors even when requested to do a short cut tend to make it a short, feminine cut. There was an ever so slight curl at the tip that was just the right touch of femininity to show that it was a woman's hair do, but only just.

She sat down and faced him.

“Any preference as to where to put the part?”

“Since I'm more or less ambidextrous, it doesn't matter all that much to me. Hmm... The last time I parted it, I think it was on the left side. Put it there.”

So, comb-comb-comb and it was parted, then snip snip comb comb, and so forth. He cut all of the curl off and ended up with a reasonable hair cut.

Her hair was now reasonably straight but looked quite masculine even if a bit old fashioned. She then gathered some of the hair and put it into an envelope, the rest went into the toilet and in a flush was gone.

“I'm going to have to get the rest of this hair off, so I'm going to take a shower.” She then shoved him out of the bathroom. Going to the bed she picked up a pile of his clothing. Pointing to a pile of her clothes she added, “You can try dressing if you want, but I'll be out shortly.”

She disappeared into the bathroom where he soon heard water running.

He looked at the pile of clothing. These things had been hers, but they were now his just as his were now hers. He examined the things that were to be his, noting that she had brought skirts and not pants. He decided, however, to wait for her to come out before he tried anything on. Besides, he was more familiar with how these things came off rather than how they went on.

He went over to the window and looked out. It was a cheap room and thus did not have a magnificent view. It did show a side street, however, and he looked down at the people, now sensitized to the fact that then he was again on that street, he would be wearing her clothes, passing as a woman, well, trying to pass.

Also, he realized that he would be wearing a skirt...

He would be wearing, of all things, a woman's skirt...

He shuddered a bit as he watched the many skirted women below.

True to her word, she was out in a short time, maybe not as short as he would have called a *short* time, but it was relatively quickly as he was lost in his own thoughts.

His pants and tee shirt looked odd on her only because they were his.

Then he realized that she had no figure to speak of. Her breasts, small as they may have been, appeared to have totally disappeared. But even as he looked at the flat plane of her chest he noted the shadow of something underneath it. Seeing his gaze and guessing at his unasked question, she said simply, “Ace bandage”.

“Golly, I thought there for a minute you had washed EVERYTHING off.”

She looked down. “No, some things don't come off so easily.”

When she looked up, he noticed that she had washed every bit of her makeup off. He knew her otherwise, even with the haircut, flat chest and all, but she now looked quite masculine. She had done exercises to keep her muscles in tone and they showed now more than ever before. Instead of looking like a muscle bound woman she was like a boy, or a young man.

“Gee, Tom, I sure do have a good looking husband.”

“And I a good looking wife. Shall we get dressed?”

“How?” He gave a sheepish grin. “I've taken these things off often enough but don't remember the sequence enough to reverse it.”

“Well, you silly goose, you'll just have to learn the other half as well now.”

She laughed, a sound that was good to his ears after all of the seriousness that was causing such a strain.

For the next half an hour she introduced him to the various parts and functions of his new wardrobe, how and where each was worn, dressing him in the process in panties, bra, pantyhose, a very tight pantygirdle to hide any “unsightly bulges”, a slip and a pair of medium heeled shoes. Then from a bag she brought out a pair of falsies that were like water filled bags but were heavier and shaped like breasts. She put them into the bra he was wearing then readjusted the straps of the bra and slip. Then she had him put on a skirt and blouse, not letting him touch anything that she had worn into the hotel; that outfit was packed away.

When she stood next to him, It seemed like an instant comparison: she in his clothes and he in hers. His slacks were a shade too long on her without shoes but would then be just right. His shirt hung just so, neither diminishing nor accentuating the shoulders and chest. She put a sport jacket on the bed.

“Keep out a sweater for yourself and this jacket for me and put the rest of the clothes away. I’ll be right back.”

As he picked up the clothes and put them in drawers or in the closet, he hummed a song to himself while she disappeared into the bathroom with a small jar and the envelope.

Straightening up the room making it look like nothing was out of order, being all too aware of his clothing as the skirt and slip continually hit and played with his legs. The pantygirdle was tight and the shoes felt strange too. There was also the earrings that seemed to continually swing and sway, hitting his neck. Then she came out of the bathroom.

“Well, Helena, what do you think of your husband now?”

He looked over and gasped just a bit.

Totally destroying the last vestige of femininity that she had had was a fair sized mustache. It had been made from hair from the envelope and thus matched her own hair perfectly.

He walked over to her, feeling even more than ever the coolness on his lower legs and the sway of the skirt about his thighs and the soft slap of the earrings. He looked closely and only on close inspection did he notice how the hair had been glued on. It was a bit sparse, but, then again, she looked like a young man... it fit.

“God, it looks natural on you. How'd you do it?”

“With this.” She held up a bottle of spirit gum and the envelope. “Well, are you ready to go? Oops, you can't go out looking like that.”

“Like what?”

“Your hair dear, you can't appear in public as a tourist with curlers in your hair if you've been out on the town this afternoon, now can you?”

With that he sat while she took out the curlers and brushed out his hair doing a very credible job. Anyone who would have walked in then would have wondered how a wife could ever have trained her husband to do that kind of a job with such skill!

As she did it, they synchronized their story about where they were from and what they were doing. Half way through, however, there was a pause while they realized that their voices were all wrong so the rest of the time was spent not only story relating but also speaking and voice correcting. It wasn't much as both spoke normally in the midrange, but still, details were details.

When the work was done, Helena put on his sweater and Tom put on her coat. Helena then saw himself in the mirror on the dresser.

“God, is that really me?”

He walked over and looked again. If he had not seen the transformation, he would not have believed his eyes. Even thus, it felt and looked strange to see this woman in the mirror mimicking his ever move and nuance. Nevertheless, both of them were full of trepidation.

As the door of the hotel room, the only island of any sort of refuge closed behind them, they took the next really great step in the adventure that their lives had turned into.