

# THE AMULET

*By Jennifer Sue*



*ILLUSTRATED BY BRIAN DUKEHART*

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A 'SPECTRUM TV' NOVEL

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## *Reluctant Press TG Publishers*

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## **DADDY!!! YOU JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND!**

**BY JENNIFER SUE**

Allen Altair was a self-confident, energetic, and dynamic man. As a self-employed Geological Engineer, he had a reputation for getting the job done right in an amazingly fast time. By the time he was 40, he was able to pick and choose his jobs, taking months off at a time if he felt so disposed.

Amanda Altair had a degree in Sociology and worked part-time for the County Social Services. She was also financially secure, having received a large inheritance from a wealthy uncle.

Allen and Amanda had been married for sixteen years and had two daughters. Ashley was thirteen while Allison was twelve. Their rambling home had four bedrooms complete with baths, two powder rooms, a pantry, a kitchen with eat-in breakfast nook, a formal dining room, a formal living room, a library, a den/office, a sitting room, and a large family room. The four car garage held a BMW, Porsche, a loaded Chrysler Towne & Country minivan, and a Jeep Wrangler. Behind the home was a large in ground swimming pool. Theirs was an almost idyllic life.

The only fly in the ointment was Allen's overprotection of his daughters. While he supported women's rights, equal pay for equal work, freedom from sexual harassment, and was firmly opposed to family violence; he could not get over his fear that his daughters would be sexually molested by boys. After all, he remembered how he had behaved when puberty hit. Logical thinking and testosterone did not go together.

Thus he insisted that his girls attend an exclusive all girls' school to avoid the travails of horny teenage boys and sexual harassment in general. In addition, he would not even consider allowing the girls to date until age sixteen, and even about that he voiced reservations. Amanda championed the girls' efforts at freedom and a coed education, but while Allen was open and liberal in all other things, in this he stuck firmly to his guns.

Every time the girls confronted their father on the matter, he would refuse to budge.

"Oh Daddy! You just don't understand," it usually ended with Ashley storming off in tears, followed by a pouting Allison.

Naturally, Allen didn't understand, and no amount of discussion, despite all that Amanda tried, could persuade him otherwise.

As a result of attending THE SIMONE DAVIS CONSERVATORY, both Ashley and Allison were demure, polite, well-behaved young ladies. Neither would ever be considered a tomboy by any stretch of the imagination. They preferred wearing soft, pretty dresses

or skirt/blouse/sweater sets. Ruffles and lace were common. Ribbons and bows were seldom absent from their outfits. Satin, silk and nylon their favorite fabrics. They were a delight to everyone.

Their lives might have continued in this vein if Allen had not taken the job in the Yucatan peninsula of Mexico. A local group of Mexican businessmen had formed a company in hopes of finding and reopening the ancient Mayan mines that had produced the silver and gold for the many artifacts found in the ruins of the Mayan cities being uncovered in the jungles. Careful study of satellite maps revealed traces of ancient roads, many leading into the rough mountains where the valuable ores waited to be rediscovered. Allen was hired to analyze promising sites along these old trace roads and pinpoint locations for excavations.

Allen flew to Mexico City in the beginning of May. By the end of the month, his work was almost completed. From his extensive travels in the region, he had seen many of the Mayan ruins but had little opportunity to explore them in any detail. This only served to whet his appetite for more investigation. Realizing that the school year was almost over, he called home. As soon as school let out for the summer, Amanda and the girls would fly down to meet Allen. Then the four would see the sights. Allen prepared their itinerary in the few weeks remaining as his work wound down.

The reunion after a six week absence was warm. The short flight to the Yucatan on board a twin engine charter plane was quite an adventure for the girls and their mother. Then came the hotels... mere shadows of what the family was accustomed to enjoying in the states.

The tours began, but quickly grew old for the girls. At their age, boys were of greater concern than crumbled ruins. By the end of the first week, both girls were sulen and withdrawn. Although they had better manners than to complain about being bored, Allen and Amanda both knew the truth. But the adults were fascinated by the ruins, especially Amanda since her area of expertise was sociology. So the parents trooped about the ruins, moving from site to site, and thoroughly enjoying the adventure.

It was during one of these outings that fate intervened. The girls exchanged looks of exhaustion as the family crossed the wide, open plaza to the tall pyramid. Just as they were ready to begin the ascent, the girls asked to be allowed to sit on some stone benches at the bottom of the pyramid while their parents climbed to the top. Knowing how the girls felt, Allen and Amanda agreed, providing the girls stay out in the open where they could be seen.

While Allen and Amanda climbed the hundreds of stone steps, the girls lolled upon some stones alongside the plaza in the warm sun as they waited. They watched other tourists gawking at the ruins. The peasant vendors outnumbered the tourists.

"I wish we were home," Ashley stated with a sigh. "Right now we could be at the mall scoping out the guys."

"Yeah," Allison drawled forlornly. "If Dad lets us."

"Yeah... Dad's such a prude," Ashley complained. "Like he doesn't trust us not to get mixed up with the wrong kind of boys."

“At least Mom let's us go to the mall...” Allison replied, “...when Dad isn't home. I don't know why Dad can't understand us!”

“Ah,” said a gaily dressed old peasant woman who was seated nearby behind her two wheeled cart of trinkets. “The young ladies have a problem. And I may have the solution!” With a broad smile upon her face she stood and shuffled to her cart. “Your father, is he the engineer who came here to find the lost gold and silver mines,” she asked as she carefully opened a side panel and extracted a carved wooden box.

“Yes,” Ashley and Allison answered in unison as they watched the old woman, then exchanged looks of amusement as they waited. She seemed quite unusual, as her English was almost flawless. At least this was more interesting than just lounging about.

The old woman's heart beat rapidly with thoughts of saving the secrets of her people as she reverently carried the box to the girls and placed it on the stone bench between them.

The girls sat up with anticipation.

Carefully the woman opened the box and removed a beautiful gold chain necklace with a small intricately wrought two headed statue of a beautiful woman. “This amulet is very ancient,” she stated as she reverently handled the object. “It predates the Maya.”

The girls were both fascinated by the amulet. It sparkled in the sun. It appeared to be made of solid gold.

“My sister bought this when she was about your age,” the old woman explained. “Then she and I were always fighting. She fervently wished that I could understand her. Just like you wish your father would understand you. An old woman gave this magic necklace to her. I did learn to understand.”

“How does it work,” Allison asked with glowing eyes.

Ashley suppressed a sarcastic laugh and did her best to appear serious. “*A magic necklace indeed,*” Ashley thought. “*Why I'm thirteen! I'm a very worldly girl, I know magic doesn't exist. While the necklace is pretty, it harbors no secret power. Although my little sister is growing up quickly, Allison is still so naive and believes in magic. Oh well, let her enjoy her fantasy.*”

“I have no idea how it works,” the woman stated. “But I know from first hand experience that it does! Has your father completed his report on the mines?”

“No,” Allison replied as her eyes were drawn to the amulet.

“*Excellent,*” thought the old woman as she continued her explanation. “All you do is slip it about your neck. Then you stand before the person you want to understand you and hold hands. Both of you close your eyes and concentrate on such understanding becoming reality. You'll feel a tingling as the magic starts to work. I guarantee your family will be surprised by the results,” she added with a chuckle.

“Oh wow,” exclaimed Allison as she bit her lip and gently touched the tiny figurine.

“How much,” asked Ashley concerned that her sister was about to be robbed.

“Oh, for the daughter of the great engineer, it is my gift,” the old woman cackled gleefully. *“The mines have been hidden and lost for a thousand years,”* she thought. *“It is not yet time for them to be discovered. Maybe this will keep their locations secret a while longer!”*

“FREE,” Allison gasped with excitement as she took the proffered necklace and slipped it about her neck. “Thank you! Thank you ever so much!”

“Yes, thank you,” added Ashley cautiously. She sensed something was not right, but could not put her finger on exactly what was wrong. “Are you sure you don't want something for it,” she asked. “It seems almost like we're stealing it.”

“No, my children, it is yours,” the old woman stated with great sincerity as she headed back to her cart.

“Well, then I want to thank you too,” Ashley added as she watched the woman close up her cart.

The trio exchanged good-byes and farewell waves as the old lady trundled the cart across the plaza and out of site.

The girls were soon lost in gossip as they talked about the encounter, the strange old woman, and of course the amulet.

That's how Allen and Amanda discovered the girls when they finally reached the bottom of the pyramid.

“What were you talking to that old vendor about for so long,” Allen asked. Then he noted the necklace and amulet about Allison's neck. One glance told him it was solid gold and very, very old. “Did you buy this from her? It had to be expensive. I hope she didn't overcharge you,” he went on.

“Oh Dad,” Allison stated in the manner young girls have when they feel their parents are crowding them. “She gave it to me! It's magic, and she said she wanted the daughters of the great engineer to have it!”

“The great engineer,” Amanda asked raising her eyebrows as she too examined the exquisite workmanship.

“That's what the locals call me,” Allen explained with a shrug. “But I don't understand why she would give this to you because you're my daughter. Almost all the peasants feel I'm betraying an ancient secret by looking for the lost mines. In fact, they hate me. But really, you girls should know better than to accept gifts from strangers! Besides, don't tell me you still believe in magic.”

Ashley was upset by her father's derisive comments. Frantically she tried to wave Dad off, to let Allison have her fantasy.

Seeing Ashley's motions, he realized that it had been Allison alone who believed in magic. “I thought you had outgrown magic, Allison,” he added with a chuckle.

“Oh Daddy,” Allison stated as she slid off the stone and stamped her foot angrily. “I can see why the locals hate you! Magic DOES exist, you just have to believe!”

Allen immediately knew that once more he had blown it by not understanding his daughters. “I'm sorry, Allison,” he stated reaching for the girl.

Allison stepped away. "If you're really sorry, you'll help me try the magic!"

"Sure," Allen replied helplessly, not knowing what else to say. "What kind of magic is it supposed to do? Make wishes come true?"

"Really, Daddy," Allison pouted. "Everyone knows magic can't make wishes come true! This is supposed to make you understand me!"

"Well, I could certainly stand some of that magic," Allen responded with a chuckle. "So, what do you have to do?"

"The woman said we have to face each other like this," she triumphantly stated stepping before her father. "Then we have to hold hands and close our eyes. Then we both have to concentrate real hard on having you learn to understand me! When we feel a tingling, we know it's working."

"That seems simple enough," Allen stated trying to regain a serious demeanor. "Let's give it a try. I'm trying to think hard about you trying to understand me, right?"

"Oh! DADDY!" she protested angrily with a stamp of her foot before she realized that he was teasing her, "you know."

"Sure, princess..."

The two did so. Of course, Allen peeked to see Allison's pretty face contorted from the effort she was exerting. A quick glance to Ashley noted her disgust with his cavalier attitude. Knowing that Ashley would tell Allison about his lack of concentration, he once more closed his eyes and tried to focus his thoughts on understanding his daughter.

"It's working," Allison squealed as she clenched her eyes shut. "I feel the tingling!"

"Yeah," Allen stated softly in obvious amazement as he kept his eyes closed. "I feel it spreading from our hands."

Suddenly Allen collapsed to the ground, pulling Allison atop him. It took several moments until Allison was able to free herself from the iron grip of her unconscious father.

Mexican security rushed to the scene and ascertained there was no danger since his pulse and heart rate seemed normal. "Must have passed out from the heat and excitement," was their diagnosis. They carried the inert man back to their rented car. Soon the staff of the hotel were placing him upon the bed in their hotel room.

A doctor was summoned, but he too could find nothing wrong. "He just seems to be sleeping."

Naturally, Amanda and the girls were worried sick and Allison blamed herself and the amulet. Amanda finally sent the girls off to bed and she kept an all night vigil on her comatose husband. About two in the morning, Amanda was awakened from a brief doze by the strong odor of body sweat. No one was in the room. It quickly became apparent the smell was emanating from Allen. In fact, she could swear he looked different, somehow smaller and softer.

Closer exam revealed he was changing... right before her eyes! Perspiration and a sickly yellow puss seemed to be oozing from his pores. The stench was becoming overpowering.

In desperation, she flung open the windows.

Over the next hours, she watched in fear and horror as her husband melted and shrank. Finally the changing stopped. Allen's body seemed encased in a transparent puss-like pudding. By this time the smell seemed less intense, so she began to wipe the mess from his body. As she cleared his face, she stopped, shocked to the very core of her being by what was revealed.

It was Allison lying on the bed!

Quickly she wiped away the mess from the slender groin. It too was identical to Allison's! Frantically she cleansed the entire body only to discover that it could have been Allison!

Every detail was identical, down to the birthmarks. On the left pinkie was the scab of the small cut Allison had received last week!

Maybe... somehow... Allison and Allen had swapped places... maybe the magic... after all... the girls said it would make their father understand Allison better... But this was ridiculous!

Rising from her smelly task, she crossed to the adjoining bedroom to check on the girls. Ashley and Allison were sleeping peacefully. Stunned, Amanda returned to her room. Allison was lying on the bed sprawled amid the smelly refuse... no... it had to be Allen... for she had witnessed the bizarre transformation! The smelly refuse had to be the portion of Allen's adult male body that had been shed to make the transformation happen! The magic had worked!

Now there was no way Allen could not help but learn to understand how Allison felt. He had become her identical twin!

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In the morning, with the help of the girls, the mess was cleaned and the unconscious faux-Allison was carried to the bathroom and thoroughly bathed, perfumed, and powdered.

The hotel staff, accustomed to weird goings on involving gringos, merely shrugged their shoulders as they burned the smelly sheets and mattress.

Allen/Allison was dressed in one of Allison's spare nightgowns and placed in the girls' bed. Ashley kept vigil while Amanda took Allison back to the ruins to search out the old lady.

They found her at the same spot.

"Good morning, young lady," she began as the determined duo approached. "I can tell that the amulet worked! Now the great engineer will understand his lovely daughter!"

"You... you knew this would happen," Amanda gasped as she tried to control her anger.



“Yes,” replied the old woman with a chuckle. “Didn't your daughter tell you that I had experienced the workings of the amulet in my youth?”

“Oh yeah,” Allison stated sheepishly as she clung fearfully to her mother. “She said her sister used it on her to make her understand.”

“Almost,” cackled the old woman. “She used it on me, but then I was her older brother! I became her twin, just as your father has become your twin, little Princess. I know you came here looking for a way to reverse the magic, but alas, there is none, or I would have used it upon myself!

“But rest assured, it won't take long for him to become accustomed to being a girl. As your twin, she'll naturally mimic you.” She turned towards Amanda to add, “In about six days, you won't be able to tell them apart. Every movement, every habit, will be identical, down to the words they use and the inflection in their voice. He'll have no choice but to understand your little girl!”

Amanda shivered.

The old woman was obviously insane!

“But why? Knowing this would happen... why?”

The old woman suddenly lost her mirthfulness.

“The great engineer was too close to giving away the secret locations of the hidden mines to the greedy invaders.”

Then the old woman seemed to shed years. There was a fire in her eyes as she spoke from her heart, the heart of the Mayans.

“My people lost their struggle to the invaders a thousand years ago, but we kept our wealth hidden. When we are ready, we will reopen the mines ourselves. These ancient ruins will be ruins no more! The Mayan civilization will once more rule!”

Slowly the eyes lost their fervor and returned to the warm eyes of an old woman as she looked directly into Amanda's eyes.

“Some of our leaders wanted to kill your husband, but many of us abhor killing. When we learned that he was bringing his family, it became even harder to decide to kill. The leaders looked for a way to stop the great engineer. Someone remembered me. They asked if I would give the amulet to save his life.”

There was no more to say. The old woman, Amanda, and Allison understood that what had been done was done to save Allen Altair's life.

Amanda nodded her head. “Thank you for saving him.”

The old woman smiled sadly.

“It will be harder for him than it was for me. I was only sixteen, not yet an adult. Be kind to HER.” Then she paused and looked about. “The leaders are watching. They know the final report has yet to be submitted. They want the notes and papers of the great engineer, to make sure the secret is safe. They will submit a negative report to the greedy ones in your husband's name. A death certificate for your husband will be issued and burial arrangements made by a high authority.”

"I'm sorry, but I cannot give you my husband's research. It would be violating my late husband's honor. We'll be returning home tomorrow," Amanda stated.

The face of the old woman fell, but she well understood honor.

Amanda slipped an arm about Allison and turned. After a few steps she stopped and looked at Allison.

"Early this afternoon, I'll gather all your father's papers on the desk in our suite while you and Ashley calm your twin, get her dressed, and teach her some proper manners," she whispered before stating in a loud voice, "let's go back to the hotel, Allison, we have a lot to do."

Despite her fears and misgivings she took Allison's hand to lead the way back to the car.

The old woman smiled and nodded her head. Allen Altair's honor would be preserved.

As they made their way back to the hotel, Allison sat staring out the taxicab window. The girl was frightened by the death threats, felt guilty for changing her father into her twin, and generally felt apprehensive about the future. Tears threatened to fall, but she controlled them by sniffing.

Amanda too was deep in thought. Now she understood that she now had three daughters and no husband. All the family decisions were now hers and hers alone.

"Everything will be all right, Allison," Amanda comforted her distraught daughter as things firmed in her mind. "I'm sure it'll be like the old woman said. In a few days, your new twin will truly be your twin. But Ashley and you, especially you, will have to help her adjust to her new life. Being a girl, especially a girl just entering puberty, will not be easy for him... her... after forty years as a male. I think it will be best if we tell everyone your father died down here and we came down to bury the body. When we get home, I'll let Ashley, enroll in public school. After all, there will be no one to object if she enters our local high school."

Amanda considered her options. "But, for now I think that your new little sister and you might be happier at the Simone Davis Conservatory. I'm certain that they would be more accommodating to the idea that you now have a twin sister. And they are paid to handle little girls with unusual behavior problems."

Allison looked at her mother. Slowly her anguish changed to disbelief. The magic HAD worked! Of course, she would miss her father, but it wasn't like he was dead or anything like that. He'd still be part of the family... Her twin sister, Alicia! But the news that Ashley would be allowed to go to public school, while she was still stuck in a private girls school with her "father" seemed unfair!

"But, Mother," Allison began to protest, only to see "The Great Stone Face" (as the girls referred to their mother's hard look of refusal to one of their requests). Shrugging, Allison brooded on the unfairness of the situation while she stared out the taxicab window.

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When they entered the girls' room, Ashley looked up, obviously quite relieved her mother was back. Rising, she ran to Amanda and hugged her.

“Oh Mom, she's been getting more and more restless the last hour! I think she'll wake up soon. Can anything be done to get Dad back?”

“Oh... ah... aw...,” murmured a soft girlish voice from the bed. This was accompanied by the rolling of the lithe twelve year old body and the tossing of the pretty head. A halo of straight golden blonde waist length hair was spread across the pillow.

“I think she is about to awaken,” Amanda stated as she went to the bedside. “We found the old woman. Your father is gone... forever. In his place you have another little sister, Allison's twin, Alicia. It will be up to you two to help Alicia adapt to her new life so she'll be as good a girl as you two.”

Allison grabbed Ashley's arm. “I already promised Mom that I'd help Alicia adjust to being a girl. But even better is that Mom will let you go to public school in the fall!”

Before Ashley could respond, a real thrashing began upon the bed.

“Oh... oh... no... no...,” a small frightened voice murmured from the tossing head. “It's just a dream... a nightmare...”

“It's all right, honey,” Amanda soothed as she reached out and grasped a small hand. With her other hand she reached out to dab away the beads of perspiration from the blonde tufted forehead. “Just relax, I'll take care of everything.”

The nurturing had immediate results. The thrashing and head tossing stopped. The ragged breathing became softer and regular.

After a few moments, the terrified pretty eyes sprung open and frantically looked about the room, finally stopping on Amanda's familiar face. Frenzied thinking was going on behind those eyes. “Amanda... what's going... my voice...” The free hand reached up to touch the small throat.

Allen assumed he was having a terrible nightmare. Somehow that damn necklace had turned him into a little girl! His educated, rational mind told him that such a thing was impossible, yet it felt so REAL!

But even though he kept telling himself the entire thing was a nightmare, it just would not end! He couldn't even make himself wake-up!

Then he felt the familiar hand hold his, the loving touch on his forehead, and the caring, tender reassurance of his beloved Amanda. At once he knew he was safe, and finally emerging from the nightmare. With every bit of will, he forced himself to relax so he could awaken fully.

Suddenly, he was fully awake, but just stayed still, enjoying Amanda's comforting touch. The way she held his hand felt so good. But something was wrong, he didn't feel right. Her hand engulfed his!

A tremendous fear enveloped him; what if it hadn't been a nightmare?

Terrified, he popped his eyes open and frantically looked about the room, finally resting on Amanda. Everything seemed so huge... even Amanda... But she seemed to be the right size for the surroundings... It was almost as if he had shrunk... the nightmare!

“Amanda...,” he blurted. “What's going...” The voice was coming from his throat but it sounded just like Allison!

Renewed fear engulfed him!

“My voice...,” he almost screamed as he forced his free hand to reach up to touch the small throat. The hand was not his. It was Allison's!

The arm to which it was attached was clad in a sheer billowing pink nylon sleeve of a nightie! The pretty ruffled cuff flared out from the slender wrist. Yet it was his arm! He could FEEL it responding to his orders. He could feel the soft nylon whispering across soft, HAIRLESS skin. The fingers touched his throat, not the beard stubbled throat of a man, but the soft, velvety throat of a girl.

This was not a nightmare! This was real!

A scream built in the pit of his stomach, but before it could erupt in its full ear-splitting screech, Amanda pulled him to her bosom and buried his face, thus muffling the scream.

At the same time, he lost control of his bladder. The uncontrolled wetness spurted out onto his thighs and quickly soaked the nightie and bed. At once he understood that even down there he was like a girl!

The scream subsided, to be replaced with tears. Even this was evidence that he was no longer a man. He was crying like a little girl. He felt helpless, lost, and utterly terrified... just like a little girl. This was no nightmare... this was real... all too real!

The girls kept silent as they soberly watched their mother comfort the trembling, crying girl that had been their father. Amanda knew the hell Allen had to be enduring as he became aware of the massive change.

Allen left the tears flow, and with it came a release. Still sobbing softly, he took inventory of how his body had changed. There soon was no doubt that he was now a girl. He was embarrassed for panicking. Never had he done so in the past, even when involved in a fire-fight while in the Marines. But now... it felt... right... and even good to let loose emotionally. By this he knew he was now a girl... no longer did he have to hide his fears. But damn it, he was a man! He had to regain control.

Finally he stopped crying. Slowly he pushed himself away from Amanda's embrace, but the two held hands tenderly. He looked down to see his small girlish hands and arms, clad in a pink nightie, holding desperately onto the large, warm hands of his wife. Then he raised his eyes to meet hers. Love... her eyes showed love... compassion... and understanding... that's what had gotten him into this mess... his lack of understanding.

After several deep breaths, Allen wet his lips.

“I... I'm a g... girl...,” he stammered the question already knowing the answer but hoping beyond hope that he was wrong..

Amanda nodded her head and spoke softly.

“Yes, you're a girl. In fact, you're now Allison's identical twin.”

“Th... the old woman...,” he began to ask but couldn't get it all out.

“Allison and I found her this morning,” Amanda replied. “She knew what would happen, her sister had used it when she was her brother. There is no way to reverse the magic. You'll simply have to start life over as Allison's twin sister, ALICIA.”

Allen's eyes grew wide. “A... ALICIA? You already gave me a girl's name,” he asked in disbelief. “It sounds as if you wanted this to happen..,” he added accusingly.

“Now that I know the facts, I'm glad it happened,” Amanda began to his utter disbelief as she tenderly squeezed the small trembling hands she held. Then she proceeded to relate how the Mayan descendants had been plotting to murder him until they hit upon the solution of eliminating him by turning him into a girl.

When the brief tale was done, Allen shivered.

“I knew the locals were not happy with my work. They did everything they could short of killing me to throw my calculations off. I guess this way is better than dying, but not much!”

“Oh Alicia,” Allison stated standing at the foot of the bed with her arms placed firmly upon her hips. “You talk as if being a girl was the worst thing in the world! Well it's the greatest thing!”

It was only then that Allen realized Allison and Ashley were standing at the foot of the bed and had obviously seen and heard everything. The pretty face turned beet red with humiliation. “I... I didn't know you were... I didn't mean...,” the trembling new girl stammered.

“It's all right, little sister,” Ashley stated with a compassionate smile. “There's no need to be embarrassed. We understand being a boy is a lot different than being a girl. Especially when you grew up to be a husband and father. Allison and I have promised Mom that we'll help you learn how to be a good girl just like us.”

Allen felt his eyes fill with tears. Both from the joy of knowing his daughters loved him enough to want to help him to adjust to being their new sister and tears of frustration and humiliation to know that his life as a husband and father were forever over.

“Girls, we'll be leaving for home first thing in the morning,” Amanda stated with a proud smile. “Please begin packing. Allison, make sure you leave out enough outfits for Alicia to wear today and tomorrow.”

Then she turned back to face the teary eyed girl in bed.

“As for you, young lady, we'll need to go to the bathroom. There's a lot about female anatomy that you need to learn.”

Allen blushed even more than before as the truth of Amanda's words struck home. While he was aware of feminine anatomy, had always been an appreciator of girlish pulchritude, and thoroughly enjoyed sex with a woman, the inner workings and functions of a feminine body were quite naturally unknown. Then a wave of horror en-

gulfed him. "D... does this mean that I... I..." he stammered looking up at Amanda. After swallowing back the bile he felt rising he continued. "Will I have a... a... p... period...?"

"Yes, Allison," Amanda replied softly upon seeing the distress this revelation caused. "You're fully female. You'll be able to become a mother. I assume your monthlies will be the same as Allison's. So you should be due for your first in about two weeks."

Allen's eyes grew wide in fear and dread. Then he looked to Allison.

"I didn't know you were..." he paused to wet his lips as he looked for the right word. "Menstruating."

"Sure, Alicia," Allison responded kindly knowing the fear her twin felt. "I started in March. I'm... WE... are growing up," she smiled coquettishly as she gave her blossoming breasts a meaningful glance. "Our period is not too bad as long as you're prepared. You'll get used to it soon enough. Our's aren't too bad, not like some of the girls."

Allen swallowed hard and felt faint. His mind was reeling! He would be having a period that wasn't TOO bad in two weeks... and every twenty eight days thereafter for the next thirty or so years... unless he... she... became pregnant!

"That's enough of that," Amanda chimed in as she pulled Alicia to her feet. "You girls get busy while I take this GIRL."

Once in the crude bathroom, Amanda immediately pulled the soft pink nylon nightie over Alicia's head. Then she knelt down and slipped the urine soaked, snug bikini panties down the smooth, hairless legs.

Allen, still numbed by all the changes and future prospects of his new existence, responded automatically without thought to the prompts as he quickly sought to cover this sudden nakedness with trembling fearful hands in modesty.

Amanda stood and turned the naked girl, her new daughter and former husband, to face the full length mirror.

Allen saw the naked, nubile girl and recognized her as his youngest daughter, Allison. Embarrassed by the sight of the naked preteen, he instinctively turned his head and tried to turn about and leave as any father would if he walked into the bathroom while his daughter stood there when she was nude.

Amanda was ready for just such a reaction. Blocking escape with her own body, she firmly grasped Alicia's shoulders and held her facing the mirror. "That's not Allison, dear, that is YOU," she stated gently. "Look at the mirror. Get to know your new body. Allen is gone forever. You ARE ALICIA!"

Allen looked with renewed fear. The father in him still wanted to look away, but there was something else, another feeling, a totally new and different feeling that made him want to look, a feeling of uncertain shame mingled with an equally uncertain pride. Allison... and himself... were very pretty. A shudder of fear swept through him as he examined the nude form he saw.

God! He was really a little girl!

The face was oval with just a hint of cute baby fat, kissable Cupid lips, a small cute upturned button nose, big wide baby blue eyes, thin delicate eyebrows, and high rounded rosy cheeks. Wispy straight blonde hair cascaded haphazardly down from the head in all directions, straddling the soft, narrow shoulders. Strands reached to the taut, narrow waist. All so pretty and familiar, the very duplicate of his daughter Allison that he'd seen many times.

But then came the differences, those things a father is loath to see upon his budding daughter. Yet it was those very features in which he felt a totally foreign but yet innate pride. For peeking seductively through the blonde tresses were the twin mounds that proclaimed approaching womanhood. Jutting provocatively from the smooth, rounded chest were pert, "AA" sized breasts.

Several emotions and feelings mixed in his mind as one fought to dominate. Fatherly instinct felt repulsed. Girlish pride felt warm and happy. He wanted to die of shame, but it felt so good and somehow natural that he also wanted to explore this new delight.

That drew his eyes from the breasts to this as yet unexplored area. From the flat, taut tummy and narrow waist flared nicely, girlish hips which tapered down to the long, sleek, shapely thighs and legs. But the center of the sensation was the triangle formed by the jointure of the legs and hips. Her groin.

A sadness momentarily engulfed him as he noted the complete absence of the familiar penis and balls surrounded by a mass of manly pubic hair, the sight that had always greeted him for his entire masculine life. Now there was only a small cute fuzzy blonde nest of curly hairs covering the smooth groin.

"It's okay, ALICIA," Amanda whispered softly into the pretty ear as she once more placed her hands upon the soft shoulders to add physical encouragement as well as verbal. "You are a girl, almost a woman. Mommy is right here to make sure nothing bad will happen."

Allen... or was he really Alicia... he really didn't know, trembled and bit his lips, then looked pleadingly into the mirror to meet Amanda's gaze. In the reflected eyes he saw only love, understanding, and encouragement. A swift tremor swept his girlish body as he nodded his head.

Finally it became too much he was physically exhausted. His knees buckled and his head lolled to one side. Both arms dangled limply as Amanda quickly caught and tenderly lowered the depleted fainting girl to the floor.

It took several minutes before Allen recovered.

"I...", he began.

"It's all right, Alicia," she cooed as she stroked the sweated brow. "This exploration was needed to rid your mind of any doubts that there is any hope that you might return to being a man. It was something you had to do. It's something you'll do again. Now you really KNOW that you are no longer male. You are indisputably a girl. The girls and I love you, changing from their father and my husband to their sister and my daughter will not change that. But it will change the way we interact. You are a twelve year old girl now, and Allison's twin. We will treat you as such. We will expect you to

behave as such. The bottom line is that I'm your mother and the girls are your sisters. We'll tell everyone that Allen died down here and we came to bury him. That means I'm now a widowed mother with three pretty daughters. You are a girl, my daughter Alicia. You will behave accordingly. I will make all the family decisions and you will obey just like your sisters. Do you understand me, YOUNG LADY?"

Allen's heart was beating rapidly as he peered sheepishly into Amanda's eyes. All that she was telling him made sense and he now knew only too well that he was indeed a girl. A chill swept over him as he realized just how different his life would be. It was hard to accept that he was now a girl, after all, he had been a man, a very virile man. All his life he had been an individual yet a realist, going with the flow when necessary, willing to stay alive to fight at a later time rather than to be a dead hero. There was no sense to fighting the change. He was now a girl, a twelve year old girl, a pretty twelve year old girl just entering puberty, Allison's twin, Alicia. That is what he had to do, for that is what he was. Indeed Allen had died down here in Mexico, he reflected sadly. That left Amanda a widow with three daughters. He was now one of those daughters, and as such would have to be an obedient girl. It would be difficult to subordinate himself as a child to Amanda who had been his equal as a spouse. But for the unity and peace of the family, he had to do so.

All these thoughts, concerns and fears flickered through his mind in a few moments. Finally he took a deep breath and sighed.

"Amanda... Mom... It'll be hard getting used to calling you MOM after all these years; I'll try my best to be a good daughter. This change is a lot for me to handle all at one time, so please be patient with me."

"Of course, Alicia," Amanda stated with a sad smile as she continued to stroke her brow. "I'll really miss having my strong, steady husband around to help make the hard decisions. Not to mention his prowess in bed! But that's what has to be. The first thing you need to do is to stop thinking of yourself as Allen. You are Alicia, and that's how you must think!"

"I'll do my best, MOM," Allen/Alicia stated as he gave Amanda a heart wrenching hug. "W... will I have to wear dr... dresses?"

"Yes, darling," Amanda answered. "After all, it was one of the rules your FATHER established that I think should continue. Ashley and Allison are accustomed to doing so, and it wouldn't be fair to them to suddenly change that rule simply to placate you. No, my sweet little girl, you'll have to wear dresses or skirts at all times other than when slacks are required.

"Now, little girl, into the shower with you," Amanda continued. "Then we'll get you dressed. We'll need all day today to give you a crash course on how to be a proper young miss. There's a lot to learn, so you'll have to pay attention and copy your sisters. Tomorrow we'll return home, so unless you want to look conspicuous, you'd better learn fast."

Taking a shower was a learning experience for Alicia, for that's how she tried to think of herself. Much to her surprise, it wasn't as difficult as she had thought. Her body was obviously feminine, and every sensation and natural reaction to stimuli was innately that of a girl. It was only in her mind where any masculinity lingered, and



that was already rapidly receding. As she showered, enjoying the needle-like stinging sensations of the water striking her preteen soft, hairless, ultra sensitive flesh, she marveled at the vast differences in her former male body and this cute body she now experienced.

As she took stock of her new body, the most difficult to thing to adjust to was the difference in her skin. As Allen, she had never noticed the little touches and pleasures that now assaulted her brain. Just the simple lack of coarse body hair covering almost her entire body was strange. She was sure that her new body would bruise and cut a lot easier than her tough, thick skinned male body had done.

Of course, the sexual difference was quite a change too. Suddenly to have twin supersensitive mounds upon your chest took a lot of getting used to. Never again could she safely go about bare chested! Then there was the difference in her groin.

Alicia suddenly realized that the more she relaxed, the easier it was to accept her present status. If she just reacted, she seemed to think and feel like a girl. Still, there was a strong masculine disgust, but even that was rapidly receding to a distant, distasteful memory. Life would be very interesting!

When Alicia stepped from the shower, Amanda could see the difference in her. The clear, bubbly look in the pretty eyes showed that an eager twelve year old girl stood before her. There was a trace of nervous apprehension in her stance, but that was only to be expected. The girl gladly accepted the towel Amanda handed her and began to robustly rub herself dry.

“Wait a moment, Alicia,” Amanda stated. “Drying off that way was all right for a boy, but not for girls. Our skin is a lot more sensitive than a boys, and rubbing will irritate our skin. Use the towel to gently pat yourself dry. You'll discover that doing even the simplest task as a girl is different than it was as a boy. Most things take longer too.”

Alicia blushed and held the towel before her in a naturally modest manner to conceal her breasts and groin as she listened to her mother. Memories from when she was a man of watching Amanda dry after a shower flooded into her mind. Indeed she had patted herself dry. There would be a lot to relearn, she realized.

“Alicia, just look how you're standing,” Amanda continued smiling. “Just like a shy young girl. I bet you did it without even thinking.”

Alicia peered down at herself and realized how she had herself covered. Indeed she was standing using the towel to cover her nudity, and she had done so without conscious thought. Her earlier thoughts that if she relaxed, doing things like a girl would come naturally.

“I didn't think about it,” she responded softly as her voice revealed the wonderment of her actions. “I guess maybe it won't be too hard adjusting to being a girl.”

“Of course it won't,” Amanda smiled as she looked at Alicia. “As long as you keep your mind open and don't get hung up on your old masculine ideas and prejudices, you'll do just fine.”

"I'll do my best, Mother," Alicia stated seriously as she began to pat herself dry. Instantly she noticed the difference. Rubbing, as she had done as a male, had irritated her sensitive skin. Gentle patting brought a soft pink blush to her nubile flesh. It felt better too. Again she marveled at the simple differences between male and female. As a male, drying after a shower was merely a chore to accomplish. As a girl, it was a sensual pleasure, one to be enjoyed.

While Alicia dried, Amanda removed the lid from a container of powder.

"Do you remember how I dust myself with the powder puff when I've finished drying," she asked the girl.

Alicia pursed her lips in thought. "I remember seeing you do it, but I'm not sure how."

"All you do is pat the puff in the powder, then gently pat it all over your body except your face," Amanda explained. "You don't want to see the powder on your body, you just want a fine coating to make you feel soft, smooth, and to smell nice. Try not to get any on your hair. I'll go back to the room to get your clothes while you finish."

Alicia did as she was told. The powder did make her feel soft, smooth, and sleek, as well as dainty and girlish. For several moments she lightly ran her fingers across her powdered body, reveling in the delightful sensations.

A gentle knocking on the door caused her to stop and scoop up the towel to hide her nudity.

Amanda entered the bathroom after knocking only to find Alicia cowering behind the towel biting her lip in a most piquant manner that brought a smile to her face.

"It's all right, Alicia. I do the same thing after I've powdered myself. It just feels so nice to be clean, powdered and smelling so dainty. It's one of the joys of being a girl."

Alicia blushed and smiled.

"Am I that easy to read," she asked.

"In certain matters, yes." Amanda replied. "Now that you're a girl, you feel and react like a girl. I know how I react to certain stimuli, you will most likely react similarly. Now, young lady, it's time to get dressed!"

With that she draped the arm full of clothing upon the sink.

Alicia looked at the pile of dainty delights and swallowed back the bile that threatened to rise. Pink nylon and lace predominated, especially upon the panties and bra that were atop the pile.

As a male, Allen had always been aroused by dainty lingerie. Now he... no SHE... was about to wear her own!

A warm flush swept her body as she wet her lips in anticipation tinged with a bit of trepidation. But she knew she was now a girl, and as a girl she would have to dress.

Since as the father he had expected his daughters to dress as demure girls at all times, now he... SHE... had to do likewise.