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Transvestia

FICTION:

Chrissie
Exposure
Dream Come True

LEADING LADY:

This Is My Life

POETRY:

Dance of Samantha McGee

VIRGIN VIEWS:

Woman By Choice or
Woman By Default

BOOK REVIEWS

EDITORIAL EMANATIONS



Volume XV No. 89

Purpose of Transvestia

TRANSVESTIA is dedicated to the needs of those heterosexual persons who have become aware of their "other side" and seek to express it. The magazine provides —

EDUCATION — ENTERTAINMENT — EXPRESSION

to help its readers achieve —

UNDERSTANDING — SELF ACCEPTANCE — PEACE OF MIND

in place of the loneliness, fear and self condemnation they have known for too long.

TRANSVESTIA does not condemn nor judge the fields of homosexuality, bondage, domination or fetishism. These are left to others to develop. They are not part of the areas of interest of this magazine.

TRANSVESTIA seeks to gather information and to disseminate it to interested persons in the medical, legal counseling and scientific professions to further their knowledge about this little understood field.

THE COVER SYMBOL

The symbol on the cover expresses the philosophy of this publication. The head, divided diagonally, represents our two sides — mind (Wisdom) and face (Beauty).

The lateral curving line portrays the ancient Chinese duality of the "Yang" (masculinity) and the "Yin" (femininity) — the two aspects of human nature.

The total symbolism indicates the wholeness of a human being — not all masculine — mind and reason, abstract and unseen — and not all feminine — beauty, desirability, and appearance, but rather an integration of both.

A "SAYING" OF JESUS

"When you make the two one . . . and when you make the
MALE AND THE FEMALE INTO A SINGLE ONE . . .
then shall you enter the kingdom."

From the Gospel According to St. Thomas.

Transvestia

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VOL. XV

NO. 89

Generously donated by:
Virginia Prince, PhD.



OUR LEADING LADY
LAURETTE

has accepted this well enough to go out at times. I met a great gal over 18 years ago in A.A. — who is now a young 72 years old and still owns and operates a little gift and card shop. I told her about Laurette and she is the best companion and friend I will ever have. As Page wrote in *TVia* #80, every F.P. should have a nice G.G. Well it is true, as we do need an understanding and close friend who accepts us as we are and helps us in so many ways to be better women.

Madge assists me in make-up, dress, poise, etc., and we go everywhere together, be it the theatre, dining, shopping, travelling in car or public transit — we have so much fun. We are as close as sisters, and she never thinks of me being anyone but Laurette when we are together. It is so rewarding and wonderful. When I am off work, I usually help her in her store. If I was retired now I would and could live full-time, but will just have to wait till I do retire, then Laurette will travel just as our Virginia does.

I am sure none of this would or could have happened if I hadn't found out and accepted myself completely for what I am and making the best of what I have. This is the edge I have over many others, as they do not know who or what they are or where they are going. I do feel compassion for them and wish I could help them in some way. Maybe this story will help.

Now, I have to relate an experience I had about last November. Laurette was on her way out to Madge's for a small supper and get-together on a Sunday. At a stoplight I looked for anyone near the crosswalk before making my turn. While watching left traffic, I was easing around the corner. Suddenly in front of the car were two ladies, one of whom I just pushed to the ground. She was not hurt, only scratched up a bit. I put her in my car to take her to the hospital, but the police and an ambulance were called. Was I ever shook up! The policeman asked for my license and when seeing it, asked if it was mine, saying yes. He said, "You sure fooled me, ma'am." Then he took all the particulars down, calling me "ma'am" all the time. Another officer came too, but was only interested in my new fur coat, a beautiful raccoon that I had always wanted for myself.

After all information was taken down, I was told I could go on. Not a word was mentioned at all of my being dressed, either by them or by the insurance man when he came to get all the data on the accident. This was my first encounter with the law in any way and it will

certainly be the last. There is no law against dressing up here except in the commission of a crime, but it was sure a shaking experience I never want to be in again.

Well, this concludes my story up to now, so I'll say to all the F.P.'s and their beautiful wives I have had the good fortune to know, and others I have yet to meet, "There are no strangers, only friends we haven't met yet."

Thanks to all of you girls out there for being there when I needed you and always will.

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FICTION



EXPOSURE

Dee Raymond

If it had been possible for a "cub" reporter to refuse an assignment, Eddie McIntyre would have refused this one. But, when Frank Gentile, the entertainment and features chief, gave what he thought was a good assignment to the *Tribune's* most junior reporter, refusal was not one of Eddie's options. He stood on the sidewalk outside the Cafe LaDonna, looking gloomily at the colored pictures in the wall showcase. Above the glass, a simple label, "Appearing Tonight," headed the photographs of "The Fabulous Lola Levine." Cover the act, had been Gentile's words, interview Lola and make sure he had enough for three paragraphs in the Saturday Entertainment and Night Club Review. A simple assignment with a byline for McIntyre.

McIntyre looked at the pictures closely. Lola's long golden hair topped an extraordinarily curvaceous figure, all the more extraordinary considering that Lola was, in fact, a man — a female impersonator. With an expression of distaste on his face, Eddie analyzed the photographs. Lola, in fishnet stockings and long, black strapless evening dress was shown singing into a microphone. She had shed the gown by the last photograph and was standing, posed, legs wide apart, bending forward to show an exaggerated cleavage, her mouth formed into a small "o." In each photograph, she wore impossibly high-heeled black patent leather shoes. Her fringed panties and tasselled bra indicated, to Eddie, that the man he would have to interview would surely be just like the simpering, homosexual queens who festooned the main entertainment streets of the city in their ruffled shirts and fringed jeans.

Eddie circled the club to the side door. An older, grey-haired man sat in a small, glass-walled office inside the door reading a dog-eared copy of *Variety*. "Whatya want?" he sniffed, not looking up.

"I'm from the *Trib*," Eddie began, about to explain his assignment.

Before he could continue, the man nodded and pointed down the corridor, "Room with number three on the door. Take the next left."

Eddie was about to thank him when the man turned away and began a violent bout of coughing and spitting into a bucket behind him.

The door with number three on it badly needed a new coat of paint. Eddie hesitated slightly, then rapped loudly on the door.

"Yeah," a strong male voice answered through the door.

"I'm from the *Tribune*," Eddie said, wondering how the performer would view his faded blue jeans, jacket and bedraggled grey, cotton shirt.

"Sure. Come in," the baritone voice called.

The room was brightly lit, both by small lights about the mirror and also by a long, overhead fluorescent lamp. A long chesterfield ran the length of the small room. The wall opposite was covered with pegboard with the mirror in the center. In a wooden chair in front of the mirror sat an unshaven, middle-aged man, his greying hair thinning noticeably on top. He wore a tattered old bathrobe, under which Eddie could see a stained, white undershirt.

"Uh, I'm, er, supposed to be here to see, er, Lola Levine before, er, the act tonight," Eddie wondered who the old guy was. Perhaps he was the agent.

The older man yawned, stretched and reached over to pick up his unlighted cigarette butt from the ashtray. "Yeah," he said. "So ask away, kid. I'm Lola Levine."

Eddie's eyes almost popped from his head. "B-but ..." he stammered.

The grey, rheumy eyes looked up with understanding. "Well, ya didn't expect Marilyn Monroe at these prices, did ya?" He lit the cigarette with a flick of his thumbnail and regarded Eddie sourly.

"Y-you hardly look like a female impersonator to me," Eddie recovered his composure.

The man known as Lola Levine spread his hands wide and shrugged, "You don't look much like a reporter to me," he rejoined.

Eddie relaxed. "Yes," he said. "I guess you're right. I'm afraid I've never actually interviewed a, er, a, well, someone like you."

The older man stood up and Eddie was able to see that his veined legs were clean-shaven. "Don't worry, kid," the chapped mouth smiled, revealing yellow-white teeth. "I won't seduce you." As Eddie shuddered, the older man flung back his head and roared with laughter. "Hell, relax, kid," he said. "Sit down while I get ready for my act." He took a bottle of pre-shave lotion from a drawer and spread the liquid liberally over his grey-white whiskers.

"You should be asking me what my real name is and how I got into this business," the yawns could hardly be contained. Eddie nodded dumbly and took pen and notebook from his pocket. "My parents christened me Hugo Balanchuk, but I lived with an aunt for a long time and my driving license says Hugh Graham, which was my aunt's married name." The electric razor left a wide track revealing pink, pasty skin beneath the beard. "I got into vaudeville, doing comedy acts, in one of which I dressed as a woman. When vaudeville died, my partner moved on. I was a rotten comic by myself. The only laughs I got were for the female sketch I did. So impersonating became the sole act that I do."

Shaven, his face was that of a middle-aged store manager or bank clerk. "I, er, don't really know what to ask," Eddie mumbled. "I'm supposed to write three paragraphs about you and your act."

Hughie smiled. He headed to the small basin at the back of the room and picked up a toothbrush. "You can say that I'm appearing to SRO audiences at the svelte La Donna Club, wowing the clientele with fabulous gowns and first-rate mimicking of today's leading female stars." He gargled and spat into the bowl. "Do you want to see me make-up?"

Eddie hesitated. Why not, he thought. It was an angle he could add, the transformation of Hugh Graham into Lola Levine. He glanced at the older man who was preparing what appeared to be a white paste

in a small bowl. "This is pancake," said Hughie. "It's often said that I put it on with a trowel, but it ain't so."

While Eddie watched, Hugh Graham's face changed into an off-white shade as the nimble fingers covered every wrinkle and mark with the paste. Then with speed and ability, a face was painted over the white clown mask — black-lined eyes and brows, red lips and reddened cheeks. Eddie was surprised, when Hugh stripped off his robe and undershirt, to see him apply make-up to his shoulders, chest and arms.

From under the mirror, Hugh took out a flesh-colored girdle which Eddie realized was a waist-cincher. With it on, curves began to appear for the first time on the stocky male body. The tiny jock, or "cache-sex" as Hughie called it, the sequined g-string, and the red silk panties gave Eddie a tight feeling about his chest and groin as Hugh applied them without comment. The special jelly-filled bra pulling tightly across his chest muscles suddenly revealing that Lola Levine was about to appear in full in the room. Two pairs of panty hose, a short cocktail dress which Eddie nervously zipped, red, silk high heels and a long blonde fall were added within minutes with a speed born of long practice. Lola sat demurely on the wooden chair and winked at Eddie. "Just my mascara and nail polish," she said in a high, kittenish, female voice. "Then I'll add my own special perfume just for you, honey," she pouted at the young reporter and put red, button earrings in her ears.

Eddie squirmed with discomfort. In what had appeared an incredibly short time, but was actually well over an hour, a voluptuous, sexy woman had appeared in the room, so different from the run-down middle-aged man at the start of the interview.

"I have to do a show now, darling," Lola's voice contained a sultry caress. "Why don't you ask Jimmy to give you a front row seat?"

Eddie stumbled out, trying to keep his mind on his task. The doorkeeper was coming to find him. He jerked his thumb down the hallway. "There's a table for you there. The barman will show you where"

The audience was not quite the SRO Lola had advocated. In fact the club was a little over half full, about equally male and female when Lola began her act. Much to Eddie's astonishment, she was fantastic. Within minutes he was swept along with the vivacity of her act. She was having so much fun singing in a natural, high-pitched female voice,

vamping all the men who sat at the tables near the front. She even passed close to Eddie, flicking her soft petticoats over his head. With a partial strip finale to the tune "I Enjoy Being A Girl," Lola left the stage in panties and bra to a surprisingly, to Eddie's ears, loud burst of applause, interspersed with a few whistles.

When he arrived backstage, Hugh Graham had returned to the room, Eddie saw with regret. The blonde wig had disappeared as had the bra and waist clincher. "Whew!" Hughie grimaced, draining a tumbler of what looked like whiskey. "I get more out of shape everyday." He was pouring another tumbler from a Five-Star bottle. He raised it to his scarlet lips, his make-up now cracking a little. "Good audience, eh? Did ya like the show?" Eddie began to reply but Hughie went on without giving him a chance. "I know," his voice was weary. "It sickens you to see a man prancing about on stage dressed like a woman." He drank from the tumbler. "But they liked me, didn't they?" The grey, red-marked eyes pleaded for some kind of favorable response from Eddie.

"Sure," said Eddie automatically. "You were a big hit."

"You'll write that?" Without thinking, Hugh Graham had responded in the little girl voice he reserved for use as Lola Levine.

Eddie hesitated. "Sure," he said, "or I'll write something similar to that"

"I know," the bald head with red earrings nodded. "You'll write, but your editor will re-write." He drained the tumbler again. "It was nice to meet you, er ..." He tried to remember Eddie's name but the alcohol was obviously having an effect.

"Eddie McIntyre," said Eddie, rising to leave. "I'll write the report just as we said and we'll see what happens."

When at last he was back on the dark street in front of the La Donna Club, the cold night air made Eddie shiver. For some reason, he was mightily relieved to be back on the street. He turned up his collar and headed back to the office. He had a deadline to meet.

* * * * *

The following Tuesday, Eddie was doing one of his usual jobs, typing out a story being phoned in by another reporter, when Lisa Beard, the tall, blonde administrative assistant, came up behind his chair. Leaning over him so that her blonde hair touched his shoulder, she whispered, "When you've finished, go in and see Mr. Merrick in his office." She moved off leaving an intoxicating aroma of perfume and an ache in Eddie's lower body. His telephone contact was distinctly annoyed as he repeated his last sentence for the third time.

John Farley Merrick was titled simply the associate editor of the paper, but the title belied the power of his job. His was the responsibility of directing the *Tribune's* high-powered, investigative reporting team, "muckraking" in the words of the *Tribune's* legion of enemies. With Merrick in his tiny, uncluttered office was Roscoe Ward, the dean of the paper's reporters. Merrick was lounging back in his chair, a copy of the Saturday Entertainment and Night Club Review open in front of him. He motioned Eddie to a wooden chair directly in front of the associate editor's desk. Then he glanced over at Ward and nodded.

"You wrote this piece on Lola Levine," Ward's gravelly voice wheezed from a spot down and to the right of Eddie's ear.

Not knowing quite which way to turn, Eddie nodded, taking a quick glance over his shoulder at the celebrated writer. "Yes," he said. Why ever should men of such importance be interested in such an insignificant piece of writing? Eddie pondered quickly; but no easy reply came to his lips. He could feel that he was sweating freely.

"An unusual piece of writing," Ward coughed harshly and Eddie could hear him searching for a handkerchief.

Eddie looked at Merrick. The moonfaced editor was noncommittal as he read Eddie's report with the utmost concentration. Suddenly, he broke off and signalled to Ward. "I think, Ross," his voice still retained much of a New England accent, "that we must explain to Mr. McIntyre the unusualness of his writing." He turned light blue eyes in Eddie's direction. With fat, stubby fingers, he threw his copy of the Review onto the desk in front of him. "Whenever female impersonators are reviewed in a newspaper," he went on smoothly, "there is generally something condescending in the tone of the reporter if the mimic is very good. Never, however, does the reporter describe such a show as 'scintillating' or 'vivacious'."

Eddie flushed, recognizing adjectives that he had used. "I tried to write as accurately as I could," he said defensively.

"Oh, I have no doubt, Mr. McIntyre," said the editor, "that you wrote the truth as you saw it. Mr. Ward and I find your perception of female impersonation quite unusual, particularly for this newspaper."

Oh God, I'm going to be fired, thought Eddie, but they want to humiliate me first.

Roscoe Ward's coughing had eased. "Hey, boy," his voice was even more leathery, "look over here." Eddie turned to look at the old, redfaced man in front of the brown-panelled wall. "You are aware of the project that I have in hand at the moment."

Eddie nodded silently. "There is a possibility," Merrick's voice was bland, "just a slim one, in my opinion, that you may, under certain circumstances, be able to work with Mr. Ward on another of his exposes."

Openmouthed, Eddie looked at the man against the wall. He was coughing again and was obviously a sick man. But what a chance! To work with the best of all the *Tribune's* great reporters. Eddie's heart leapt wildly in exultation and expectation. This was what he had become a reporter for! What could the expose be?

Between coughs, Ward had taken up the speaking. "I've spent my life exposing the corruption of this city," he gasped. "I've spent the last year on the current set of articles, exposing how young girls are snared into the web of prostitution, how they are degraded, and how they come to serve the interests of the Mob. But that's yesterday's news. Finished now." His coughing was so acute that Eddie's exhilaration was quite subdued. It didn't look to him that Roscoe Ward would ever finish another assignment. "Girls aren't the only people exploited by this new mob in town," Ward went on. "Do you know how many suicides there have been in this city in the last two years? Over 250!" His hoarse voice had fire in it. "And do you know why? 'Course you don't but I'll tell you. Blackmail has become a way of life for many people in this city." He had to stop and sip at iced water that a worried Merrick had risen and gotten for him.

"All the so-called 'degenerates' of this city," he rasped on determinedly, "have become subject to blackmail — queens, transvestites,

gays, lesbians, kinks — call 'em what you like. Anyone with any bent of any kind, no matter how harmless it might be to himself or to the community, is being hounded into suicide or ruin through exposure." He slowed for a moment, panting. His dark eyes, however, glowed with an inner fanaticism. "But who can crack the conspiracy of silence that surrounds anything like this? Even the victims won't talk for fear of reprisal. We have to expose this corruption and rid it from the city." He slumped back, exhausted, into his chair.

"For such an exposure," Merick took up the narrative, "we need someone on the inside, to supply authoritative material, both to us and, possibly, to a public inquiry later. And that," Merrick glanced at the article on his desk, "is where you come in, Mr. McIntyre."

Eddie followed his eyes. He frowned, feeling bewildered. They wanted him as an inside man for what?

"To put it bluntly," Roscoe Ward's face might have been granite, "how'd you like to be a female impersonator?"

Eddie's eyes flared open. He sat back abruptly. He felt numb. His earlier excitement had evaporated into a strange fear. "I-I er ..." He swallowed. He surely must have misheard.

"You see, Mr. McIntyre," Merrick's voice was persuasive. "I'm sorry, I should call you Eddie. The problem, Eddie, has been that we have not been able to find any young man to whom we could address such a question. We needed someone who is not one of the unreliable, exotic kinds of persons mentioned by Ross, but, who possesses some training as an interviewer or reporter. This person also has to have an open mind, but not one likely to be jeopardized by exposure, to the subject of female impersonation."

"It's the only area we could slip someone in without them having to debase themselves too much," Roscoe was able to talk again. "We considered using a real girl, but she'd not likely get past first base. Any kind of queen, of course, we couldn't be sure of to give us correct facts, and might compromise us, instead. Well," he looked upward at Merrick, "that's our pitch. You'll be paid as a member of my staff, of course, and you'll stay with us when this is all over, as an investigative reporter. That's a promise."

"You'll need time to think it over," Merrick eyed the young man closely. "You've a girl friend?"



LISA
WA-11-R



Eddie nodded, his mouth dry, but his mind was agitated as it had ever been in his young lifetime. "Julie Burns," he said. "She works in Records."

"Talk it over with her." Merrick picked up the paper, placed it in his desk, leaving it spotlessly clean. "She might see the real advantages to your taking this assignment."

* * * * *

Julie had already been called by John Merrick when Eddie met her for lunch later.

"What is this?" she snapped at him when they were fairly secluded in the staff restaurant. "Are you a queer, Eddie? What was Mr. Merrick talking about?"

With a high degree of embarrassment, Eddie explained what Roscoe Ward had told him in Merrick's office. "It's a shortcut to the top," he said finally. "But anyway I don't think I can do it." He looked about the lounge furtively. He tried to joke, "I don't think I've the legs for it."

Lisa Beard swept by their table, two of the paper's featured reporters in tow. She saw Eddie and waved to him. "Hi!" she called. "I've a message for you." She wiggled over to their table with the eyes of all the men in the restaurant on her. "Mr. Ward said he completely forgot to mention the matter of your bonus." She lowered her voice, and smiled prettily at him. "I typed up a check for \$5,000 in your name before I left. Mr. Ward said he'd talk to you about it if you decided to work with him." Her blue eyes were filled with astonishment. "Has Mr. Ward offered you a job and you've turned it down?"

Eddie shrugged and looked at Julie. At the mention of the bonus, Julie had stopped eating. Now she looked intently at Eddie. "For that kind of money, it's O.K. with me," she said quickly. She smiled at Lisa. "You can tell Mr. Merrick that I persuaded him. I wouldn't want him to pass up his biggest chance because of me." Lisa raised her eyebrows and returned to her table. "I'm told she's frigid; can't come at all," Julie's voice dripped acid. She suddenly grinned at Eddie. "Think you'll look as great as she does, Eddie?"

* * * * *

"The first thing I want you to do," said Frankie Darro, the instructor arranged for Eddie by Ward and Merrick, "is to shave off all the hair on your body. Shave as close as you can, too. Put on the bathing trunks you find in the bathroom and come back and see me."

Without Eddie actually agreeing, Ward had taken Julie's permission, relayed to him by Lisa, as consent to go ahead and arrange lessons in being a woman for Eddie. Frankie Darro had an apartment in the same building as John Merrick. His grey-white, rinsed hair, shaped eyebrows and mincing walk hardly allayed Eddie's private fears of what he might be subjected to. Darro was likely in his late fifties, but by his bright, colorful clothes, stressing edgings in white, he tried to indicate his youthful outlook. He never spoke to Eddie of his assignment. Singlemindedly, he worked at only one task — to make Eddie as feminine as possible. Eddie's all-over sun tan brought a clap of approval from Frankie, who also remarked, "Well, dear, you really do have the legs for it," a remark which made all the hairs on Eddie's body stand on end.

Having arranged for Eddie to move in with Darro, Ward left them completely alone for a week, while Frankie went to work. Frankie kept Eddie almost without clothes for the first three days, teaching him how to wear the special g-strings that were necessary to hid his true sex from view. Frankie also concentrated on combing, setting and re-arranging Eddie's hair. Eddie had always been a "longhair." When he checked a mirror late on the second day of training, he was surprised by the mess of curls, nevertheless, that had been built up on top of his head. For the first time, he saw his face framed with a woman's hairstyle. It was so incongruous, he wanted to quit right away. Frankie quickly turned the mirror over and pushed him away. He let Eddie wear his own clothes in the main while he tried to show him how to dance, move, sing and speak like a woman.

On the evening of that third day, Eddie met female make-up for the first time. The fragrances that filled his nostrils aroused him, but Frankie quickly dampened that by plucking out, most painfully, Eddie thought, almost every hair in his eyebrows. Frankie put false eyelashes, lipstick, eye shadow, liner and mascara on Eddie's face and re-introduced Eddie to the mirror. Eddie could hardly believe the transformation. He actually did look like a woman. Or, at least, he didn't look so manly as he had before. He went to bed thinking that Ward's plan, which he had secretly thought would be abandoned before long, might have a chance.

On the fourth day, after he had shaved, Frankie gave him the make-up box and told him to go ahead. The result was a disaster, though an interlude of great hilarity for Frankie. Eddie looked grotesque and all Frankie could do was laugh. When he saw that Eddie was losing out to his frustration, Frankie took over and under his day-long tutelage, Eddie was able to make a reasonably feminine face for himself and comb the soft curls about his face.

The fifth day would live long in Eddie's memory. For the first time in his life, he put on women's clothes. Frankie had brought a special bra with some kind of liquid insert to make a bust for him, but it was the feel of the panty-hose on his shaven thighs that lifted him so that he almost died thinking of Julie and wishing she were there.

Frankie uncovered all the mirrors that day and let him see himself. In full, female attire, with Frankie's expert touch to his make-up, he looked to his own eye, like an attractive woman. When Frankie brought him costumes, bikinis, gowns, mini-dresses to wear, he was hardly able to do more than watch himself move, exposing his thighs, his panties, a bare shoulder — it was narcissism of an order, he thought, that made him desire a woman so, when he was dressed as a woman. Frankie refused to let him wear any of his own clothes now. On his feet, he wore only high heels, for that was all that were provided. The final assault on his manhood came that evening, however, when, his hair in curlers, he found a short nightdress and panties put out for his sleepware. In seven days, in clothing and physical appearance, when he glimpsed himself in a mirror, he was a woman.

On the tenth day, he was working at a mime and dance routine Frankie had wanted him to work at particularly hard, when the doorbell rang. As he pirouetted, making sure as he had been taught, that the silk skirts billowed out wide to expose all of his legs and panties, he glanced at the doorway to see Merrick, Ward and Darro watching him. In total confusion, he stopped, conscious of the critical gaze of three men, with himself in women's clothes. He could feel his cheeks burn in embarrassment beneath his face powder.

"You know," said Merrick wonderingly. "It might work at that."

Ward smiled at Eddie. "Let's get a drink," he rasped, "and set out a course of action."

When Eddie walked over to the table, without thinking Merrick held out a chair for him and he sat, running his hands beneath the silk, as demurely as he could.

"Well, what do you think?" Ward asked Darro, enthusiasm in his voice.

Darro looked at his long, shiny nails. "I don't know," he said. "It's asking too much, I think, in such a short time."

Merrick frowned. "You don't think McIntyre can carry off a pose as a female impersonator," he said.

"He looks great to me," Ward roared hoarsely. "I bet he could pass anywhere."

Merrick watched Darro carefully. "You're the expert," he said to him directly. "Give us your expert opinion."

Darro shook his head. "You gave me too little time," he said. "She doesn't really have a femme voice. Singing is out of the question. As a dancer, you need talent and experience." He looked sadly at Eddie. "She'll never make it as a dancer, I'm afraid."

"You mean," said Merrick, "that Eddie here won't be able to get a job as a female impersonator no matter how much money we put into his clothing, or the time you spend on working up an act."

Darro agreed. "That's about it."

Merrick looked regretfully at Eddie. "Well, I'm sorry, Eddie, after all you've gone through. You really did try hard, I can see. You can, of course, keep the bonus." He rose, about to leave.

"There's always another way," Ward's voice was harsh. Eddie began to feel afraid as he glimpsed the stone-like mask of a face. Darro's hands fluttered and he glanced nervously at Eddie.

Merrick sat down. "Oh, what is it?" he said. Darro and Ward exchanged glances. "Come on, Ross," he said, "we've gone this far. What else can we consider?"

Ward motioned to Darro. "Well," said Darro. "You don't need

real talent to be able to strip. I could teach anyone to bump and grind in a couple of days." He looked at Eddie's horrified face. "Sorry, darling," he said, "but money and good costumes can turn a lousy strip into a good one. There's always an opening for a stripper in an impersonation club."

There was a silence for a while. Merrick looked at Eddie. He's actually considering it, thought Eddie.

"O.K.," said Merrick. "Let's work at that." He smiled at Eddie. "I'm afraid you'll have to earn that bonus after all, Eddie. Perhaps we can come up with more for the extra you'll have to put up with now."

Eddie opened his mouth to speak. Trying to remember how Frankie had taught him to speak as a girl, he only made a choking sound.

"She ought to go out in public now," said Darro, "so that she can get used to people looking at her as a woman."

"When were you going to do that?" asked Ward.

Darro shrugged. "Perhaps today," he said.

"Then come on," said Ward gruffly. "I really do need a drink now. Let's go over to the Pump and get a drink."

Without further reply, Frankie handed Eddie a short coat and purse. His arm under Eddie's, he whisked him out of the flat into the bright daylight. Ward and Merrick, in obvious high spirits, escorted Eddie into the Pump, a lounge bar of equal attraction to men and women. The first person they met was Julie Burns.

She smiled brightly at the *Tribune* men and continued to leave. Ward hustled Eddie into a booth. Looking at the glass-covered wall at the end of the bar, Eddie saw Julie suddenly stop as if she had been jolted. She whirled around and looked in their direction. Eddie could see her mouth forming his name. Then, as he watched, her face dissolved into an expression of enormous distaste. With a scornful glance at their table, she turned on her heel and almost raced away. Eddie could feel the tears welling up in his eyes. "Don't," hissed Darro, "I can't fix your make-up in here, darling."

* * * * *

Darro's influence had produced a job for Roxanne Miller, a stripper, at the Gold Coast, a good club for female impersonators. Not as swank as the Ladybird or Racetrack, with their chorus lines of beautiful "girls" and expensive production numbers, but neither was it as desperate as the Barnyard, Arthur's or Betty's Club, where the performers had to mingle with the audience and were known to be homosexual and on hire to members of the audience.

Eddie was dressed in his usual jeans for the first time in over a month when he reported to the Gold Coast for his initial appearance. The queen who looked after the stage door eyed him up and down, noting his shaped brows, pinched in waist, long, shiny fingernails and general effeminate appearance. Accepted as one of that sorority, Eddie was able to find the communal dressing room without difficulty where the two trunks labelled "Roxanne Miller" were waiting for him. The Gold Coast boasted one of the best equipped dressing rooms for its performers. In this level there were no star performers, so that separate dressing rooms were unnecessary. The Gold Coast, however, boasted six separate mirrors and make-up tables. In addition to this, each performer had a long cupboard-like walk-in wardrobe to place their costumes on hangers with ample space for trunks or cases containing other items of apparel. There were three other impersonators in the room when Eddie walked in. A tall blonde, in black bra, panties, garter belt, stockings and high heels walked over to him.

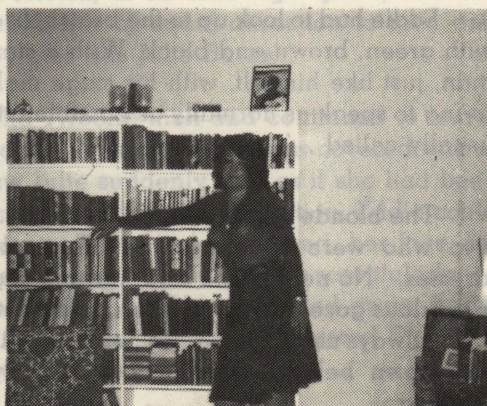
"Hi," she said in a twangy, high-pitched voice. She cocked her head to one side so that her backcombed hair swayed a little over her shoulder. "You're new, so you must be Roxanne."

Eddie had to look up to the brown, friendly eyes, garishly made-up with green, brown and black. With a start, he realized that this was a man, just like himself, with his stage make-up on. "Yes," said Eddie, trying to speak as normally as possible, "that's my stage name, but I'm usually called . . ."

The blonde quickly raised her hand. She looked back at the other two who were wiggling into identical tight fitting black evening dresses. "No need," she said, turning slightly, revealing to Eddie's incredulous gaze that her statuesque breasts were, in fact, the real thing. "We always use stage names here. I'm Kiki, and that's Diane and Deirdre down below." She looked critically at Eddie's jeans, but said nothing.



ANTONIA
MALASIA



"Er, I'd better unpack," said Eddie.

The blonde shook her head. "No," she said. "Annie does that. But you'll have to pick out your gear for tonight. Annie doesn't come on till show starts." Eddie glanced at his watch. There was still an hour to go, but he'd need that to make-up well. The blonde had returned to one of the mirrors and was adding even more make-up, white this time, to the back of her eyelids.

To hide his confusion, Eddie went over to his trunks which had been placed by the fourth walk-in. Opening them brought immediate responses from the other occupants of the room. Diane and Deirdre, identical twins as far as Eddie could tell, as slinky a pair of "femmes fatales" as he had ever seen, cooed with delight over the red satin panties and garter belt Frankie had insisted he wear in his first performance. Kiki turned, brush in hand, her lips being re-coated in blushing pink, "I'd keep those locked and out of the way," she said. "If the other girls see them, you'll find yourself without even a hankie when you need one."

"Ooh, spoilsport, Kiki," squeaked Deirdre, pouting and looking at herself in the mirror.

Eddie smiled but quickly ducked away into his cubicle. Despite Frankie's coaching, it was every bit as bad as he had expected. Now came the worst part. He had to strip off the protection of his male "street clothes" and feminize himself before three other creatures that he hadn't yet thought of in his own mind as men. Steeling himself, reciting the longest poem he could think of, he went through the motions mechanically. In no time, he had shed his clothes, had positioned the flame-red bra, g-string and panties on his person, and ducked out to a mirror in the furthest corner to make-up. He concentrated on his own face, reciting, calmly, reciting on, as he applied the light powder base to his face, before beginning the stupendous task of making up his eyes.

"Gee, I wish I was like you," Kiki's voice had dropped. There was admiration in his-her eyes. Eddie also noticed his-her adam's apple for the first time.

"Huh?" he said.

"You've such a soft, beautiful skin," said Kiki. "You won't have to wear body make-up like the rest of us."

Eddie shook his head. He'd better comb out and spray his hair. As long as it was naturally, Frankie had insisted he backcomb it up over his head in graceful waves, holding it in place with an extra-strong hair spray.

"You're a stripper?" Kiki was lounging in the chair, apparently satisfied with her make-up, and was prepared to chat.

"Yes," Eddie nodded. "And you?"

"I sing," Kiki's voice was pitched up again. Eddie could hardly believe it was not a woman beside him when Kiki spoke like that. "The twins will open the show with some dancing and acrobatics. Then I follow with a couple of songs." Kiki stood up and headed for a wardrobe near the wall. "You will follow me."

Eddie nodded. His hair was in place and Roxanne was beginning to appear. He prepared to put on his false eyelashes. In the mirror he could see that Kiki was putting on a short slip and was holding a green cocktail dress on a hanger. With his eyelashes in place, Eddie looked at himself. Roxanne looked back. In no time, Frankie's precise instructions in his head, Roxanne's lipstick was applied, her eyeshadow, necessary for the stage, made black holes of her eyes. For a while, Roxanne disappeared into her wardrobe to add the other necessary things, garter belt, stockings, slip, petticoat, red satin high heels, the long, very expensive brocade black and red gown, white evening gloves, a thick fake-diamond necklace, heavy triangular earrings to swing in Roxanne's ears, a small tiara wedged into her hair, the three-quarter length white silk-lined evening coat, and the final touch, a diamond-studded purse. As Eddie swished out to check that everything was as Frankie had ordered, he caught the other three impersonators staring at him. Confused, he looked in the mirror. He had never quite seen Roxanne that way before. If he hadn't known it was Eddie underneath, he'd have admired the lovely girl who looked back warily at him.

"Wow," said Kiki. "You're gonna knock 'em dead, kid."

Just then, the door opened, and a group of young girls came in. They split off, chattering, going into different cubicles, where they began to strip off. "Meet the rest of the cast," said Kiki. "Hey guys," he shouted, "this is Roxanne. She's stripping in the third spot."

From the wardrobes came a few scattered greetings but in the

main the other impersonators were too busy getting rid of the girls' clothes they wore everyday on the street and putting on the girls' clothes they wore everynight on the stage. Some impersonation, thought Eddie.

Ta-ra!" A cute singing voice burst forth from the door. Standing there in the briefest mini Eddie had ever seen was a stunning honey-blond girl, her hair straight and down her back to her waist. Her tiny midriff was bare, save for two tiny links of the brief top to the bottom of the dress. She was highly developed and expertly made-up. She wiggled across the floor to Eddie in her high-heeled calf-length white boots. "Hi, everybody, Karen's here. Let the show commence!" She laughed, high-pitched, a caricature of a woman's laugh.

"And who are you, darling?" she vamped at Eddie. "What a stunning outfit, my dear! If you've more like it, maybe we can share. We're about the same size."

"Watch it, Karen," said Kiki. "Roxanne's a stripper, too. She'll soon be on top of the bill if you help her out."

Karen's brown eyes flashed at Roxanne, the enmity quickly being erased by a cunning smile. "Why, darling Kiki," she said, mincing up to the tall singer, "what an unkind thing to say."

After the perusal of the others, the strip that Eddie gave was almost an anti-climax. Unable to see the audience because of the lights, only when a burst of applause broke out as he seductively held his bra at arm's length and dropped it, his other arm across his narrow chest, did nerves catch up with him, but his momentary panic, holding him stationary in full glare of the audience, only g-string, backcombed hair and false eyelashes between him and total nudity. The flash-out at the end of his act galvanized him into action and he fled from the stage. With enormous gratitude, he recovered his bra and panties from Anne, a white-haired old man who attended as a general factotum to the performers. Quickly, Eddie pulled on the bra and panties and felt dressed again. In the background, he could hear the applause continuing for the routine Frankie had taught him. "Well, you're a hit, girl," he thought, and began to re-dress in his brocade gown to return to the dressing room.

"Hey, you were great!" Kiki was enthusiastic as Eddie entered the dressing room. "What a fantastic strip!" Eddie saw Karen's head swivel

in his direction. Kiki winked as she went on. "Did you hear that applause? You'll be heading this bill in a few weeks, for sure."

As quickly as he could, Eddie edged off to his cubicle. He was still shaking as he realized what he had done. But now came an equally difficult part to his role — to get the "hold" out of his hair so that he could look reasonably masculine when he left. He saw that Annie had arranged the gowns Frankie had bought with much greater care than Eddie ever showed. He heard a rustle behind him. Kiki was there. She swallowed, her adam's apple bobbing as she saw Eddie eyeing her dress, which she still wore and was in no hurry to change. "You'll be asked to visit the bosses," Kiki said. "You can dim your make-up, but you're expected to be in drag." She looked about furtively, and lowered her voice. "In this club, it just doesn't pay to get on the wrong side of the bosses. Just ask Cissy if you don't believe me." Karen passed by in the background, still looking daggers at Eddie-Roxanne. "This little black dress," said Kiki loudly, "will do for any occasion, and you can keep that jewelry on." She darted away before Eddie could follow up.

Within five minutes, Annie appeared at Eddie's shoulder with the order for him to join the boss in the club as he removed the excess eyeshadow he had used on stage. Annie's anguished expression at Eddie's request for time to change, convinced him to leave on the brocade gown. He directed Annie to fetch him a new pair of long evening gloves, repaired his eyes, and then set off after Annie into the dimly-lit club where, "the Fabulous Fiona," not, in his opinion, a patch upon Lola Levine, was treating the audience to an animated version of "I Enjoy Being A Girl."

Beeny Carponi, short, swarthy, a permanent five o'clock shadow about his jaw, was a caricature of a crook. He looked Eddie-Roxanne over and patted the bench beside him. "Sit here, doll," he said, not even removing his cigar stub. Eddie slid in as gracefully as he could, conscious of the excessive rustling of his gown and the appraisal he was undergoing from the other members of the group at the table. "How'd ya like a pair of boobs?" Benny's smirk was followed by a coarse laugh.

"Oh, stop it, Benny," a blonde woman, about thirty, well-dressed in a long, black evening dress, spoke petulantly. "Pay no attention, dear," she said to Eddie. "He likes to shock all our new girls. When

you're ready for implants, just you come to me. We can arrange that without any trouble." Eddie clutched the glass of sherry that had been placed in front of him. He took a quick sip, leaving a lipstick rainbow on the glass.

Benny glowered at the woman who had spoken. "Keep ya nose out of this, Allison," he snarled. "I'll break the new stuff in any way I want. I run this joint." He waited for a challenge but none came as Allison looked back to the stage, where an impersonator, in a skimpy nightdress, was cuddling up to a giant teddy bear and was debating, much to the amusement of the audience, whether or not to strip off her panties "because it is so-o-o hot in bed!"

Benny pushed his scarred face to within an inch of Eddie's hazel eyes. "I can't stand queens," he said, blowing smoke into Eddie's face. "When they don't do as I say, I do nasty things to them. We also pay better here than in any other club on the block." He looked back at Allison and then relaxed. He put his arm about Eddie's bare shoulder. "Hey, you gotta cute act, darling. you really can spin it out. I see the old guys just hanging out when you got right down there. You sure worked them over good." He might have gone on but was interrupted by a muffled word from a waiter. Without further word, he stood up and bulled his way off toward the bar.

Allison immediately moved beside Eddie. She looked at him intently with her blue eyes. "Don't mind him, Roxanne," she said, putting her hand on Eddie's knee. "I was really interested in your act. There are so few unoperated or uninflated mimics these days that you really shocked us. Did I hear," she leaned over and breathed in his ear. "that you actually arrived in men's clothes?"

Eddie could feel the gentle caress of her hand, moving very slowly upwards onto his thigh. He nodded and dropped his gloved hand on top of hers, which she left in place.

"How interesting," she smiled and caressed her lips with her tongue. "And do you go out during the day like that?" she asked.

Eddie nodded again, feeling a sudden, stronger pressure on his thigh. "Oh boy," she said, huskily. "We'll have to get together real soon, Roxanne." She smiled with delight. "Do I ever have my work cut out with you!"

Continued in TVia #90



TRUE STORY

A DREAM COME TRUE

Helen — CA

Dressed in my regular men's suit, striped shirt and tie, I walked down the street. Ahead of me on the corner stood a ladies' dress shop with a banner in front — DRESS SALE. Heart pounding, I opened the front door and walked in.

Instantly I was surrounded by femininity. Racks of pretty blouses, skirts and dresses lined the walls. Bouffant petticoats hung on display, all ruffles and bright colors. A glass counter displayed wigs, high-heeled shoes, lingerie. Beautiful nightgowns and peignoir sets caught the roving eye, and their silky, sheer fabric invited examination and stroking.

Other men stood amongst the feminine merchandise or browsed through the small magazine shelf. I hesitated for a moment as I took in the scene, and then I approached a rack of bright dresses. Slowly my hands reached over and began to search through hangers for a style that I liked. Finally I selected one, gauze, with full sleeves and a long skirt decorated with a ruffle on the front panel which curved down and up in the shape of an apron.

I pulled it out and inspected the girlish details, the fullness of the skirt, the ruffles at the wrists and the flounce at the hem. Then, flipping the hanger over, I held it up to my neck and shoulders, so that it flowed down my suit coat and trousers to the tops of my heavy black shoes. It might just possibly fit me, I thought, as I checked the size of the shoulders, the waist, the length of the sleeves.

For a moment, the wonder of it caught in my throat. Me, obviously a man, examining pretty clothes, holding up panties with the expectation of buying and wearing them, wondering if a dress would fit my

waist, or if the color of a lovely slip would show through the material of a dress. A dream come true! I choked and swallowed on my excitement.

I vividly remember walking through dress shops and department stores with my mother and sisters, seeing them fondle intimate garments, exclaiming over this cute dress, or that frilly blouse. How I envied them. As a boy, any enjoyment of pretty things was *verboten*. Any wish, even, to stroke silky fabrics or fingering exquisite laces, or, even more, to yearn for bright colors which might be contained in a flowered gown, had to be denied and suppressed, held in check and hidden as it would not fit the stereotype of my masculine image.

Living with my mother and two sisters, I fought against my fantasy of dressing in dainty garments, of letting my hair grow to flow down my back in girlish ringlets, of wearing ruffles and bows, so that I would attract and charm others, to be loved and cared for by them.

Perhaps some of my ardent desire leaked out because my sisters would tease and taunt me. "Don't you wish that you could wear pretty things, but you can't; you'd look silly, and you can't because you're nothing but a boy . . ."

I would remain stoney-faced, expressing contempt and scorn at such sissy things. Only girls, only sissies, wear laces and ribbons, dress in soft, gentle fabrics designed into pretty frocks and gowns that pleasure the senses. Instead, I wore rough clothes and hiking boots as I roamed the countryside, trying to be big and tough and strong to meet the demands made on me.

Yet, my dreams could not be denied, and I quivered at the thought of ruffled panties pulled up over my hips, with a waist cincher shaping my body, together with a lacy padded bra to give me sweet curves. Then a cool slip would caress my body, tickle my knees and cover my bra with dainty embroidery. Before I slipped on my filmy dress, I would pull on sheer hose and fit my feet into the feminine straps of high-heeled sandals. Casually tossed curls would frame my made-up face, and I would be prettier and more feminine than they were.

But . . . I found myself back in the present and reality as I held the dress up and adored the thought of wearing it. I didn't even know

what size I took. And, alas, age has taken its toll. I am no longer young and fresh. I had grown into a body that would never be dainty or pretty, or pass in public. This body of mine would be difficult to fit into womanly clothes at any time.

My shoulders dropped, and despair flooded my body.

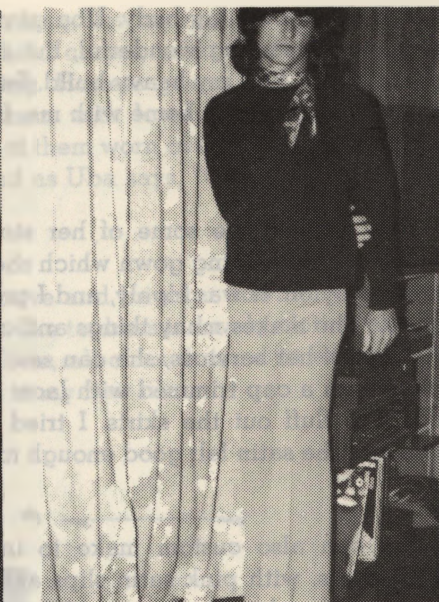
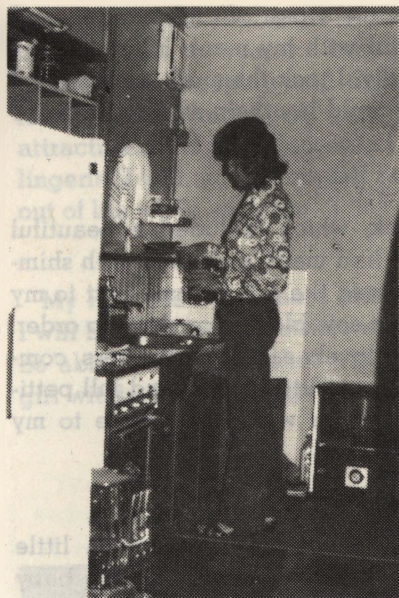
I had no need for depression; my dream *had* come true. I had found a dress shop which catered to men — Uba's Fashions, 6013 W. Sunset, Los Angeles, CA. Phone: 213-462-4249. The mistress of the shop, Uba herself, can help you find what size you are, can sell you girlish clothes, and can even sew pretty things that you desire.

A short, round-faced woman with long hair, she smiled at me. "Here," she urged. "Try on this slip; it should fit." She handed me a dark, lace-trimmed slip made of the softest material imaginable. I went into the little alcove which she has as a dressing room, stripped, and pulled the slip over my head to slither down over my body. I felt so delicious and good that I hugged myself, and for the first time, I had on a dainty bit of lingerie which was for me and no one else — no binding across my bust or under my arm pits. I slid my hands down over my hips — it fitted me.

What exhilaration I felt! Even giddiness! I wanted to dress completely in feminine clothes, from the waist-cincher on out and try on every nightgown and dress in stock in the store. I wanted to run my hands through the drawer of delicately trimmed panties and hug them to me. I wanted to fling my arms out and glide across the floor, or twirl so that a full skirt would flare and flower around my hips.

But I came to my senses. Many things take long preparation and planning. Where would I wear my feminine things? I am not alone. I have a wife and children. How could I budget my funds so that I could buy the gowns and lingerie that I yearned for? It would take time and a lot of effort. Did I want to be as much like a woman as I could, complete with padded bra, corset, and wig, or would I settle for pretty garments and enjoy myself as a man while I wear them?

But all these pretty things displayed before me — Uba is a businesswoman who earns her living from the proceeds of her shop, and despite my exuberance, she would not want me running wild. I had the dress which I had selected, and I pulled it over my head and set-



MIKI — JAPAN



SONYA — YUGOSLAVIA

GELLO — SAUDI ARABIA

bled it down over my body. Uba gave me a pair of pink panties, and there I was, feeling wonderful, but still with my man's haircut, signs of my beard, and my heavy build. Sadly, I took them off, but even if I could not take them home with me, I could lay them away and begin my preparations.

Uba showed me some of her stock, which included a beautiful black velvet evening gown which she had made and lined with shimmering nylon. It was lovely, and I pressed the soft texture next to my cheek. She makes many things and can sew blouses or skirts to order. As part of her services, she can sew a lovely satin maid's dress, complete with a cap trimmed with lace, a cute little apron and full petticoats to fluff out the skirts. I tried one on which was close to my size and the satin felt good enough to eat.

She can also custom make to individual measurements a little girl's dress, with pink satin slips and bows, and she can make baby clothing to order. She has a catalog which shows many of the things that she sells, and it is on sale for \$3.

After all this time, my head felt awlirl, but I remembered one final item. "Can you show me your panties with the fly-front opening?" I asked. Uba handed me a pair, beautifully trimmed with lace and ruffles. For the first time I saw and touched pretty panties made for men. Unfortunately, she didn't have any in my size, but I ordered a pair of satin bloomers with a camisole top to match. That will be the start of my feminine wardrobe.

Slowly my plans are developing. I will advance in my career and accept a position which will take me away from home and into San Francisco. I will rent a small apartment, for my own use, as my wife has her own business and cannot move. Once I am settled, free from observation and interruption, I will be able to develop my own feminine wardrobe.

My bed will have nylon tricot sheets which can be purchased from Montgomery Ward's catalog as well as other shops; I will sleep and

have wonderful dreams as I wear long, flowing nightgowns. I will buy housedresses to wear for household chores, making meals, washing dishes, and sweeping and dusting. Hostess gowns will enhance my leisure hours, and I will vary them with lovely dresses as well as attractive skirts and blouses, all of them worn over the finest of dainty lingerie. I will indulge myself and as Uba says, "Get some enjoyment out of life while you can."

My future is much more attractive and brighter now. Maybe, later, I will be able to meet others who like to dress in lovely clothes and be able to visit and chat with them, all of us dressed to express our girl within. I am looking forward to my new life.



*Sincerely yours
On my 70th year
Betty Ann*

BETTY ANN
FL-17-A



DONNA MARTIN
IL-11-S



FICTION

CHRISSIE

Jeri Lynn—Wisc.

I couldn't understand why mother complained so much when I told her what was required of all the freshman boys at our school — namely, that we appear as part of our "initiation" into high school, dressed completely in girls' clothes. (To make sure that we all understood what *that* meant, we were each given a mime'd copy of what we were supposed to wear, when, and for how long — the latter being the Friday session of classes our first week of school, and again that evening at a school party.) I wasn't, you know, particularly thrilled by it all myself, but then, "Everybody else has to do it, too," I told her. But she still thought it was terrible. Perhaps it was her old country upbringing. I love my mother, you know? But, sometimes she didn't understand things because they were so different from what she had known in the "old country."

So anyway, I gave her the list of things I was to wear, and went on about my own business, thinking she would help me. I mean, she *had* to help me. You know? And she did — I think. And I also found out why she was complaining.

"Mother! You didn't *buy* all this stuff new, did you?" I asked, when she presented me with an armful of bags and boxes.

"Yes," she said, "and it was too expensive — too expensive, I tell you. I hope this does not happen more — again. So much money for your — what you say — initials."

"Initiation."

"What I said. But it is yet too much money. We are not rich like some people. Since your poor father is no more ..." She paused, as she always did in memory of my father, then (as she always did), ploughed ahead: "We do not have much money. I have to work very hard — and this money was from your school fund — for the university. There was no other way," she muttered.

"But mother — for gosh sakes, you weren't supposed to buy all that."

"Maybe I should steal it? Hah? You get better idea?"

"Well, everybody else is borrowing the stuff, you know, from their sisters ..."

"You got no sisters," she said, cutting me off.

"I know that, but we could have asked someone. You know, like Mrs. Rosalia — she's got three daughters — we could have asked her."

"Borrow?" Her eyes grew large as she looked incredulous. "Borrow things like these? It is not proper — one does not borrow underwear — brassiers and such. No. It is not *done*." That was always her ultimate condemnation — that something was not *done*.

"Well, I don't know" (and I really didn't — she might be right). "But you could have borrowed some of this — I mean, you didn't have to buy the dress, too, did you? That would have saved some money — and the shoes ..."

"Perhaps, but is still not right — and, should we let Mrs. Rosalia know we are poor? Your grandfather owned ..."

"Twenty square versts in the Ukraine ..." I know, I know — and everybody was rich and had their own ponies and so on — Mama, you don't understand."

She didn't seem to hear me, except for shooting a stern look at me as if I were mocking the memory of her father (I wasn't, but I heard the story on the average of three times a day — every day), and she went on, grumbling, "Mrs. Rosalia — pfui! My father would not hire gypsies."

"Mrs. Rosalia is not a gypsy, mother. In fact, she isn't even Spanish like her husband was. She's Irish."

"So? Same thing."

Wonderful logic, huh? As a matter of fact, mother and Mrs. Rosalia were the closest of friends — most of the time. But occasionally, something would happen, and mother would storm and rage about "the gypsies" for a while. Fortunately, Mrs. Rosalia was as generous and good-natured as they come, and she always made overtures to my mother, which my mother accepted as her due, and which Mrs. Rosalia freely gave, so that they would become even closer friends than before. On the average, I would say that these storms occurred about once a week, every week. I had had the poor fortune to bring home my list on the wrong day, and as a result, found myself the owner of a complete ensemble of girl's clothes — and I do mean complete. I will quote from the list we were given: "Each freshman boy will appear on Friday, wearing the following items: A suitable dress (or blouse and skirt), flats or baby heels (high heels are not permitted, nor are bobby sox and loafers), nylons (boys with hairy legs will shave them clean before appearing at school — or else). In addition, each boy will wear the following lingerie (pink is required, although either pale yellow or a floral print will be accepted): full-length slip, panties, panty girdle, and padded brassiere. These items will be worn to and from school, during school and to and from the initiation party Friday night. Each boy will present himself to the senior girl who has been assigned as his "big sister" for the day, and she will take care of his makeup." That's what the mimeo said — but there was more to it. This was a very old tradition at the school, and the school authorities permitted it, although they supposedly kept an eye on things, to make sure no one was abused in any way. Also, it was widely circulated that any freshman boy who did not comply with the requirement a hundred percent would be dealt with by the senior boys. No one was sure just what this entailed, and no one seemed anxious to find out. Freshmen are still so awed and scared their first week, that they'd believe anything. Oh — I forgot one other thing — there was a competition for the "prettiest boy" at the school party — both the boy and his "big sister" got to have their pictures in the school yearbook, if they won. Most of the boys would have just as soon declined the honor, but the girls were very keen on it.

I thought that once the initiation was over, I would be all done

with it. Not that it wasn't enjoyable in a way. I mean, everyone else had had to do it, and we *had* won the contest, which was something to the good, I suppose. (Also something to the bad, as I discovered — even though all the boys wore dresses, only *one* distinguished himself. Let's face it, winners are always unpopular, and I had won the dubious distinction of being *less* of a boy than my classmates). Still, except for a few snide remarks thrown at me in the halls, and in gym class, things calmed down reasonably well at school. From time to time, I would meet my "big sister" in the halls, and *she* always said something, although I didn't mind it so much from her. She had a kind of right to call me "little sister." But I expected it would all die down, after a little bit, because there were more important things on everybody's minds — fall parties, football games, and so on.

My biggest problems came at home. My mother, bless her thrifty heart, decided that I should continue wearing the clothes she had bought me at home. It wasn't because she wanted a daughter (at least I don't *think* so — or at least, I didn't think so then). Instead, she hated to see money wasted: "You must get the wear out of those things!" she insisted. "You cannot simply throw away good money like that."

"Well, I certainly can't wear dresses!" I replied.

"Why not? Around the house — who's to know? So wear them, like I say. Also, it will save your good clothes for school."

The argument went on for quite a while, but she won in the end. And as far as it all goes, she had a point — as long as I stayed in the house, who was to know? That was the only thing I had against the clothes, as such. I didn't want people laughing at me, and, to be honest, I didn't really mind the clothes themselves. They were comfortable, for sitting around in, and so on. And I didn't have to wear them everyday because I only had the one outfit — the skirt and blouse I had worn during the day. The formal my "big sister" had had me wear was still hanging in the closet, and my mother would not believe that she didn't want it back, until I told her about the dress shop her mother owned. But mother was still impressed by the waste of money (nearly as alarming when it was someone else's), and she insisted that it be kept.

But I began to suspect a plot. Mother insisted I wear the skirt and



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blouse, and of course, the undies, every weekend — all day Saturday and again on Sunday, after church. The plot of it was that she made sure I wasn't going to run off on my own during the day, but would say home where she could keep a reproachful eye on me. And it worked. I didn't think too much of this, but there wasn't much I could do about it. Anyway, it didn't make a whole lot of difference, except that she seemed to think that just because I was wearing girl's clothes I should do girl's work. Not that I did anything much different than I ever did — cleaning my room, helping her with some things, doing dishes. Most boys do those things. But she seemed to get a kick out of calling my regular chores "girl's work" and she made it worse by making me wear an apron, all day long. That got to me, because it was that extra something that made it all seem like I was — well, I don't know quite how to explain it. See, it's like this: as she said, since I had the skirt and blouse, and so on, I should wear them — "to get the wear out" — and that didn't particularly change my status. But wearing an apron was like a badge of femininity. It changed everything, so that I was very self-conscious.

And of course, the idea that as long as I stayed in the house, no-body would see me, was blown out the window the second weekend. You know why — because Mrs. Rosalia came over, like she usually does, on Saturday, to enjoy a morning of telling my mother how sick she was (like a horse, she was sick), and my mother would enjoy *herself* by alternately telling Mrs. Rosalia that she wasn't half as sick as she herself was — and furthermore, she was a poor widow with a child to bring up. When mother got through with that, Mrs. Rosalia would start in with how lucky my mother was not to have three children like her three daughters who had all gotten married and didn't even think of their poor old mother — well, you know how it goes. It was the bright spot of the week for both of them. Anyway, Mrs. Rosalia was lying, not only about her health, but about her daughters, because they had all married pretty well — one had even married a doctor — and they all lavished a lot of affection and gifts on their mother. I must say this about Mrs. R. — she liked my mother a good deal, and had insisted on staying in the neighborhood when she could have moved out into the suburbs with one of the daughters, just to stay near my mother. And she never bragged about the things her daughters gave her — she was embarrassed sometimes (like when she got a color TV), because she didn't want to hurt mother's feelings. Mrs. Rosalia was as fine as they come.

Except she really fixed me, but good, That second weekend, I was standing in the living room, running the carpet sweeper back and forth, when there was the familiar rap on the door. It opened, and in pops Mrs. R.'s head, hollering, "Yoo hoo, Maida! It's me." (Maida is, of course, my mother. And the entrance was what she always did, being a close friend.) And then she saw me.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

And because I was so used to seeing her, I forgot for a minute that I was wearing a skirt, and said, "I'm cleaning the floor." And then, her surprised expression reminded me of something, and I groaned, "Oh, no!" And literally burst into tears. I was so embarrassed, I wanted to crawl under the rug. Of all the people I would have picked *not* to find out about it, she headed the list.

With that, mother came into the room to greet her old friend, but seeing me slowly turning into cement, said, "What's wrong with you?"

"Oh, Mama!" was all I could manage, and even then, I squeaked when I said it.

Mrs. Rosalia decided she wanted to get in on it all, and asked, "What's he doing wearing a dress?" (It wasn't a *dress*! but I guess that really didn't make much difference, did it?)

"To get the wear out," my mother responded. "Come. I'll make tea, and I'll tell you it. It's because of school . . ."

So she told Mrs. Rosalia why I was wearing a girl's outfit; I guess I really shouldn't have worried so much, because Mrs. Rosalia understood, and said, "Sure, and that makes sense. It was just that I was so surprised at the seeing of him, standing there, a-wearin' them fine lookin' clothes. And I says to myself, Maida has gotten herself a daughter." And she laughed at her own joke (she always did), which didn't make me feel much better. But she didn't tease me about it.

Well, they had their tea (mother always has a "glass of tea" — Mrs. R. always has a "dish of tea"; they both drink out of cups from Woolworths), and were just starting the weekly medical report (they were on "sinus," I think), when I asked, "Mother, can I go change?"

"Why?" she blinked at me.

"Mother!" I said, nodding my head at Mrs. Rosalia.

"Gertrude is a friend. It's alright she should know. Now go heat some more water."

"Sure," said Mrs. R., "it's alright. Besides, you make a fine-lookin' lass — almost as pretty as my Carmel."

So I got a lot of clothes that had belonged to Mrs. Rosalia's daughters. I wasn't exactly thrilled by it. But I was stuck, because mother insisted that I wear them around the house all the time, and not just for the sake of economy. The fact that they were given to me by Mrs. Rosalia made it necessary, in order to avoid hurting her feelings. I don't really understand that. I had feelings of my own, too, and I can't see how I would have hurt *hers* if I had simply said (very politely), "No thank you. I am a boy and a boy doesn't wear girls' clothes. It isn't done."

Unfortunately, it *was* done — by me, at least. I had absolutely no say in the matter. And, like I said, I wore the girls' old things around the house all the time. And I do mean *all* the time. As soon as I got home from school, I had to change clothes.

There was one small compensation: most of the clothes Mrs. Rosalia gave me were, you know, outerwear — dresses, skirts, blouses, and sweaters. No underwear — or not much anyway. I'd rather not talk about the exceptions, but in a way, they're responsible for what happened after that. I already owned one set of girl's underwear, from the initiation, but I didn't understand them. If that sounds strange, let me point out that that whole area is pretty mysterious, and from what I knew about the topic already, filled with taboos, unspoken laws, and insanity. I mean, look at it (if you can — that's mystery number one): does it make sense to make, say, a slip that's better looking than a dress, then hide it *under* the dress? And if so much as a half-inch of lace shows under the hem, then everyone gets excited or embarrassed? Another thing — why do they make these sets? You know, with the slip, panties and bra all matching, but then forbid them to be seen — or even mentioned? How many girls will, if they're complimented on the way they look, say, "But look here, see? My slip, panties and bra are all matching, too. See?" Like I say,

pretty mysterious. And one never borrows nor uses another girl's underwear. That's maybe not so hard to understand — but you remember, my old lady had made such a fuss about it when she had *bought* me the outfit for the initiation, right? — so why didn't she raise a fuss when Mrs. Rosalia included some of Carmel's old lingerie in the assortment? (I asked her about that, and she answered me directly: "Shut up your face. You want to insult Mrs. Rosalia? Maybe you think there's something wrong with her daughter?" I don't know *what* that meant.) But no, mother took everything offered.

I don't know what use I was supposed to give some of the stuff — and that includes the lingerie I was given. See, it wasn't the ordinary, every day kind, either. Maybe that's why it had been packed and put away. Would it be clearer to you if I described some of it? Well, there were several petticoats like the girls used to wear, you know, under real full skirts? One of these was something else — it was actually three petticoats in one, made in tiers. The bottom one, the one worn next to the skin, was of pale blue taffeta (if you're wondering about how well I describe these things, with the correct words, and so on, I will simply say, I very soon learned all the words. And the music, too.); the next layer was a series of net ruffles, sewed to each other, so that the third layer was held out; the third layer was white. The back, and all the way around to the front was solid fabric, a very thin taffeta. But in front, there was an insert, from the hem to the waist, of delicate white lace, like an apron (but no apron ever looked like that!). It was, my mother exclaimed, "The most beautiful thing she had ever seen!" I made one frightful mistake, just then. I thought so, too. (Look, just because I'm a boy doesn't mean I can't think something that is nice, is.) My mistake was simple: I opened my mouth and said so. I didn't know it then, but that remark nearly cooked the goose? Nearly? Heck, it darn well incinerated it.

Mother looked like she wanted to cry or something (I don't understand mothers, either, but then, who does?), while Mrs. Rosalia seemed to be affected in the head, and trotted over to my side and put her arm around my shoulders. Yecch. "It is that beautiful, isn't it?" she said. "I used to get a lump that big in me throat when Carmel wore it — and she only wore it twice. It was her petticoat for the bridesmaid's dress when Glorianna, the oldest, got herself married. Sure, and I'd bet you'd like to see the dress, too, wouldn't you now?"

I would have said not, but mother said, "Yes!" and the next thing, Mrs. R. had scurried off to another closet, bringing back a long dress wrapped in plastic. "She loved this dress so, but she could hardly stand to wear it."

"Why is that?" my mother asked.

"The waist — you see how small it is? Ah, she complained about that, did my Carmel. She was always that fond of a bit of sweets, you know. We had to starve her a bit, and even then, she had to wear a corset to get it on — ah, but when she did! Glorianna was furious, because her sister got all the attention. But your chick is so slender. I'm betting he could slip it on like a glove."

She was wrong, as ten minutes of argument, followed by a sullen acceptance of the inevitable proved. Glory be, it was still three inches too small! "Ah," said Mrs. Rosalia and my mother together in a chorus of disappointment.

"Ah!" said Mrs. Rosalia in a fit of inspiration.

"Ahh!!!" said yours truly in a fit of pain. (There's three puns there! The fit of pain was caused by Mrs. Rosalia's discovery and application of the selfsame corset Carmel had worn. And let me tell you, it *was* painful.) The gown, needless to say, fit very well, after that. And everyone was very impressed. Even me, as the pain in my sides gradually subsided (which it did, much to my surprise — or else I just got used to it.).

As a result of all of this, I was given not only the petticoats, but the gown (I now had two, neither of which I wanted, nor could use), and the stupid corset. And the latter made Mrs. Rosalia think of something else; her Carmel, apparently a little chubby in the days when girls all had very small waistlines had collected a variety of garments designed to eliminate her large waistline. She was rescued eventually by marriage and the change in fashion that allowed women to be less scrupulous about their waists. Her rescue meant that I was the totally unwilling recipient of a variety of waist-cinchers, longline bras, and even one ugly looking garment built along the lines of the corset I had already been given. But where that garment was made of satin and trimmed with lace, and had a certain charm to it (it was made to be pretty, although that was mostly in the eye of the beholder

— not the beholdee, to coin another triple pun), the latter garment was coarse and stiff, and ugly. "It's like we girls all wore in the old country," said Mrs. Rosalia. "I had Tad's sister's cousin send it to me from Dublin."

"I had one myself," said my mother. "Wore it from the time I was 11 or 12 until I was 17. A training corset. I can remember our governess tightening the laces all the time . . ."

"But it gave us that fine figure, didn't it?" said Mrs. Rosalia.

The orgy of clothes went on. It was discovered that I had a smaller foot than Carmel, which meant that a couple of pairs of shoes she had been unable to wear fit me perfectly.

In the end, it took us several trips — spaced over the next few weekends to get everything home. And after just the first trip, I already owned — or had the custody and mandatory use of — more girls' clothes than my own boy's clothes. I will say this, too, that they were more impressive than my own. Carmel Rosalia had been an attractive girl, with the peculiar dark beauty caused by the mingling of the Spanish and Irish. She had set off her beauty with some rather vivid colors, so that my closet now seemed filled with an incredible rainbow, rather than the decently sober dark tones I was used to.

Of course, it was not a complete wardrobe, although I was so stunned by what was there that I didn't notice any lack. I had suits, dresses, skirts, blouses in profusion, even two coats, one winter, one lightweight. Shoes — and of course, that idiot formal. What else didn't I have?

"Since you'll be wearing these things now, I must buy you some things," my mother told me.

"What? My gosh, even if I wore them all the time . . ." I groaned.

"You need underthings," she said. And despite her earlier grumbling when she had had to buy the outfit for initiation, she came home the next night with several bags.

I had a premonition of things to come when mom gave me that special smile. I had seen it before: that look of happiness, combined with amusement and embellished by a tear or two. It reminded me of the time I tried on Carmel's petticoat and stupidly said that it was beautiful. And again, when she first tied an apron on me, saying that there was plenty of girl's work to do in the house and that we were going to do it together.

"Come Chris . . . look at the things I bought for you."

With a heavy heart I followed her in my bedroom. As she piled the things on my bed, she hardly even took time to take off her coat. And like a saleslady in a store, she began to show off the items one by one.

"Here are some nice panties . . . you needed some more . . . your underpants are all getting worn."

She added that last part because she saw my face drop very low.

"But Mother . . . I have plenty yet. You did not have to get so many of them . . . and those horrible colors."

"Now Chris . . . be reasonable. You're outgrowing your underpants. These have elastic — see . . ." She held up a nylon bloomer-style panty in light yellow, yet with elastic at the legs and the waist.

"Did you get me any other undershorts?"

"What for? We now have plenty of these. You can wear a clean one every day like a proper girl."

"Before I could protest further, she showed me two nice slips in pink and blue and a pantyslip combination in soft pure white. Stupidly I said "they're nice." Won't I ever learn to keep my mouth shut? I retreated quickly and said, "I already have several of these . . . why more?"

"Not enough . . .," mother replied. "When I was a young girl in the old country I had drawers and chests full of nice lingerie. Much more than this."

It sounded like the old story of how many versts grandpa had, and I dismissed that remark. After all, what happened 50 years ago is not relevant now, right? I bet many girls today did not own more than two panties and some blue jeans. Hopefully I asked:

"Didn't you get anything for me . . . for a boy, I mean?" Silly question. I already knew the answer, of course. And mother ignored the question completely. I paled when she opened the next parcel and drew from it some baby doll nightgowns . . . and then a slinky long nylon nightgown. I started again:

"But Mother . . . What about my pyjama's? Why did you get that housecoat?" I asked, pointing at the latest thing she withdrew.

"Do not be so dumb — you're wearing nice things in the daytime . . . so why should not you sleep in them also? You'll look so . . . what do you say, 'kjoet' in this."

She smiled, holding up the light blue baby doll gown. "They cost nearly \$10," she added. That made me swallow my harsh response. I knew how hard it was for her to spend a few extra dollars, let alone the over 50 bucks she must have shelled out for all of this. Why she must have saved for months to do this. So I kept my mouth shut and tried not to look too mad.

It was not until it was too late that I recognized the big mistake I was making. Like the time when I had admired Carmel's pretty petty-coat . . . and when I let them lace me in the first corset. Mistakes all. But at the moment I could think only of her sacrifice. I hugged her and said: "You should have bought a nice dress for yourself."

"I much ratherly buy things for you Lieber," she said, stroking my longish hair and holding me close to her. "You look so nice now Lieberski." When she used that word that had become the topmost of endearment terms in our 16-year relationship, I became emulsified. I really loved my mom.

After we broke up, I did not have the heart to protest anymore as she showed me how really extravagant she had been. There were some kinky sculptured panty hose, nylons, some new bras, a nice miniskirt and even some hair ribbons and a shiny barette for my hair.

As she held up the red short skirt, she said: "Grandpa would have whacked me in the woodshed if I had dared to wear such a thing." I could well imagine. I had seen the old photos of the old guy, a dictatorial-looking gent, sitting in an armchair, looking contented, while surrounded by his fawning wife and daughters, all in ankle-length skirts and high-necked bodices, standing, of course.

"Now you just put these away neatly, Chris . . . and then we'll make dinner." I wiped my hands carefully on my apron before touching the delicate pretty garments and neatly folded them and put them in the drawer which lately had begun to bulge more and more.

That night when I kissed mother goodnight, she said: "Put on one of your new sleep-things, Lieber. I want to see how you look." Well, I thought, what harm can it do? After all, I do it only to please her. I took my corset off but left my bra on. I had goose flesh as I pulled the short gown on my hairless body and put on the matching panties. Mome came in and there was that look again. All smiles and a tear or two. She hugged me tight and lovingly. There was such tenderness in her eyes that at that moment I could not care if they had tarred and feathered me. She led me to the mirror.

"It's real nice," she said. "Just like I thought it would . . . like it was made for you."

I blushed. Like heck it was. What a thing to say. Made for a boy?? Nope . . . you should have seen me.

She took a hairbrush and pushing me in a chair, started to brush my growing hair. It felt nice — even nicer than when someone scratches your back. The way she did it . . . gently with obvious affection as if she was proud of my healthy long locks. I saw that she enjoyed the closeness, too. So I let her have her way. She must have done more than the usual 100 strokes. She ended parting my hair and to my horror I found that it was long enough to put in two short pig-tails, which she tied with a blue ribbon, one in each plait to match the color of my nightgown.

I started to pull on the ribbon, but she playfully slapped my hand away. "Let it sit, Chris. This way it does not get fouled up during the night." She admired me, holding me with both hands at my shoulders. "You look just like my younger sister, Schipka, God bless her soul." She tucked me in bed, a thing she had not done in years.

So the next morning, Saturday, I found myself sporting two little girl pigtails, that flopped back and forth everytime I turned my head. With the miniskirt and a sissy blouse. They did look cute in a juvenile sort of way. I did not realize even then how much it feminized my appearance.

Mother went out to do her weekly marketing. Every week she seemed to regard it as more of an insult when I refused to go out with her. "You are not getting any use out of those fine coats," she said, shaking her head. "They just hang in the closet for the moths to eat." As far as I was concerned, they could stay there forever. And moths sure was a joke. We had more mothballs in that closet than peas in a can. So far I had been able to stay safely inside. When she had left, I sighed with relief and started doing the dishes.

Saturday in our house was cleaning day ... with a vengeance. Everything had to be spotless for Sunday. It was no use arguing that no one ever came to visit us on the "Lord's Day" as mother called it. It just was DONE — that's all. It all seemed so useless to me as naturally we were busy keeping it spotless all week. So, wearing a flowered workapron, I was busy polishing the buffet when the doorbell rang. With the cloth in my hand, I went to open the door. She must have forgotten the key again, I muttered. She was always losing her doorkey. As I opened the door, I froze into a 5'4" icicle.

There was a smiling Mrs. Weingarten, mother's other good friend, and an Avon saleslady. She regarded me with an uncertain glance, asking:

"Missus Unkraitz does live here, yes???"

My mind was anaesthetized with shock. I nodded, just standing there like Lot's wife, unable to cope with the calamity of discovery which befell me.

"Is she home, yes ... may I come in?"

Still stupefied I shook NO and then YES, as I stepped aside for her to enter. As she barged in, she took off her coat and started studying me.

"And who might you be, young miss?" she asked with that heavy German accent.

"Are you a girlfriend of Chris'?"

Eagerly I nodded.

"Yes, Mrs. Weingarten," I said quickly, grasping at anything to prevent her from recognizing me. It sure did not explain my dust-cloth and apron. Separating the words, slowly the truth began to dawn on her. "How ... do ... you ... know ... my ... name? Have ... we ... met ... before ... sometime?"

Feverishly I began to babble lies but was interrupted by her shout: "Himmel ... you're Chris, aren't you? Maida has made a girl out of you, ja? Was ... a gut Gretchen hairdo doch."

She opened her arms and hugged me to her ample bosom. I broke down then and melted in her embrace. The world seemed at an end for me right then. I cried and cried while she tried to comfort me.

"Liebchen ... Liebchen, do not weep ... it's alright."

I could not stop sobbing ... let alone speak a word.

As she held me, I felt the hem of my skirt around my knees, aware of my feminine shoes. My embarrassment knew no end.

Mother chose that moment to return. At a glance she realized what happened. But she greeted Mrs. Weingarten as if nothing had happened. She had brought Mrs. Rosalia with her. She did not help either, greeting me with a kiss and saying, while she pulled on my new pigtail, "How pretty your hair looks dear. Why have you been crying ... what for?"

Lena Weingarten and mother were finishing with the weather and just about to start on their respective medical conditions. Mrs. Rosalia happily joined in. She had not even expected a reply from me apparently. I used the opportunity to slink away, still shaking in my shoes. I had almost reached the safety of the hall when mother called: "Chrissie ..."

She always called me that now, ever since she had made me wear skirts. "Chrissie will you make us a dish of tea, dear?"

I stopped in my tracks, nervously turned around, and with great urgency in my voice, asked:

"Mother . . . please can I change first?"

"Change to what . . . ?" she asked, acting surprised. "What for . . . ? Mrs. Weingarten is a good friend. It's allright that she sees how nice you look now. Go and heat the water dear."

As I left the room, I heard Lena Weingarten ask mother: "Why's he in dresses . . . he looks real cute this way . . . is he a girl now?"

"It's because of school." Mother started her long explanation. Why in heaven's name did everyone accept it as completely logical? Was it?

In the kitchen, I could hear them talk animatedly, sometimes laughing, but most of the time sounding like it was the most logical thing in the world to have a fifteen-and-a-half-year-old boy dress like a teenage chick, with pigtails yet — not mentioning the obvious bosom.

During the ten minutes it took to boil the water, I sort of regained my composure. Just a little bit anyway. I just had to accept the fact that now another neighbor knew me as a girl. And thought nothing of it. Were they crazy . . . or was *I* soft in the head?

I guess it was partly me anyway. I should have realized that this was bound to happen sooner or later. Lena Weingarten came regularly, at least once a week or so. I just had never seen her on a Saturday. When the tea was ready, I hesitated for a moment. Then I called mother.

"Mom, the tea is ready."

"Good, dear," she replied, "bring it in and pour it nicely, like I taught you."

Resentment welled up in me. And I hated the way she pronounced pour like "power." But I knew protesting would be no use. So blushing deeply I took off my apron and carefully carried the tray with pot and cups, sugar and a tray with cookies into the livingroom. With my hands full I could not even attempt to hide any of my appear-

ance ... as all three stopped talking and smilingly watched my entrance. My walk was slow and careful, because I did not want to spill anything and also because of the tight skirt and the heels on my shoes. Mrs. Rosalia broke the silence first.

"I always liked those shoes of Carmel's," she said. "They make a girl's feet look so dainty. Do you like them, Christine?"

That was one of her jokes on me. She called me by that name all the time now, always laughing like it was terribly funny. Well it was not. Not to me and certainly not in front of Mrs. Weingarten. And, I should have known, Mrs. Weingarten adopted the new name promptly as if I had been baptized that way. As I approached the coffee table, I was very conscious of my nice legs in the white sculptured pantyhose and the flare of my swinging little navy blue skirt. As I began to distribute the cups and saucers, a blush burning my cheeks, Mrs. Weingarten said:

"Don't the young girls look sweet nowadays in these little outfits?"

The other women agreed heartily and to my undying shame continued to discuss me as if I was a doll or something.

"We're training her figure ... the old-fashioned way, you know," Mrs. Rosalia said.

"You don't say," Lena replied, studying my narrow waist with interest.

"She wears it day and night," mother added. "A small waist is so nice for a young girl."

Everybody but me nodded yesses, continuing to study me, making me feel so awfully self-conscious.

"You're old enough now for a little makeup, Christine," Mrs. Weingarten said. "I'll leave you samples. Avon has lots of pretty beauty things."

Sure enough. They would not even let me take the things back to the kitchen before the lady from Avon had shown me all kinds of

strange items, explained their use and smeared some of them — rather lavishly, I thought — on my virgin face.

The other woman watched with interest, with Mrs. Rosalia occasionally nodding her head and making a comment.

"Her eyebrows need some attention, Maida. Do you have some tweezers handy?"

"Oh yes ... pincets ... you mean," mother replied, ignoring my pleading looking and searching through a buffet drawer, where she kept the strangest collection of things.

As Lena was doing my lips, I could not protest, while Mrs. Rosalia "gave attention" to my eyebrows, I could not help saying "ouch" as she continued long after Mrs. Weingarten was finished. When I finally got to look in the mirror, I just could not believe my reflection. There was nothing of Christian left. Not a trace ... Some fresh, pretty ... and yes ... sweet girl ... tried to keep from laughing at me. I went into shock. It was just like seeing a stranger wearing my dress. "I don't believe it," I finally whispered, pulling on my pigtail, to test and remind me that I was really that adorable looking girl. The three of them admired me so that I almost began to believe them when they said: "She's a real pretty girl ... ja ... a real girl."

"It's a shame she won't go out of the house," Mrs. Rosalia remarked. If she wasn't so nice, I could begin to hate that woman.

"She's the prettiest girl on the block," Mrs. Weingarten added. "You will come and visit me soon, Christine ... yes?"

"Not like this," I said with real conviction.

"Why not?" Mrs. Weingarten asked, not so innocently. "And think of all the money you can make for your education ... as a babysitter ... or a shopgirl. Many of my customers keep asking me if I know a reliable girl for babysitting. I can get you plenty jobs."

Nobody seemed to consider the fact that I could make money as a boy, too. Anyway, I said again: "No, I won't go out as a girl."

"Not even in a real pretty outfit?" Mrs. Rosalia asked with disbelief

in her eyes. As if I just had revoked God, Country and Motherhood in one fell sweep.

"No, not ever," I said. "Suppose someone sees me ... I'll die."

Mother frowned disappointedly, but she did not say anything. The women finally parted, the guests Christining and kissing me to death and distraction.

"Aren't they nice friends, Chrissie?" Mother said and then in her final voice: "They're good people." That always ended any argument about our guests. It said everything as far as mother was concerned. Just like it's not *done*. A final, unassailable, hard rock fact. So now two good people knew I was a girl at home.

Since that day, Mrs. Weingarten and Mrs. Rosalia appeared to visit with much greater frequency. It seemed to me that they were there almost all of the time. Or at least, every other day, I found one of them when I came home from school.

Where mother initially had her little plot to keep me under her wing by making me wear girls' clothes at home (I had long since become used to wearing panties even to school), the three of them now seemed hellbent on making me look completely like a girl. I say "look" but I really mean ... ACT ... FEEL ... LIVE like a girl. Mrs. Weingarten insisted on teaching me how to improve my makeup. I must admit she was a whiz at it. Mom kept on showing me what she could do with my hair. She still brushed it for me every night and I usually wore it in plaits now. I once suggested a visit to the barber for a haircut. But mother reacted like I was going to have my nose cut off. So eventually I got used to them also.

One day Mrs. Rosalia insisted that I learn to "use my hands," as she called it. It began when a little lace had torn from my slip and showed under my skirt.

"Christine ... you can't wear a torn slip like that. Did not your mother show you how to fix that?"

"No, of course not," I said.

"That's terrible," she replied. "You're old enough now to do those

things for yourself. A girl your age should try to help her mother more. My daughters knew how to do that when they were half your age. Go get a needle and thread," she ordered.

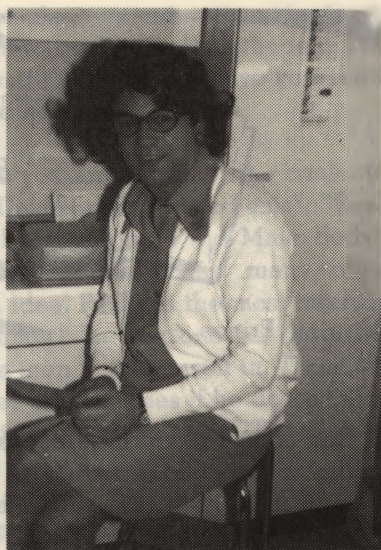
I did as I was told. I always seemed to do that lately. I guess I had had learned that arguing did no good anyway. When I returned with mother's sewing basket, she made me take off my dress and slip right then and there. Sitting in my bra and panties, she showed me how simple it was to sew the lace back on. Mother, who came in from the kitchen, approved, except that she made me get a housecoat "as a girl you better learn some modesty."

Once this subject had been broached, I was told that it was absolutely necessary for me to learn how to embroider and to knit and to crochet. "You should see the beautiful things my daughters made for themselves." I did not see the necessity at all, but from then on mother never let me rest a moment. As soon as I rested my hands in my skirt to just relax or watch television, mother would put me to work. I could kill the rascal who thought up that old Ukrainian proverb: "The devil loves empty hands." Then with a big sigh, I would get up and get the needlework I was doing at the time.

What made it bad was that mother always made me wear a fresh white apron when working with the needle. That always made it seem much worse. Aprons always made me feel feminine, but those white frilly and ruffled pinafores really got to me. She explained that when she was young she always wore the same thing home and at school. It was DONE. Well you know what that means by now.

The time was approaching when summer vacation would begin. Mother at least let me do my homework, even though I had to wear skirts. She only let me help with the cooking and the dishes afterward. I lost a lot of time, washing my makeup off and in the morning trying to stick down my hair and combing it into a boyish looking head of hair, I was not too successful. The frequent washing mother insisted on made my hair springy and also it had a natural healthy sheen. Mother loved my hair. And I must admit that I enjoyed our nightly routine.

CONTINUED IN TVia # 90



RITA — BRAZIL



BOOK REVIEWS

Virginia Prince

This issue I have three books to call to your attention. This is not going to be a book review in the general sense of the term even though it is titled that way. I haven't time to read with the idea of reviewing nor to write in depth about each. However, I think all three books are important so a few words about each will be in order and if those words stir your stumps to get and read one or all of them it will be sufficient.

(1) *The Hazards of Being Male* by Herb Goldberg, Ph.D. Nash Publishing, New York, 1976.

Dr. Goldberg is professor of psychology at California State University, Los Angeles. I became acquainted with him and the book through attending a seminar on it that he held at the University. It was a very interesting experience. It became more so when, at an intermission I went up and introduced myself and spoke momentarily about myself. He knew of me through others and asked me later to come down and speak to the audience which I did for about twenty minutes. What I had to say about my own liberation from the restrictions of masculinity went over quite well with the audience after what he had said.

This should not be taken to imply that the book has anything to do with cross dressing, it doesn't, but it does survey the problems facing men in our culture very completely and in depth. Naturally it is the release from the pressure of some of the problems which leads all FPs to speak about the relaxation and comfort they feel when in their femme role. Most men are aware of the expectations of masculinity or else they wouldn't be able to live up to them, but few men have ever

stopped to formulate the problems let alone examine them in depth. Since all FPs have their masculine life to lead as well as the feminine one, it would be in your interest to read this book and give yourself a clearer picture of where you really are as a man.

A few of the chapter titles will give you an inkling of the contents: "In Harness: The Male Condition"; "The Wisdom of the Penis"; "Feelings: The Real Male Terror"; "The Destruction of the Male Body"; "The Success Trip: A Fantasy Portrait." There are many other chapters but that should give you an idea. Perhaps the most interesting chapter is titled, "Impossible Binds." In this one he describes nineteen different double binds that a man finds himself in. These are conditions in which he loses if he does and he loses if he doesn't. The double bind we are most interested in is what he calls "The Gender Bind" and he summarizes it this way:

"Either way he loses; if he is in touch with and expressive of his feminine component he may be subject to great feelings of anxiety and humiliation. If he successfully manages to repress, disown, and deny this critical part of himself he will have to live as an incomplete person, alienated from an important part of himself and consequently susceptible to emotional and interpersonal rigidity and numerous psychological and psychopathological problems that result from this repression." Sound familiar? Sound like the man knew what he was talking about and where he was coming from? Right, so get the book and learn things about your masculine side you never knew before.

(2) *Sexual Variance in Society and History* by Verne Bullough, Ph.D. John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1976.

Dr. Bullough is an old and very admired friend of mine. I lecture for his classes every year. He is professor of history at California State University, Northridge. This is a very scholarly book with about 100 references at the end of each chapter. It is not light Sunday afternoon reading for just anybody but for those with any interest in human attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in the areas of sex throughout recorded history it is a gold mine. The author examines all forms of sexual variance but with particular reference to homosexuality and transvestism throughout history and in all of the major cultures — Greece, Rome, China, Persia, India, Egypt, Islam and Bysantium.

Mythology and religion impact on all these cultures and up through

the middle ages and into recent times. Seen in this long perspective the reader gets a better idea of why society feels as it does toward sex in general and its variations in particular. Transvestism and the people throughout history — both male and female — who practiced it is discussed in relation to all the culture and historical periods.

The book is not written to approve or disapprove anything, there is no attempt at explaining or justifying either acceptance or condemnation of any form of behaviour. It is an impersonal and detailed evaluation of how man has dealt with sex and its modifications through its rise from prehistory up until today. It is a monumental piece of work.

(3) *Transvestites and Transexuals* by Deborah Feinbloom. Delacorte Press, New York, 1976.

This book more directly involves us than the other two and therefore may be of greater interest. One important thing it does is to provide a book whose title starts right off with "*Transvestites*." Thus the Library of Congress filing system sets up "Transvestism" as a heading. It is to be hoped that most libraries will, in due course, obtain this book because then when some worried closet case goes to the card file under "T" he will find something other than Transylvania which, you may remember, was Dracula's base of operations. Finding the book he will find out about the existence of Phi Pi Epsilon, about *Transvestia Magazine*, the *Wives* book, the *How to* book and about me as their author and publisher. I don't mention all this for ego reasons but because at last there is an orthodox, acceptable, regular book which will turn up widely in libraries and through it many locked door cases will find "us" — me first, perhaps, since I'm mentioned by name, but through me, all of you. Many will be interested in Phi Pi Epsilon, will write, be informed of its reorganization into the Society for the Second Self (Tri Sigma for short), will join, and will become your friends. This is all to the good.

The book itself is an outgrowth of the author's getting acquainted with one of my friends and FPE member in Boston and through her getting to visit with and come to know many of the members of the Boston chapter of FPE. Since this friend of mine went through the three stages of simple transvestism, full-time living as a woman and finally through surgery into the condition of "femaleness," Ms. Feinbloom was able to see and learn all aspects of the sex vs. gender con-

frontration. Seeing that there was a need for some sort of helping center she founded a Gender Identity Service in the Boston area. I met her one time in Boston when I was there for a TV show. I think I was able to implant some basic ideas that provided some of the foundation for her subsequent understanding.

This book will be read with much interest by any FP, and not only by them. It will provide an excellent "way in" to understanding and acceptance by wives, parents or friends. This is because there is no attempt to judge the behaviour pattern. Deborah Feinbloom is a sociologist and she went into the subject as a research project not with a personal involvement (though she did count my friend — Helen in the book — as her personal friend). Thus the book is really a report on her observations and comments with the FPs she met at the meetings of the group. But being a sociologist she interprets and integrates her observations into the whole sociological picture. She also goes into the whole transexual area with sympathy and insight and clarifies a lot of that field for "outsiders" that really can't deal with such a thing.

I think it is proper to say that this is a "must" for cross-dressers. Don't just buy a copy for yourself, go one step further. Bug your local library to buy the book so there will be something there when the locked-up sister comes to the file for help and looks under "T."



"Instead of his bonus, Mr. Jones asked for my permission to wear this (ahem) costume at work."

POETRY



THE DANCE OF SAMANTHA McGEE

(based on the original poem, *The Cremation of Sam McGee*, by Robert Service)

Sharon Anne Stuart
—FCBC-4-H

DEDICATION

Robert Service is the author of the original poem "The Cremation of Sam McGee" upon which this parody is based. Service's original version is the story of men facing the perils of life in the rugged Yukon-Alaskan climate before the days of oil pipelines when the riches sought were gold, furs, and seal skin.

"The Dance of Samantha McGee" introduces a crossdressing theme but borrows a great deal from the original verses. As a parody it is intended as a vehicle for humor but it carries a thought provoking message as well.

The parody is dedicated to all men who have faced a lonely existence in circumstances where the impulse to crossdress and give expression to inner femininity could be indulged only with great difficulty and guilt and to those whose final escape from the closet was death.

To one degree or another all of us as crossdressers have experienced the confines of the "sack in the back of a pack." Liberated as some of us are in these times of relative freedom one wonders if we ever completely escape the closet of the "sack in the back of the pack." Perhaps some of us will find a larger closet and a larger sack but will we ever find the means to fully realize the potential for our feminine self. For Samantha that fulfillment was death. Compared to that gruesome fulfillment how thankful we can be for the blessings we enjoy whenever we gather together to share friendship and feminine experiences. Perhaps that fellowship is fulfillment enough.

There are strange things done in the midnight sun
 By the men who toil for gold;
 The Arctic trails have their secret tales
 That would make your blood run cold;
 The Northern Lights have seen queer sights,
 But the queerest they ever did see
 Was that night on the marge of Lake Labarge
 I danced with Samantha McGee

Now Sam McGee was from Tennessee, where the cotton
 blooms and blows.
 Why he left his home in the South to toam 'round
 the Pole, God only knows.
 He was always cold, but the land of gold seemed to
 hold him like a spell;
 Though he'd often say in his homely way that "he'd
 sooner live in hell."

On a Christmas Day we were mushing our way
 over the Dawson Trail.
 Talk of your cold! Through the parka's fold it
 stabbed like a driven nail.
 If our eyes we'd close, then the lashes froze till
 sometimes we couldn't see;
 It wasn't much fun, but the only one to whimper was Sam McGee.

And that very night, as we lay packed tight
 in our robes beneath the snow,
 And the dogs were fed, and the stars o'erhead were dancing
 heel and toe,
 He turned to me, and "Cap," says he, "I'll cash in this trip,
 I guess
 And if I do, I'm asking that you won't refuse my last request."

Well, he seemed so low that I couldn't say no;
 then he says with a sort of moan:
 "It's the cursed cold, and it's got right hold till
 I'm chilled clean through to the bone."
 "And Cap," says he, "I've gone stiff in the knee,
 and the freeze will do me in;
 So my last request is next to my breast in a bag of seal skin."

A pal's last need is a thing to heed, so I swore
 I would not fail;
 And we started on at the streak of dawn, but God!
 he looked ghastly pale.
 He crouched on the sleigh, and he raved all day
 of his home in Tennessee;
 And before nightfall a corpse was all that was left of Sam McGee.

But I dreaded much to even touch that tiny seal skin bag
 That hung so loose on its leather noose like hangman's deadly tag;
 Though I knew in the end, the corpse would win,
 and look in that bag I must
 So I closed my eyes and in several tries
 I wrenched that bag from his bust.

A note inside on a piece of hide was all that could be found.
 Its message was terse and writ in verse
 and it set my heart to pound:
 "Take great pains to dress my remains in the womens' attire I keep
 Hid in a sack at the back of my pack; then
 cremate it all in a heap."

Well, no one knew before he turned blue
 that Sam was a transvestite;
 And in that sack from the back of his pack
 were the clothes to dress just right;
 As a dance hall girl on her way to a ball in any mining camp;
 A wig, some shoes, a corset and rouge, and a dress to outfit a vamp.

There wasn't a breath in that land of death,
 as I hurried, horror-driven,
 With a corpse half hid that I couldn't get rid,
 because of a promise given;
 It was lashed to the sleigh, and it seemed to say:
 "For you there can be no rest,
 Cause you promised true, and it's up to you to heed my last request."

Now a promise made is a debt unpaid, and the trail
 has its own stern code.
 In the days to come, though my lips were dumb,
 in my heart how I cursed that load.

In the long, long night, by the lone firelight,
 while the huskies, 'round in a ring,
 Howled out their woes to the homeless snows — O god!
 how I loathed the thing.

And every day that quiet clay seemed to heavy and heavier grow;
 And on I went, though the dogs were spent and the grub
 was getting low;
 The trail was bad, and I felt half mad, but I swore
 I would not give in;
 And I'd often sing to the hateful thing, and it hearkened with a grin.

Till I came to the marge of Lake Labarge,
 and a derelict boat there lay;
 It was jammed in the ice, but I saw in a trice
 it was called the "Alice May."
 And I looked at it, and I though a bit, and I looked at my frozen chum;
 Then "Here," said I, with a sudden cry, "is my CRE-MA-TOR-EUM."

So I broke out that sack from the back of Sam's pack
 and I dressed him in those clothes.
 With corset in place so tightly laced and garters to hold up the hose;
 And wearing that dress Sam was more or less
 the woman he'd yearned to be;
 And when I was done I thought it's be fun
 to name her Samantha McGee.

Then I did what I must with my sacred trust to put her to the fire.
 And I made my way to the "Alice May" to build the funeral pyre.
 Some planks I tore from the cabin floor, and I lit the boiler fire;
 Some coal I found that was lying around,
 and I heaped the fuel still higher.

The flames just soared, and the furnace roared —
 such a blaze you seldom see;
 And I burrowed a hole in the glowing coal
 and I stuffed in Miss McGee.
 Well, she sizzled so, and gave off a glow,
 as the flames licked the hem of her dress.
 I knew I should stay, but I turned away; too frightened I must confess.

Then I made a hike, for I didn't like to hear her sizzle so;

And the heavens scowled, and the huskies howled,
 and the wind began to blow.
 It was icy cold, but the hot sweat rolled down my cheeks,
 and I don't know why;
 And the greasy smoke in an inky cloak went streaking
 'cross the sky.

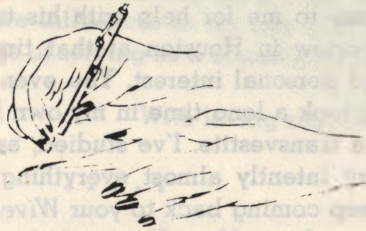
I do not know how long in the snow I wrestled with grisly fear.
 But the stars came out and danced about ere again I ventured near.
 I was sick with dread, but I bravely said: "I'll just take a peep inside;
 I guess she's cooked, and it's time I looked";
 . . . then the door I opened wide.

And there sat Samantha, looking cool and calm,
 in the heart of the furnace roar;
 And she wore a smile you could see a mile,
 and she said: "Please close that door.
 It's fine in here, but I greatly fear you'll let in the cold and storm —
 Since I left Plumtree, down in Tennessee,
 it's the first time I've been warm."

"And now my dear, there's nothing to fear
 I'm ready to dance a jig;"
 The flames were fanned as she took my hand
 and we danced midst the burning brig.
 Through the moonless night in the fiery light
 We jigged 'bove the cinders' glow
 Came the icy dawn, my partner was gone, Just ashes atop the snow.

There are strange things done in the midnight sun
 By the men who toil for gold;
 The Arctic trails have their secret tales
 That would make your blood run cold;
 The Northern Lights have seen queer sights,
 But the queerest they ever did see
 Was that night on the marge of Lake Labarge
 I danced with Samantha McGee.

"Dear
Editor"



LETTERS

Editor's Note:

Following is a collection of letters received by me over a period of several months. Many of them say very nice and complimentary things about me and my efforts. Naturally I appreciate the writers' appreciation, I'm only human (believe it or not). I have some hesitancy about printing a lot of such letters in TVia lest some readers think I am on some sort of ego trip and want to build myself up in the readers' eyes. But many of these letters say other things of interest to FPs too and not wanting to deprive you of those contributions I decided to print them all but with this little introductory note. It is true that if, as a result of reading some of these words of approval for my book, *The Transvestite and His Wife*, those of you who haven't got it decide to order it, I won't be unhappy about it. After all, I wrote the book to be helpful and it is a great satisfaction to me to learn that it has fulfilled its purpose in so many cases.

But while we are on the subject of helpful books, I will make one out and out commercial plug for my newest book called *Understanding Cross Dressing*. It was not available to those whose letters follow because it only appeared in late September. It is a general discussion of the subject, and should prove helpful to a great many of you. The discussion is not confined just to the straight, uncomplicated hetero cross dresser, but covers all aspects of the subject. It should not only help the FP herself, but any of those whom she wants to educate. But now back to the letters.

* * * * *

Dear Virginia:

Each day I seem to find new depths of gratitude for the young man client who came to me for help with his transvestism and for your broadcast interview in Houston at that time, and subsequently for your books and personal interest. You even challenged me with my first "name." It took a long time in my own head and gut to come to accept being a transvestite. I've studied, as probably is common in like cases, very intently almost everything I can find said on the subject and keep coming back to your *Wives* book. You, I do believe, said it the very best. Now I've underlined and used the *Wives* book until it has become tattered. That's why there's a check included for another copy if you would be so kind. I've a new use for it, too, new in my case — only it's intended purpose in fact. Recently the subject of transvestism has come into the open between my wife and I. She sounds like she has memorized all the non-accepting arguments you speak of in the book, so I want a new fresh copy to hand to her. We really had a laugh at it last night when she referred to me in a nightie as a "hippopotamus in a pinafore." As great as lingerie feels and makes me feel, I have to admit her word picture is indicative of how I look. We really are at a place in our growing acceptance of each other's individuality that has led her to repeat to me on more than one occasion: "I don't care what you wear." However, on the subject of my wearing femme things when we are together, she is very non-understanding and full of ignorance, bias and misinformation and very wrong ideas. Now I don't see the *Wives* book as a panacea, but I do see it as the very best authoritative and honest open and cogent statement of the transvestite experience and need structure I can find.

Since communicating with you last, I've been involved in a helping way with several other troubled transvestites and a couple of transsexuals seeking professional counsel with a goal of surgery. My opinions along the line of surgery as a factor in the life of a biological male are very closely aligned with yours. I suppose I have read and studied only a fraction of the amount you have, yet I have come quite independently (O.K., not totally independently) to the same basic conclusion as you relative to sex reassignment surgery. I know of only one case among the several who have come to me for counsel, in which I think the procedure is indicated.

Frankly I think every transvestite and every transsexual in the

world really owes a debt of gratitude to you. I know you are busy and engrossed in running your business enterprises and don't need to spend a lot of time sitting around reading my praises of you, yet I do thank you for your positive influences in my life and in the lives of those I've had the privilege of serving as a counselor and confidant.

With loving regards, Janet, TX

* * * * *

My Dear Virginia:

Enclosed you will find my application for membership in the Tri Sigma Sorority. I have read your excellent book, *Understanding Cross Dressing*, and am very enthusiastic about it.

For years I have been the so-called "closet specimen" and did not realize the scope of so many sisters with the same feelings.

May I compliment you on your book. It is well written and shows a keen insight into the mind and actions of people. The explanations between TV, TS, homosexuality and other different groups helps to dispel any uneasiness that an individual may have concerning themselves.

Keep up your good work. I hope that some day I may have the pleasure of meeting you in person.

Sincerely, Marian, WA

* * * * *

Dear Virginia:

I have just finished reading my first copy of *TVia* (#86) and I must say that it is the best magazine about transvestism that I have ever seen. I can hardly wait until I can get #87.

The thing that I really like about *TVia* is that it treats the subject of TVism in the correct way. I am a motion picture projectionist and from time to time we get an X-rated movie with TVs in it. Unfortun-

ately, they always have the TVs playing somebody that is sick in the head or someone that is really weird.

I just loved the stories, pictures and helpful hints in *TVia*. I am looking forward to getting #87. Also I hope and pray that someday *TVia* will be as widely read as *Playboy*.

Yours, Dick

Editor's Note: Thanks for the good wishes, Dick, but while I'd be glad to see TVia's readership doubled or thereabouts, I don't know as I'd want it as big as Playboy. It would be a big organization and would lose the personal touch and relationship that I try to maintain with my readers. Most of you don't realize it but I regard you all as my friends not just subscribers, which is what makes it hard for me to accept it when long-time readers drop off the list. I've then lost a friend, not just a customer.

.....

Dear Carol (my co-director of Tri Sigma — Virginia):

Thank you for your letter. In response to it I have remitted to Virginia a money order for \$15 as you specified for membership in Tri Sigma Sorority.

You know, the entire movement/organization apparently "ram-rodged" by Virginia Prince is so obviously *normal* that I feel a compulsion to support it. I lived for about three and a half years and worked for 14 years in San Francisco, and — as you might imagine — saw evidence of almost every revolting aberration the human animal is capable of. So you and Virginia are no less than comparable to fresh breezes from the Pacific.

I hope a Tri-Sigma chapter may be established in this area. It would logically, of course, be based in Reno. But then I would at least be able to talk on the phone to its members. I probably won't for some time be able to take a very active part in meetings and the like, but I would like to have some contact, even if only by correspondence, with the ladies who will maintain it.

So good luck to you and if I can be of any assistance to you in this area just let me know.

Sincerely, Enid, Nev.

Dear Virginia:

I have been quite a busy girl during the past six months. I've moved into a lovely duplex that gives me the privacy to live my life as I please. This now involves every evening doing something femininely oriented. I'm learning to sew — quite an experience when there is no one to help. I've shortened some skirts and I've made some little items. I bought a used sewing machine and someday in the future I'd like to be able to make my own dresses.

I've been growing in my identity as a woman, too. I have several accounts as myself and I now don't feel awkward about going window shopping during the evenings. If I can lose some more weight I'll be down to a size 12 dress which is my goal. Bob has lost his fear of buying me anything I need. Macy's was loaded with end-of-season sportswear, so I expanded my wardrobe by a few more skirts and two more dresses.

I've worn out my breasts and now I need to order new inserts and jelly kit. Several girls I know are using hormones and their breasts are enlarging. I only dream about such things. I know if I took estrogen internally my breasts would become full because I fooled around with birth control pills and quit just before they got noticeable, but, they were growing — so painful when I slept though. I only use estrogen creams now and my skin has improved noticeably. God, Virginia, if only society would not condemn me I would become openly feminine. As it now stands I wear panties and women's pants and pullover sweaters and no one says anything. I wear women's shoes that have the unisex style. I'd love to wear prettier blouses and pants but my male identity can't be sacrificed.

Before I close Virginia, I want to say that your book, *The Transvestite and His Wife* was instrumental in my finally meeting my mother and letting her meet her daughter. It was quite emotional and I cried

my heart out when she accepted me fully. She had worried about me for so many years, she now is very relieved about my effect on Bob.

Here I've rambled on again, but I hope I haven't bored you. I want to thank you for all you've done for me in the past three years — almost four years now. Thank you and sweet dreams.

Love, Michelle, Calif.

Dear Virginia:

I have been married for 15 years to a fantastic girl. Through fear of offending her and the possible problems that I thought would occur if I revealed my TV inclinations I had never mentioned or even tried to discuss anything remotely connected with TVs. I suffered alone and admired and envied all the lucky couples that described their coping with a TV marriage and the sometimes sad but mostly pleasant relationships that these couples discussed in the correspondence section of your magazine.

I collected copies of TV-oriented literature on the newsstands and articles of lingerie when on frequent trips to New York City and I secretly indulged in my fantasies as the very few opportunities to do so occurred.

Quite by accident a few weeks ago our housekeeper tucked a nightgown under my wife's pillow and then made the bed. That night my wife put on a fresh nightgown before coming to bed. After coming to bed we got comfortable, turned out the light, and it was then that she discovered the nightgown under the pillow and mentioned it to me. Shortly after we began some serious foreplay and my wife noticed my touching the gown repeatedly and suggested that if I was so fascinated with it I should put it on. That was the moment of truth and I hesitated — for about one-millionth of a second — then away I went. I asked if she would mind if I also put on a pair of her panties. At that point she realized that there might be something more to this than just a silly impulsive act regarding the gown and panties. We held each other in the dark and I blurted out the whole story, trying to be as honest about every detail that I could remember. To my complete surprise and delight she showed not the slightest amount of alarm or



"Look at it this way, how many other married couples can really say that they share EVERYTHING, and really mean it."

disgust and told me if women's underwear or anything else turned me on I should enjoy myself. She said the only thing that mattered to her was whether I loved her. Speaking of love, that night was the most fantastic lovemaking session that we ever had experienced up to that point in our marriage.

The next day I gave my wife *The Transvestite and His Wife* to read and she asked me some questions and after a long discussion she told me to bring home all my books and clothes but with the promise to be discreet and not give our two children any reason to suspect anything unusual.

Since that first night, our marriage has been better than ever and our sex life that I would previously have described as average and very ordinary in frequency and variety is now fantastic for both of us.

We just celebrated our 15th anniversary and my wife gave me a black peignoir and a new wrist watch for my male self. She had the watch engraved with the new femmename that she gave me.

Sincerely,

(name withheld on request)

.....

Dear Virginia:

Please send me an application to join the Tri Sigma Sorority. As of this date I have sent for and read 10 copies of *TVia* which have given my wife and I many hours of pleasant reading. I also have sent for and received your other books, *The Transvestite and His Wife*, and *How to be a Woman Though Male* and I can say that they have helped to bring my wife and I closer together in understanding and have prompted her to become an "A" type wife.

Thank you again for making these books available and giving me the opportunity to be me.

Sincerely, Jo-Ann

.....

Dear Virginia:

I am returning *TVia* #s 59, 60 and 65 that I rented. I have now read all published issues of *Transvestia* from #1 to #86. In my opinion, there is no better source of information and knowledge on all aspects of transvestism in the world.

Those 86 issues, published over a period of more than 16 years constitute a remarkable achievement and I still cannot understand why so few of our new subscribers do not take advantage of the opportunity they have to read all the back issues made available to them through the renting library.

The putting together of such a wealth of knowledge on the subject of transvestism is due to your love and dedication to the cause of transvestism and we all owe you an eternal debt of gratitude for having made it possible.

Thank you very much, dear Virginia, for your help.

Yours very truly, Daniel — Canada

Greetings!

It was with great interest that I read, in the October 1975 issue of the *Playboy* advisor about Miss T.D. of New Orleans, Louisiana, and her being concerned and hesitant about marrying a man who likes to dress in women's clothes.

I have been married for over twenty-five years, and have been doing this same thing secretly when my wife was out shopping, until one day after she left, she came back home unexpectedly because she forgot an item that she wanted to exchange. Lo and behold! here I was, all decked out in my finest clothing, and she walked in on me. At first I thought that she would think that I was some sort of freak, or a pervert. On the contrary! We sat down and talked it over, and she had told me that she had suspected it for some time, because she used to watch me scan the newspapers looking at women's clothes that were on sale and the catalogs that were sent to our home in her name. She never sent out for these, so she looked in every nook and

cranny, and found my secret hiding place where I kept my lingerie, dresses, heels, wigs, and make-up kit.

It was at this time that we sat and talked this out. Here we were, I in a beautiful dress, and she in one of her best pants suits, talking over a cup of coffee. She remarked, "I knew about this for a long time, but I didn't want to say anything, because I didn't want to hurt your feelings. Now that this is all out in the open, I might as well tell you that this sort of turns me on, but the way you dress, you look like some sort of floozy, because the colors are not coordinated." She told me to change clothes, and come with her shopping. Well we went out, and she selected the proper clothing, with shoes, lingerie, and jewelry, and when we came home, she assisted me in getting dressed, and applying my make-up.

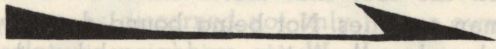
Since that day, everytime she sees a dress that would look good on me, she buys it, and when she comes home, I have to model it for her. I get dressed each and every Sunday morning in a French maid's outfit and serve her breakfast in bed. After this, we have our sex. After sex, I change into a dress or a pants suit. Toward evening, I change again, into a long gown and she touches up my wig and make-up. At the present time I have a wardrobe that is much finer than most women that we know. This has brought our relationship much closer than anyone could every imagine. I love to dress in women's attire and she goes along with it, and we are both very happy.

After reading this article many times over, I wanted to write and inquire about any transvestite clubs or organizations in or near where I live, but I was hesitant because I feared meeting a friend or a neighbor. Well so what? I'm sure that there is a skeleton in every closet.

Are there any magazines that are published for persons like me, so that I can keep up on what is going on, and where? I am in my late forties, and am very much interested in corresponding with anybody who has the same thoughts and ideas as I have, with no sex of any sort involved with people of the male sex (female, yes, but not male).

Yours truly, Harry, III.

*WOMAN BY CHOICE OR
WOMAN BY DEFAULT?*



This decision is not one that will have to be made by any large number of you but it will be my subject for this essay both in the hope that it will have some impact on those few (hopefully) of you who cherish an idea of sex change surgery and because such a discussion may also help the rest of you to a better understanding of the whole field of self identity — both sexual and genderal.

Now the best place to start any discussion of anything is at the beginning so let's go there. In man's earliest period as a thinking animal his only point of reference about himself or herself, since I'm talking about individuals, was the biological one — his anatomy and reproductive function. In short, he had to regard himself as an animal in which the only differences in life activities between males and females comes when the reproductive process is activated. As any animal knows instinctively that it is a male or a female and that it will play one or the other role in reproduction, so too did thinking man observe the anatomical differences, recognize himself or herself as a male or a female — which is to say a potential father or mother respectively — and construct a self identity on that basis. A sexual self identity means that you acknowledge your anatomical-physiological structure, realize that you are a potential inseminator or a potential "baby maker." If you were the latter, one of the other biological imperatives was that you nurtured the young after birth and for this purpose females are provided with breasts. If babies are to be nurtured first literally at the breast and subsequently in other non-nutritional ways such as caring, training, protecting, etc., it must have had to be done in and around the home base, whatever that happened to be.

Males on the other hand, not having breasts and consequently also not having the nurturing responsibility, did have the opportunity, which was also the obligation, of providing food and protection for the female and the young. He was free to roam about in order to do this. From this need for hunting developed the skills of the hunt which involved group activity and cooperation. Primitive animalistic religion also developed which led to the idea of gods of the hunt, etc. This in turn led to religious rituals calculated to result in a successful hunt, etc. From both of these humble beginnings came modern religion and statecraft and the fact that males have been the operators of almost all human societies. Not being bound down by nurturance, men also developed mathematics, science, philosophy, logic, ethics, etc. Meanwhile the women for their part continued their nurturing functions and learned other skills that could be carried on in and around the home base such as basket making, leather tanning, ceramics, food preparation, clothing construction, etc. In the process they became not only the prisoners of their sexual obligations and abilities but also prisoners of the men who, to a very large degree, determined most aspects of how women lived.

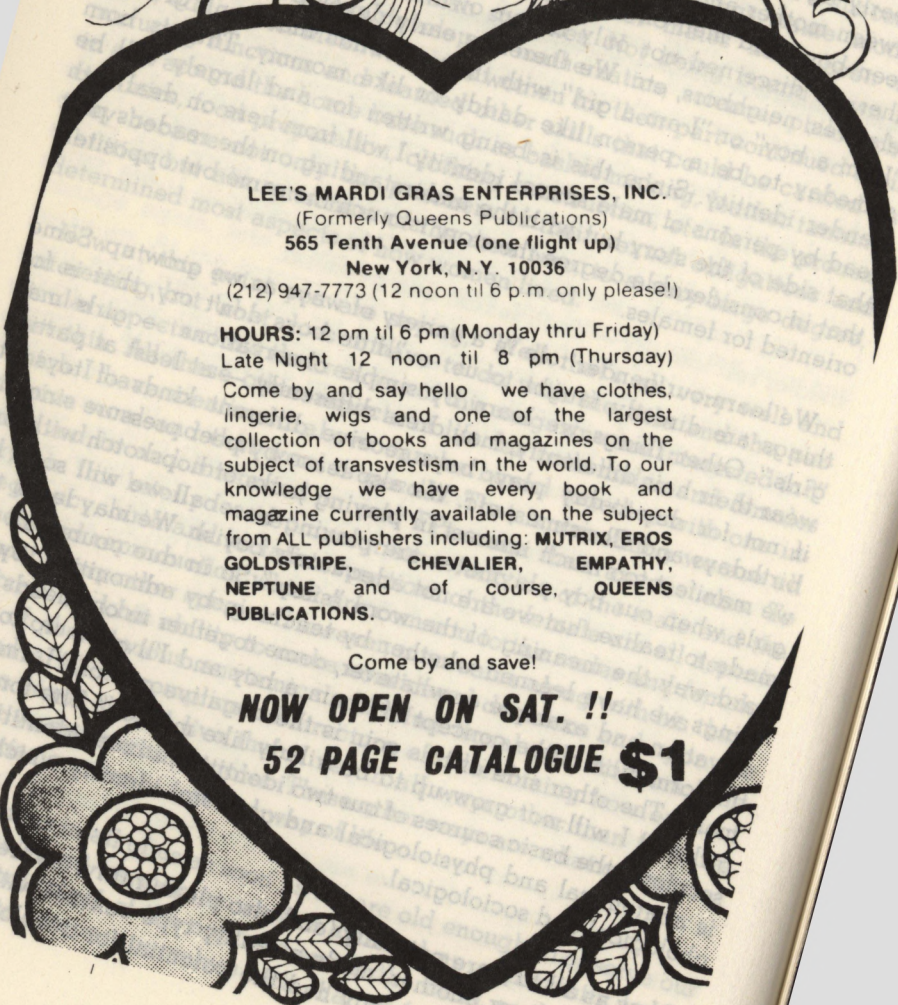
Now at this point you are saying; "Well that's all very well and interesting but what does it have to do with the title and the particular aspects of life that readers of this magazine are interested in?" Just this: All these other aspects of life for both males and females which I have mentioned above can be bound together with one inclusive word and that word is *gender*. That is something we are all involved in and interested in and FPs more than anyone else. To explain this briefly — the impregnative function of the male and the pregnancy, birth and lactation functions of the female are all aspects of sex and reproduction which are common to the males and females of most every other species. However, man came along with his thinking brain and his ability to make considered decisions and upon the base of the obvious anatomical and functional sex difference he created a whole complicated structure of determining how each of the two sexes should live their lives in all ways other than their reproductive and nurturant roles. These other ways are what collectively comprise gender — a social way of life.

It is obvious to all of us as soon as we are old enough to observe our own genitals and as soon as we are afforded an opportunity to observe an individual of the opposite sex in the nude, so that we have something to compare ourselves with, that we form a primitive form of

sexual identity. This nuclear idea is added to continuously all during infancy and childhood and through adolescence too until we become sexually mature individuals capable of reproductive function. That is not news. But more or less simultaneously with this learning process leading to self sexual identity, there goes on a process of thinking of ourselves as being individuals who are "like mommy" or "like daddy." We are of course like one or the other parent on the sexual level, but at early ages this is not so significant as all the other differences between mother and father or sister and brother or, to generalize between boys and men on the one hand and girls and women on the other. as discerned not only in our own homes but at school, with relatives, neighbors, etc. We therefore early develop self concepts of "I am a boy" or "I am a girl" with the projection that I will grow up someday to be a person like daddy or like mommy. Thus is born gender identity. Since this is being written for and largely will be read by persons of male sexual identity I will from here on deal with that side of the story but with the understanding on the reader's part that in considerable degree the story is much the same but oppositely oriented for females.

We learn our gender role in a variety of ways as we grow up. Some things are directly taught to us — "little boys don't cry, that is for girls." Other things we learn by simple observations — girls may wear their hair differently, may dress differently — at least at parties if not for day-to-day play, boys receive different kinds of toys at birthdays and Christmas, etc. We also learn by peer pressure since if we manifest too much interest in playing jacks or hopscotch with the girls when our boy playmates are playing baseball we will soon be made to realize that we are not adequately boyish. We may learn the hard way the meaning of the word "sissy." So in due course all the things we have learned whether by teaching, by admonition, by observation and example or whatever, come together in our heads with the formation of the concept of "I am a boy and I'll grow up to be a man." The other side of this coin is the negative one of, "I am *not* a girl and I will *not* grow up to be a lady like mother." The foregoing sets forth the basic sources of our two identities, sexual identity which is anatomical and physiological and gender identity which is psychological and sociological.

Now as all FPs are painfully (and also pleurably) aware, we have, by one means or another, made a reality type contact with that part of ourselves which originally had the potential for developing a girl-



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type gender identity. Such potentials were submerged and rejected because of the learning processes described above which activated, encouraged and developed that part of our total human self which our particular society believed were appropriate to penis-people. The potentials remained there below the surface, however, until some event brought them to our attention. We experienced something new, it was pleasurable and satisfying and we developed it over the years until here we are adults of various ages who upon occasion enjoy bringing this half of ourself into real time and three-dimensional existence in place of a fantasy life in the back of our head or in wistful day dreams. We are in short "femmiphiles" or to use another term I coined many years ago "FemmePersonators" meaning one who "personates" or brings life to his femmeself (as distinct from female impersonator).

At this point in life we begin to be faced with choices and decisions which can be simplified into three classes. The first class consists of those who continue to live and function as men in their daily social and business activities but who, when circumstances are favorable, enjoy giving life to their femmeself through dressing and acting (to some degree) as girls and women do — that is to say the regular transvestite or femmiphile.

The second class which is not large consists of those of us (and in this case the "us" refers to persons like myself, Mary and some others) who, because we find ourselves in circumstances that permit it, decide to live twenty-four hours a day as our femmeself. That is, to live as women openly and in society.

The third class which, to my thinking, is unfortunately much larger than it should be, consists of those who have undergone or who seriously plan in the near future to undergo sex change surgery.

Now after all this, we come to the meat of this essay and the reason for the title. Let us deal now with classes two and three, persons who have decided that they have lived enough of their lives as men and that they would be happier living the rest of it as women. let me recall to your minds the distinctions between sexual and general identity, namely that one is based on anatomy and the other on psycho-sociological factors. Interestingly enough very few of the persons who put themselves in class three say bluntly that "I want to be a female." What they do say is that "I want to be a woman." If you

ask them if they are planning on having surgery primarily so that they can have intra-vaginal sex with a male they will usually either strongly deny that as a motive at all or will cop out to some degree with statements to the general effect that "if I find somebody that I love and that loves me I would probably enjoy having sexual relations with him" or "well that's just part of being a woman."

The significant thing is that these people, and some of you who read this will be in this category, make it clear in various ways that it is not to become a female that they contemplate or have the surgery. They all say, "I am a woman trapped in a man's body." That is not the same as saying, "I am a female trapped in a male body." The difference is not a subtle one but it is lost on most class three individuals. It is also lost on the surgeons and psychiatrists that they deal with too, unfortunately. What it all comes down to is either a confusion between or a denial of the difference between sexual and general identity.

People in class two know the difference and consciously elect to change their gender identity without surgery. This is what I did eight years ago. I recognize fully that there is nothing at all that I could do after sex change surgery that I can't do right now except have sex with a male. I also recognize that the desire for that kind of experience is a head trip first. One has to want it before one has it, so that desire has to be present in the head even before surgery, it doesn't come as a result of surgery. Since class two people recognize the difference between sex and gender we can make a conscious decision to become a woman — a psycho-social gender creature and stop there because we have no pattern in our head that leads us to long for sexual interaction with a male. We are therefore women by choice. Having made the choice and living and accepting the limitations of that role in society we are able to literally give life to our feminine side in the same social ways that female women do.

Class three persons however, are those that I call women by default. By this I mean that they become women as a result of a physical alteration which leaves them non-males by any anatomical criteria and non-males are, by definition "females" and can therefore "be" women. I put quotes around "female" because becoming a non-male doesn't make you a female. It makes you a chromosomal XY male person with a frontal orifice and with no gonads of any kind. What I'm trying to say is that their womanhood comes about as a by-

product of their bodily alteration. They are somehow unable to see themselves as both sexual and general creatures and that having these two sides to their total humanness they have the possibility of altering one without necessarily altering the other. Instead they see general identity (womanliness) as a by-product — an undeniable and inevitable by-product of their sexual identity (non-maleness). To put it in very blunt terms — people with a hole in front can be women so if they get their male organs removed and an orifice constructed then they are by definition, women. Their womanhood becomes a matter of definition rather than of choice. They are woman by default rather than by choice.

I tried to show in the first part of this essay that gender identity, the sense of being a woman or a man is an outgrowth of social roles and expectations and was built on the sexual differences between males and females but is not in reality dependent upon those differences. This is certainly more true today than anytime in history. Women are greatly expanding the definition of what is included under the term "woman" by showing that she is capable of most of the things that men are capable of and if an individual woman wants to do something heretofore considered masculine she just ups and does it. She doesn't go and have some sort of surgery to make her a "non-female" so she can equate this with masculinity so that she can wear what she wants, have the kind of job she wants or make the kind of social contribution she wants. If females can do it without surgery why can't males? Ah, you say but what about the female to male transsexuals, isn't that exactly what they're doing? To a degree that is correct but while female to male seems to be just the reverse of male to female it is not that easy. True, to remove the sexual part of one sex and create a semblance of the sexual parts of the other is an opposite situation, but the psycho-social component of the decision is not by any means equal and opposite. Women are the peasants of our society while men are the nobles. For one born a peasant to aspire to the status of a noble is certainly more of an understandable ambition than for a noble to aspire to become a peasant. As a result the female to male persons always come across as much better integrated and "together" people than the male to female type.

It is apparently very difficult for those FPs who are in the process of deciding the class two or class three question, to deal with the concept of a self designation supported by the appropriate underlying external anatomy. This is rather surprisingly a very male chau-

vinistic attitude. Women complain that men see them as sex objects, i.e. as humans having the necessary receptacle for the male organ. They say this is the essence of male chauvinism, that men see them as objects and not as people or to put it more bluntly, as vaginas and not as heads. Women want men to accept them as full human beings with many different strengths and abilities, nor merely as handy receptacles, baby makers and housekeepers. They want to be seen as females yet at the proper time and place but as capable and interesting human beings all the rest of the time. The fact that men largely fail them in this respect is what led to the term male chauvinism. Because men see themselves as the strong ones, the capable ones, the ones with adventurous spirits who can tackle new and difficult projects and come thru as winners. They don't see women in this regard which is what chauvinism is — what we are, what we can do, what we believe is better than what you are, can do and believe.

Then come along these class three persons who can't see their womanhood as being possible unless they have a vagina. It's exactly the equivalent of the usual male attitude which in effect says that women can be defined as human beings with a hole in front and it's there for us to use. Boiled down to its basic essence this attitude says women are holes. Now that is a harsh and brutal and vulgar statement but sometimes it is necessary to state things that way to make one's mind deal with the basics and not to gloss them over and diffuse the matter with a lot of trivial material. So it is my assertion (and I am well aware that I will be attacked rather severely and in various ways by various class three people both pre-op and post op) that for large numbers of those who seek surgery that is the very deepest, bottom line of their concept of womanhood. "Women are holes and if I want to be a woman, which I do, then I too must have a hole." So I must get a surgeon to remove my maleness and create me a hole. THEN, when I have a hole I can be a woman."

I will be attacked for that statement simply because it is too gut level for such people to accept. Most of them have been in the business of unintentionally (and sometimes intentionally) deceiving both themselves and everyone else they could get to listen to them about the reality of their need for surgery. With this kind of pattern of behavior already in gear it would be too much to expect any of them to say, "yes, you know, I think Virginia may be right, I am thinking of womanliness as a matter of having a hole." No way. So their defense will be to attack me in various ways for saying something so blunt.

However, I have no hopes of changing the mind of anyone who has already made a personal commitment to himself to have the surgery. Many years of trying have taught me that only a tiny percentage of such people have any interest in any point of view on the matter except their own. The old statement, "My mind is made up, don't confuse me with facts" is only too appropriate. Actually I have a feeling that on a deep level they don't want to listen to other opinions because if they did they might have their minds changed by having to agree with that point of view and if they did then the whole beautiful fantasy about their becoming women would collapse like a house of cards. After all, nobody ever denied that FPs and TS's were the world's masters at wishful thinking and high powered imagination.

But as I say I don't expect to have much effect on those who have already made an inner commitment. However, there are a lot of the rest of you out there who have not yet made such a commitment but might come to that point in a year or so. I'm trying to practice preventive medicine as I have found that once the virus of surgery has taken hold there is small chance of turning anyone back. I'm hoping that some of you who read these lines and who might be toying already with the surgical idea or who may start to toy with it in the future, may be induced to look at the whole matter not as a "hole" matter (forgive the pun but I couldn't miss it) but in a different light. If your economic, domestic, or other circumstances ever come to the point where you could stop living the life of a man and you seriously consider living as a woman, then do so. What you have to remember is that being a woman is not a matter of self assertion. We have all gone thru the stage of getting all gussied up in our prettiest dress, heels, wig etc. and looking in the mirror and saying, "I AM a woman!" As though that magic assertion would bring it about. No, that's not what does it.

What really would justify one's claim to be a woman is made up of two factors, one internal and one external. The internal one is complete self acceptance. If you are unable to deal with yourself on a completely general level without reference to anatomical configuration you are never going to really make it. Those who have to have the maleness removed and the hole constructed as a means of bolstering up their self concept and self acceptance are only kidding themselves. If you have to figuratively hold your dress up and pull your panties down so that you can (again figuratively) say, "See, I am

too a woman and I have a right to wear dresses (or whatever)" have not really accepted themselves. They have tried to impose acceptance on themselves by creating a manifest physical denial of their maleness because there are no longer penis and testicles present to force such an admission. But making your body persuade your mind is a cop out, it's not true self acceptance. Since womanhood is a gender matter, it's a head trip not a body trip. And such persons are in effect trying to persuade their mind of the reality of their womanhood by referring to their bodily condition. True self acceptance is just what the words say, "I am what I am. I am a male sexual person who prefers to live out my life in that social role defined as womanhood. I will do this because I want to do it and I will not be troubled by other peoples concepts of womanliness. That is their problem and let them settle it, it's not my problem. I accept the role with both its advantages and limitations, voluntarily and intentionally."

The second factor, the external one, is the real payoff. If you look authentic enough, act authentic enough and dress appropriately, the world at large will accept you as just another woman. Within this acceptance you have freedom to do many things, many of them the same things that you used to do as a man but which, because you have sent out the correct visual identifying signals of womanhood, the world will accept as being done by a woman. When the people on the street, the plane, in the restaurant or wherever look upon you as, treat you as, and have the same expectations of you as — any other woman, **THEN** and *only then* are you a woman. If you can't bring out these responses in other people because of some incongruous dissonance such as size, shape, voice, facial appearance, beard shadow, walk, behavior, gestures, language or a variety of other things, then once again you don't make it.

You see, surgery is, at the bottom, a form a self persuasion because, sexual intercourse aside, the world never pulls your skirt up (or anyone elses) to ascertain whether you are a woman or not. Thus a class two person and a class three person who had had the surgery have exactly the same opportunities to make friends, to do things, to be accepted for what they appear to be. The operation doesn't figure in to this social acceptance at all. In fact if the operatee never tells them but comports herself within the accepted limits of womanhood in her particular community the world will never know that she has had surgery, so what good does it do?

I hope you will forgive my using myself as an example of what I'm talking about, because I don't have anyone else to provide me with this insight. I was once asked by a psychiatrist friend of mine, why, since I'd already had electrolysis and had taken hormones and grown a pair of breasts, I didn't go ahead and finish the job, namely have the sex changing surgery. I replied that since there was absolutely nothing that I could do after the surgery that I couldn't do right now except lie on my back, spread my legs and allow a male to penetrate me — an act that I have no desire for, why should I do it? It costs many thousands of dollars, it is generally very painful, it is very inconvenient for a long time afterward, there is a pretty high partial failure rate in which patients have to return to subsequent surgeries at additional cost and risk, and there is the basic risk attending all major surgery. If I wasn't going to get anything out of all that except the ability to do something I didn't want to do anyway, what would be the point?

My friend, replied thoughtfully, "yes, I guess I see what you mean. But what about a situation like your getting into an auto accident, being knocked unconscious and taken to the hospital?" I replied with a smile — "You know — that hospital — they have a big problem. Because if they pull my blouse down they'll put me in the women's ward, if they pull my skirt up they'll put me in the men's ward and if they strip me they'll leave me out in the hall!" I always get a big laugh from students when I tell them that. But I hasten to point out that there is a big moral to the story. And that is that when I come too I'm not going to have to decide what I am by finding out the sex of the other patients in the ward. I don't care because I know what I am at the time of the accident and I'll know what I am when I wake up from it. In short I have managed to get my self image, my self identity if you will, out from between my legs and into between my ears. In short my identity as a woman does not either depend upon nor is it hampered by the state of my genitals. I am perfectly comfortable with the designation of "male woman" even though to most people that seems a contradiction in terms because they can't separate sex from gender.

So my final comment to any who may still be able to listen is, if you want to be a woman full time, then go ahead and be one. (Full directions are given in the book *How to be a Woman Though Male*) You will be one if you look and act the part for others and if you accept yourself as you are and don't operate inside some sort of guilt

tinted cloud, constantly confusing sex with gender and fretting over the apparent incongruity of male organs on a woman. It's not incongruous, just rather unusual. If you can accept you the world will too since self acceptance involves self confidence and keeping your cool. I don't say this as any kind of a brag but simply as an obvious example. I would not have been able to do the traveling and other things I have done if I had not completely accepted myself for what I am and achieved the self confidence that goes with it. Now if I can do it others can too. I know several who have and they don't even have the somewhat aggressive sort of personality that I have, so that is not a requirement.

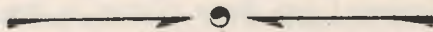
Thus all the pleasure of womanhood are open to the self accepting person who can present an acceptable appearance to the outside world without the expense, pain, danger and inconvenience that accompanies surgery. If any future circumstances such as an incapacitating accident, old age or whatever should dictate the necessary return to masculinity it could still be accomplished as no irreversible action has been taken. One of the facets of womanhood in this society that you hear about all the time is that women are paid less than men for the same job. Since the operatee now has to compete for a living like everyone else, "she" is likely to have to suffer a drastic drop in income. It is rare that someone who has achieved some sort of position technically or professionally can return to it as a woman. If she does, unless by some miracle it is in exactly the same job at the same place, she is going to be paid less. On the other hand it is often impossible to bring along the references and connections from a formerly masculine life into the new feminine one so that for most it ends up that they have to make a living at some considerably more menial and less paying task than they used to have as a man. Under these circumstances the \$5,000 to \$10,000 that has to be paid for surgery seems like a pretty high price to pay not just in itself but in not having that money as a cushion for the new life.

Of course, there is one final thing to be said and that is that if one really longs for the opportunity to be a female to a male sexually before the surgery he is basically homosexual to begin with and should learn to accept his gayness as he is and not cop out thru the surgery to justify through bodily changes a thing which is a mental thing to being with. Homosexuality is obviously a head trip, your head decides that this is what you want to do, your genitals are only

the tools (??) with which you do it. So surgery to justify open or repressed homosexuality is again not the most intelligent solution.

In conclusion therefore, I urge any who read these lines to consider becoming the woman of your dreams by virtue of a conscious choice and decision, and not to achieve it as a by product of surgery — which I consider to be by default. After surgery there is no other choice left to the person and that is what I mean by default. Transsexual surgery is NOT the endpoint on the TV or FP scale in spite of what some people including some professionals say. They are just unable to separate sex from gender and so believe that you can't change one without changing the other because they are synonymous, simultaneous and inseparable. How wrong they are could be attested to by many of those who had the surgery but as this would be admitting that it was a mistake they cannot afford to do it. It is indirectly proved however by the number of those formerly heterosexual FPs who, having had surgery, now turn back to females as their sexual partners and like to think of themselves as lesbians. The incongruity of this assertion doesn't penetrate either. Since lesbians operate by oral methods and since the surgeon didn't do anything to the TS's tongue, "she" can do nothing after surgery that "he" couldn't have done before it. The important thing is that the individual although now living in the opposite gender is still following the mental directives that "he" as a male had before, namely attraction to a female.

Please think deeply on these matters if you have any thoughts at all about surgery. I did once, when Christine hit the papers. If I'd had \$5000 I'd have been on the next boat. Fortunately I was broke and had 15 years to learn what I've tried to express in this essay. I hope it will save a few who might otherwise climb on the table in search of their dream.





EDITORIAL EMANATIONS

by Virginia

I. TRI SIGMA & CHEVALIER: I have asked before but I have to ask again. If you are sending money to Chevalier for something and paying dues to Tri Sigma at the same time *please* do it in separate checks. Although I administer the finances of Tri Sigma and run Chevalier as my own business, the two operations are entirely separate. Their records are separate, they are kept in two different places, and their bank accounts are separate. Tri Sigma expenses will be accounted for in the Annual Report while Chevalier being a private business, will not be so reported. It saves me having to write checks from one account to the other, so please — 2 checks.

II. TRI SIGMA SORORITY: New subscribers to *Transvestia* turn up daily and many of you are not aware of our social organization. It is the Society for the Second Self which, because of the three S's in its name is shortened to Tri Sigma. Requirements for membership are simple — either having purchased 3 issues (any three) of *Transvestia* or the book *Understanding Cross Dressing*. When these have been read a request for application forms will bring them to you. Return of these and payment of the \$20 annual dues will bring you the Directory of Members and a subscription to our bimonthly newsletter the *Femme Mirror*. The \$20 is budgeted as follows: \$9 to the Directory and its Supplements (at least 2 during the year); \$5 to the *Femme Mirror*, \$2 to general administration expenses and \$4 to advertising. We are about to initiate an advertising campaign now that we have accumulated \$500-\$600 in that fund from the 1976 dues payments. It took some time to accumulate this but we now have it and will be placing ads probably by the time this issue reaches you. There are thousands of our sisters "out there" who don't even know that there is an organization for them and we can't figure out any better way of

letting them know than by placing ads in magazines and newspapers. If you have any suggestions of places where we might place ads which we could afford, that you feel would find a lot of our lost sisters please write in about it. Although there will be notification of the 1977 dues of \$20.00 being payable in January, sent in the *Femme Mirror*, this is just a little extra reminder. Every year there are those who say they didn't get reminded, so here it is.

IV. UNDERSTANDING CROSS DRESSING: Most of you know about this new book by now, so I am not going to say much about it as such. However, I am going to make an appeal to those of you with any appreciation for the help you have gotten from any of Chevalier's activities to help others who are still in need. To do this I ask you to buy copies and donate them to libraries in your area. Several of our readers have already done this voluntarily. As most of you know there is nothing of any value to be found in libraries. If this Understanding book were there the next sister who comes along might not have to go away empty handed as so many of us did. To make it easy for you I'll offer a special price of \$4.60. (postage included) instead of the usual \$6.00 if you will place an order with me for a library and send a short note of donation with it. I will then mail the book and your letter to the library of your choice. Not only will you be helping someone else out of the closet, but in a little longer run you may help yourself to a new friend because if someone finds it, writes to Chevalier, decides to join Tri Sigma you could have another friend in your own city or town. In any case it is a way of passing on the help and pleasure you have gained.

V. TRANSVESTIA #60: This was a special issue of TVia devoted largely to articles dealing in one way or another with the subject of transsexuality. It had an article by one who had had the surgery, another by one who wanted to have it but who, after a thorough examination of the whole question, which she writes about in detail, decided not to have it. One by Susanna and one by myself. This issue had long been out of regular stock, but I recently found that the printer had a box of about 100 "insides" of this issue. He still had them because he ran out of covers first and thus he didn't finish them. I'm having covers printed for them and so they will be available for any who want them to complete sets or just because it was a very special issue — that is the reason why it ran out of stock so soon. Price \$5 and 50 cents postage as usual.

VI. SEPARATE STORIES: Some of you have asked when I was going to come up with some more separate stories. I would like to but the problem is a financial one. As I indicated in the last issue, income is down while prices are up. Thus it is difficult to accumulate enough capital to print stories. Getting the Understanding book printed set me back about \$2500 and I still owe about \$900 of that so that is the problem. Maybe when I get present debts paid off I'll be able to come up with some.

VII. CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE: I feel that I should render something of an apology for this issue on two counts; 1) There is not as much variety as usual because everything got lengthy and, 2) because there are two long fiction stories and both of them are continued in #90. I did this because I didn't really have enough small stuff to fill up 25 pages if I left one of them out and if I printed all of either of them it would have taken up 2/3 of the book which wasn't much variety either. So I made the choice of giving you the first half of each which in turn didn't leave too much room for other things. But it is very difficult to assemble this magazine with a large variety of material because fiction is submitted much more frequently than true experience, articles, poems, novelty items, or whatever. Anyway, I hope you like it.

VIII. POSTAGE ON SPECIAL PRICE ITEMS: As you see by the price list, I'm trying to clear out the last of #'s 20, 51, 52 and so have put them on a special price of \$2.50. However the Post Office refuses to go along with special offers and thus the postage on each is 57 cents as it is for regular issues. Thus when you are ordering any of these 3 please figure on the postage as 50 cents as it is for regular issues. This will help. The 10% doesn't pay all of the postage as it is but, I'm holding on.

IX. IRREGULAR PUBLICATION DATES: Some of you have commented unfavorably on the irregularity of TVias appearance. I have to apologize for this but it just can't be helped. I've had to go back to work 3 days a week out of town myself which means that I have to do everything for TVia, Tri Sigma, the mail, myself, my house, garden, pets, etc. between Fri morning and Mon afternoon. It's next to impossible. On top of that I'm a victim of any sort of delay on the part of the typographer, the plate maker, the printer and the bindery. All of them being human, have their own problems but I'm just the one at the end of the line—or more properly you are. But there are a lot of back numbers available and TVia doesn't get out of date like *Time* so why don't you help you and help me to fill up those gaps by ordering some of them. Fill in your library, there is nothing better available for FPs. How about it?

THE TURNABOUT PARTY . . . A neighborhood turnabout party with a valuable prize leads George's wife to decide they **MUST** win. She converts George to Sally and they do and find a lot of new FP friends, too. Illus. \$5

IF YOU CAN'T LICK 'EM, JOIN 'EM . . . A high school boy finds himself outclassed by a girl, wears her clothes as a penalty, required to maintain role by sisters, joins a sorority. Accepted by his family he gets job, meets girl, falls in love, reveals all, they become engaged. In two parts.

PART I DOWN TO DEFEAT Illus. \$4
PART II MARILYN MAKES IT Illus. \$4

SCHOOLGIRL IN THE SECRET SERVICE . . . Two young boy cousins become girls, attend girls' school to work with British Secret Service, which leads to many adventures as girls. Illus. \$4

HIS AND HERS EQUALS THEIRS . . . Steven gets fed up with his wife's borrowing his things, decides to show her how it is and borrows hers. Neither will give up and things progress until Steven becomes Stephanie . . . and stays that way. \$3

TO HELP WITH POSTAGE, PLEASE ADD 10% TO ALL ORDERS.

SPECIAL REDUCED RATES ON BACK ISSUES OF TRANSVESTIA

The following back issues are still available: 20, 51, 52. Every issue is new until you read it. Any back issue, \$2.50

A number of issues other than those listed above have been repurchased from subscribers. These may be bought, when available, for \$6 each. If we don't have the issue you need, put a hold on it — first come first served — and we will ship when it is available.

We have retained a lending library of three copies of all issues of *TRANSVESTIA*. They may be rented for \$6 per copy, \$3 of which is a deposit and will be refunded or applied to something else upon returning the rented copy. This way you can read every issue from No. 1.

PRICE LIST

TRANSVESTIA . . . A magazine written by, for and about men with a "Feeling for the Feminine." Published six times a year.
Per Copy, Issues 61 and after (most are available) \$5
Annual Subscription \$30

CLIPSHEET . . . News of transvestism and impersonation around the world. Numbers 35, 36, 37, 38, 39 available.
Single copies \$1.50
Any four copies \$5

SEPARATE BOOKS

THE TRANSVESTITE AND HIS WIFE . . . A discussion from both points of view. Includes many letters from understanding wives. Written simply, fairly and directly to help wives, parents, others to understand. \$4.50

HOW TO BE A WOMAN THOUGH MALE . . . A complete guide for the cross dresser. Everything you need to know about body alteration, clothing, jewelry, wigs, feminine attitudes, behaviour patterns, public conduct, legal aspects and change of status. \$7

FATED FOR FEMININITY . . . Fascinating story of a high school boy who wanted to be a cheer leader but ended up as school beauty queen, most popular girl and eventually bride of another pretty girl. Illus. \$5

I AM A MALE ACTRESS . . . Reporter impersonates a star, makes a hit, gets contract, becomes actress, marries female star, they live as sisters. Illus. \$5

TALES FROM PINK MIRROR . . . This book was not published by Chevalier but is available to readers. It is a long story, profusely illustrated about a boy's conversion to a girl in a special school. Illus. \$4

THE BIRTH OF BARBARA . . . Paul and Amy's marriage was falling apart till they decided to switch roles. Paul eventually becomes Barbara, finds he likes the role, the housekeeping, the clothes. They live happily as sisters with Amy earning the living and Barbara the housewife. Illus. \$5

ANNOUNCEMENT — A NEW BOOK

Understanding Cross Dressing . . . The first book published examining the subject of cross dressing in depth, its possible causes, its problems and its satisfactions. An understandable explanation for both cross dressers and interested outsiders. \$6

MERCHANDISE

Item 1. **SPECIAL BRA WITH INSERTS:** Nice cotton bras having a special pocket in each cup which holds a poly-vinyl insert. Although intended to be inflated with air, the inserts can be filled with the special jelly to provide softness and weight. Available in white only in sizes 36B and 38B only. For larger sizes, bras can be lengthened with special extenders available in most notions departments and 5 & 10 stores. Inserts can be removed and used in other bras.

BRA and INSERTS \$8.50

Item 2. **JELLY KIT, FOR SPECIAL BRA:** Consists of two chemicals — one liquid, the other a powder. When the powder has been soaked in water overnight and injected into the inserts, followed by the liquid and enough water to fill them properly, a soft, non-flowing jelly results. This may be colored to skin tones with liquid makeup. The jelly-filled inserts give the breasts a natural softness and weight. Worn in an elastic strap bra they bounce and flow as one walks just like a natural breast. Full instructions provided, also suggestions for producing "cleavage."

JELLY KIT \$6.00

Item 3. **REGULAR INSERTS ALONE:** For those requiring special bra sizes or who wish to wear inserts in bras of their own the inserts can be obtained separately.

INSERTS PER PAIR \$6.00

Item 4. **MASTECTOMY INSERTS:** For those desiring a larger bust, it is possible to obtain the type of inserts intended for breast replacement after a mastectomy operation. These are larger than the regular type and have an extended part that fits under the arm where the lymph glands have been removed by surgery. This provides fullness in this area that no ordinary falsies of any type can give, thus being more natural on a larger figure.

INSERTS PER PAIR \$6.00

NOTE: Items 6, 7, 8 and 9 are cut out of urethane foam plastic. They are supplied to you as "blanks." That is, they are cut to size and shape but are left in a rough finished state to be trimmed to final smoothness and shape by the user. This may be done with any sharp scissors. To

supply the items in finished smooth condition would require much more time and consequently a much higher price and they might still not exactly fit the needs of the purchasers.

Item 6. "PHANTOM PHANNY" Two separate shield-shaped plastic foam pads, beveled and made concave to fit and cover the buttocks cheeks. Worn under a girdle they will enhance one's derrier to more feminine proportions. They are washable, comfortable and undetectable. One size only. PER PAIR \$5

Item 7. HIP PADS: Two rather oval shaped pads of foam plastic cut into approximately the right shape and with edges beveled. Since the exact shape and size desired will vary they are intentionally left in a rough finished condition to be further shaped, trimmed and smoothed to the desired contour by the wearer. Easily cut with scissors. When worn under a girdle, they add about an inch of "hip" on each side. These are "wrap-around" pads, not just a narrow piece of foam worn over the hip. Under a girdle with the front pad (which they are designed to match with) they give an entirely feminine and smooth pelvic outline. PER PAIR \$6.00

Item 8. FRONT PAD WITH GROOVE: A "T"-shaped foam pad pre-shaped and beveled and with a groove and pocket in front to hold the male organs up against the stomach. Rough finished to allow for further trimming to individually desired shape and smoothness. Use of this pad will give the "flat-front" look so much desired without binding and discomfort. There is a "tail piece" that fits back between the legs and fills this area when worn under a pantie and girdle or a pantie girdle. If it is not wanted it can be cut off. Wear with a lubricated sheath for greatest comfort. PAD, EACH \$4.50

Item 9. A small front pad designed to cover the male organs when they are worn tucked between the legs. Intended to be worn under bathing suits, shorts, tight slacks. Gives smooth, rounded feminine control. PAD, EACH \$3

CHEVALIER PUBLICATIONS
BOX 36091, LOS ANGELES, CALIF. 90036

Publication Policy

TRANSVESTIA is composed primarily of material submitted by its readers. Fiction, articles, histories, true experiences, letters, poems, pictures — all are welcome. The greater the variety of material the more interesting the magazine will be. Material is solicited for publication on the following basis:

1. All printed material of one page or more will be paid for at the rate of \$1 per page with the exception of pictures. The Editor must reserve the right to cut or edit submitted material for suitability and payment will therefore be made on the basis of the final printed page. No payment will be made for material less than 2/3 of a page which will count as one page. Payment will be made after material appears in print. Manuscripts will not be bought in advance.
2. Submitted material will not be returned unless requested and stamped envelope provided.
3. Off-color material will not be printed and should therefore not be submitted. The Editor reserves the right to be the sole judge of suitability and to edit, alter, delete or refuse material when it is deemed to be in the best interest of the magazine.

PHI PI EPSILON (FPE) is our social organization. After having been on Chevalier's subscription lists for 5 or more issues, having read them, and deciding that we are your kind of people, ask for an application to join. Acceptance into FPE is dependant upon approval of the application, payment of dues and submission of an information form for use in the FPE Directory of Members. Admission into local chapters of the sorority requires an interview with the appointed interviewer for that group. Five or more members may form a group and can request designation as a chapter.

PERSON TO PERSON ADS AND REPLIES

To protect the magazine and its subscribers from the careless, thoughtless or foolish acts of a few it is necessary to limit correspondence service to members of Phi Pi Epsilon. A \$2 fee is charged for each ad and \$1 fee for forwarding all inter-member correspondence. Letters to other members should be sent to Phi Pi Epsilon, Box 1038, Cherry Valley, Calif. 99223. Place the letter to be forwarded in a stamped, sealed envelope with the addressee's femmename and code number in pencil. Do NOT put *your* return address on it. Enclose the \$1 fee.

Ads for *GOODS AND SERVICES* also accepted where appropriate.
Ask for rates.



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