

# A VERY SPECIAL JOB



*Sarah Thorpe*

**A VERY SPECIAL JOB by SARAH THORPE**



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**Written by Sarah Thorpe Illustrations by Teeje**

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By Sarah Thorpe

Harald Berg was born in Duluth, Minnesota. His parents had moved there just after College to find work, His parents, Kari and Olav Berg, had met in College where they both were studying to become auditors. They were, however, bom in small Minnesota towns only 20 miles apart. It might be a dull profession, being an auditor, but for Harald's parents it seemed natural since they both shared the interest for numbers and accounting.

Both Kari and Olav were of pure Norwegian ancestry. Their forefathers had arrived in Minnesota sometimes in the 1870's and settled as farmers. Both families had lived in an almost pure Norwegian community that had kept the old language alive. Thus Kari and Olav still could speak their forefathers' language.

Kari and Olav moved to Duluth right after College to find work. They had found it in a local Auditing company. After a few years the owner died. Since none of his relatives wanted to take responsibility to run the company, Olav decided to buy all the shares and take over. In order to get the company running and make a nice profit Olav had to work even harder than before. All this time Kari was on his side supporting him all the way.

When everything finally calmed down Kari became pregnant. She gave birth to Ingrid just two weeks after she had turned 34, Three years later Harald was born.

Ingrid and Harald grew up in a 99% Norwegian family. At home they learned the Norwegian language just like their forefathers had spoken it. They also learned English, of course, and by the time they started Grade Scholl they were fluent in both languages. During their upbringing Ingrid and Harald were taught all about Norway's glorious past, the Viking Era. So in good Norwegian tradition they had been given pure Norwegian names.

In early age it was discovered that Harald had inherited all the genes necessary to become an auditor. His ways with numbers was fantastic. He remembered them all and could do rather complicated calculations in his head. Everybody thought

he would follow in his parents' footsteps. His sister, however, had no interest in numbers whatsoever; instead she wanted to become a physician.

But running an auditing company took its toll on the Berg family, and by the age of 47 Olav had a heart attack and passed away. This left Kari all alone with two kids, 13 and 10 years old, and the responsibility to run the company. At that time the company had many clever employees so Kari decided to let the company more or less run itself. She took care of her children and acted only as Chairman of the Board. This proved to work out very well.

Olav's funeral took place in late May. He had died only a few days after the Norwegian Constitution Day on May 17<sup>th</sup>. This was a day that was celebrated by almost everybody of Norwegian decent in the US. This year was no exception and at Kari and Olav's home places representatives from their families in Norway had been present. One of them was Simon Berg, Olav's fourth cousin, another was Magnus Larsen, Kari's fourth cousin. When they heard of Olav's death they decided to extend their stay at least until after the funeral. During these days they made their utmost to help Kari and her kids.

After the funeral reception Kari asked both of them to come to her house the following day at noon. She wanted to have a private conversation with them. Ingrid and Harald would also be present, of course.

Simon and Magnus were well prepared when they arrived at Kari's house the following day. The evening before they had discussed several options on how to help Kari and the kids in the coming months. They had many ideas, but had ended with one; they would invite Kari and her kids to Norway and let them spend two months of summer vacation there. That would give them one month with each of the families.

Upon arrival at Kari's house, Simon and Magnus were taken directly to the living room. Ingrid and Harald were already there. Kari served some coffee and leftovers from the day before. After some initial idle talk Kari went straight to the point. "First of all," she said, "I wish to thank you both for the support and consideration you've shown after Olav's untimely demise. I also want you to know that the support from our relatives back in Norway was highly appreciated. The three of us talked a lot about it last night. It made us decide that we wanted to visit Norway this summer. We plan to leave as soon

as school is out and come back just before the new semester starts. I will use the weeks left before we leave to make sure the company can take care of itself while I'm gone. I have booked tickets this morning so everything is settled. So my question is: Will you gentlemen be able to help us while we're in Norway?"

Simon and Magnus looked at each other in astonishment. She had the same thoughts as them! It was Magnus who came to his senses first and he said: "You must have been reading our minds. This was just what we were going to propose. So don't worry, everything is taken care of. The three of you will spend your summer holiday with our families. Our wives have already started the preparations. We will suggest that you start with one month at Simon's place, and finish off with one month at my place."

"I will pick you up at the airport and drive you all the way to my place," Simon said, "it will take about five hours including a 15-minute ferry to cross the fjord. I live in a village called Hafslo which is located close to the Sognefjord; the world's longest fjord, 125 miles long and more than 4000 feet deep at its deepest. I will accommodate you in my own house. It is large enough. I work as an entrepreneur; building one and two apartment houses. I have a wife named Mona and three kids, two boys 23 and 20 years old, both in college and a daughter who is 11. At the end of your stay at my place, I will drive you to Magnus' place."

"Then my family and I will take over. My house is a little smaller than Simon's, but I will be able to accommodate you all. I have a wife named Wenche and three kids as well, two boys who are 19 and 13 respectively and a girl that's 16.1 live outside a town called Hamar, about 75 miles north of Oslo, the country's capital. I am the principal at a local Junior High. And I will of course take you to the airport when you leave for home. The airport is located only five miles from the center of Oslo."

And so it was. By June 20<sup>th</sup> Simon picked up Kari and the kids at the airport and drive straight to his place. The drive took a little longer than anticipated so they didn't arrive until 9:30 in the evening. But that didn't matter; the sun was after all still shining. "When does the sun set here?" Kari asked.

"Around 11:15 in the evening," Simon replied, "and it rises again around 4:10 in the morning. In addition it doesn't

get quite dark in the hours between. You see we have really long days here in summer. And the further north we go, the longer the days. Up in the northern part of the country the sun is above the horizon for more than two months. We pay for it in winter though, when the sun is up for only 5<sup>X</sup>A hours during the days just before Christmas. Up north it doesn't come up at all."

"It must be strange living there."

"It is. I was up there doing my military service and it was hard to sleep at all during summer. In winter, though, we could sleep all day long."

Kari, Ingrid and Harald spent a wonderful summer with their relatives in Norway. It was so relaxing and they enjoyed every minute of it. The weather wasn't always at its best, but they had more days with sunshine than with rain. Simon arrived with his guests at Magnus' place as scheduled. He had also brought his wife along, and they would stay for two days before they returned home. During the first day Magnus came up with a suggestion. "Dear friends," he opened, "listen closely to what I now will propose, and what I will propose is in total agreement with Simon and his family. I have checked around a little, both here in Norway and in Minnesota, and found out that it might be possible for Ingrid and Harald to spend one year at a Norwegian school on the same level as they are now. I have talked to their schools in Duluth and compared the curriculum in both places and found that they are comparable. The schools in Duluth have no problems with you two going to a Norwegian school for one year, and here it will be our pleasure to have you as students. The only thing we must take care of is some extra English lessons, as well as lessons in American History and some other US specific topics. What do you think?"

Kari and her kids were taken completely by surprise. This was totally unexpected. The whole idea was both fantastic and outrageous. And what about Kari? Could she make it alone in Duluth running the company without her children by her side? It took more than a minute before she was able to say a word. "This came quite suddenly," she opened, "we were not prepared for something like this. I'm sure the kids would be happy to spend a year in Norway. That leaves me alone with the company and all. Maybe that is a good solution. Then I can concentrate on running the company knowing that the kids are

in safe hands here in Norway. I know you expect an answer from us very soon, but please give us at least a day to think about it. Let's drop the subject for today and let us return to it tomorrow. Is that OK?"

"It's perfectly all right," Magnus replied.

Ingrid and Harald were just as shocked as their mother. They didn't know what to say. Deep inside, they both wanted to stay, but they also knew that it was not their decision alone.

The following day Kari told Simon and Magnus that they would accept the offer. She had made some quick phone calls back home and had confirmed everything Magnus had told them. It was decided that Harald would stay with Simon and his family while Ingrid would stay with Magnus. They thought it was best that way. Simon's daughter Irene was 11, only a year older than Harald. On the other hand, Magnus' youngest son Gunnar was 13, just like Ingrid.

So by August 15<sup>th</sup> Ingrid and Harald started their year in a Norwegian school while Kari went home to take care of business. Ingrid and Harald had no problems following the lessons; after all they spoke the language. Their dialect might be a little old-fashioned, but it didn't take them long to catch up with the other students. They also made lots of new friends. The bonds between Ingrid and Gunnar seemed to grow especially tight. It was clear that they were falling in love.

The bonds between Irene and Harald also grew tight, but on a slightly different level. If they had been a few years older you might have called it love, but on this stage it was only a very tight friendship. The kids' health was also monitored closely. After a few months it was discovered that Harald didn't grow like his classmates. He was therefore sent to the hospital in Bergen to have a more thorough check-up. There it was discovered that he was suffering from a metabolism disease. They found a cure right away and soon everything was back to normal. But damage had been done and as a result Harald probably would be somewhat shorter than he normally would have been. At this time this didn't bother him very much.

Over Christmas one thing happened that would have a profound impact on Harald in later years. During Christmas mass and the family dinner afterwards Irene and her mother were dressed in a national costume; also called bunad. Harald's eyes were transfixed on the bunad all evening and

wondered if something like that existed for boys as well. He was told that they existed, but that men and boys didn't wear them very often. Then Irene came up with an idea. "Why can't he try my spare that's in the closet," she said, "I'm sure it will fit."

Mona looked at her daughter and said: "I also think it will fit, but don't you think it's wrong to let a boy wear a girl's bunad?"

"Not if he's willing," Irene replied. Mother and daughter looked at Harald. He didn't say a thing, but they could see in his eyes that this was something he wanted to do. So it was decided; next morning Harald was dressed in a bunad just like Irene. Mona combed out Harald's hair to make it look more girlish. She put a little subtle make-up on the two girls' faces to make everything look perfect. Mona and Simon now took the two girls to another village and attended the service there. Nobody noticed that the girl following Irene around in reality was a boy. They didn't meet anybody they knew which was just as well. Then Harald didn't have to talk to anybody.

Back home Harald stayed in the bunad all day. When he had to take off before he went to bed, he felt really sorry. But reality took over and he reverted back to his boyish self.

Both Ingrid and Harald skied a lot that winter. They had been on skies before, but this winter they really perfected their skills. Since it was lots of snow in both places they played in the snow as much as they could. The days were short, but they didn't care. There were enough lit up areas and tracks around so they could play in the snow long into the evenings.

In late March the first signs of spring were showing. The sun started to melt the snow and the days became longer. It felt as if life returned after a long standstill. In June the school year was over and they had to prepare to go back home. Kari came over in early July to spend a few weeks in Norway and to take her children home. Before they left for the U.S. a couple of things were decided. The following summer Simon and Magnus would come to Duluth to visit and bring, if possible, all their kids. When in Senior High, Gunnar and Irene would come and spend one year in Senior High in Duluth. Finally, Ingrid and Harald promised to come back after graduation from college and work at least one year in Norway. Ingrid was still determined to become a doctor. Harald hadn't



decided yet, but he believed it would to be something in financing or economy.

It was tear-filled farewell at the airport. Ingrid and Gunnar swore eternal love and promised to stay in touch as much as possible. The year was now 1992, they were both 14 years old and even if they had PCs, Internet was not something for normal folks yet.

Irene and Harald also promised to stay in touch. Their friendship was now so deep that it had to continue. It was not something that could be cut off just like that.

Kari and her kids arrived home 19 days before school started. While she was alone she had worked her butts off and managed to make money enough to redecorate the house. That meant newly renovated rooms for both Ingrid and Harald. They had also got their own PC to help them along with their homework. The kids were overjoyed when they saw their new rooms and how they were equipped. They loved what they saw and promised their mother that they would keep everything in order.

Back in school Ingrid and Harald became the center of attention. Their classmates wanted to know everything about their year in Norway. Several of them were of Norwegian decent as well and wanted to know how life was in the country where their forefathers came from. So Ingrid and Harald had to do their best to keep them updated. They also had a lot of pictures and videos to go along with their stories.

The year went fast and soon Ingrid graduated from junior high while Harald graduated from Grade School. And then the Norwegian visitors came along. Irene and Gunnar arrived already on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Their parents would arrive two weeks later. This gave the kids lots of time alone and they really took advantage of it. Ingrid and Gunnar were just as much in love as the year before, and Irene and Harald kept their friendship hot.

When summer was over it was back to Norway with the guests, and back to school for the kids. Two years later Gunnar came back to spend one year in Senior High along with Ingrid, and two years after that Irene did a similar thing.

For Harald the years were busy with schoolwork. He did his utmost to become a straight 'A' student and managed. The same was true for Ingrid of course. Due to his illness some

years earlier Harald didn't grow as tall as most of his classmates, in fact his sister was slightly taller than him. This had given Ingrid an idea one Halloween. She asked if Harald would dress in the same costume as she did so they could go as twin girls. Harald hesitated at first, but after some pushing from his sister and mother he gave in. This implied a lot of training; he had to learn to walk, talk and sit like a girl. The most important thing was that he had to master high-heeled shoes.

When the day arrived and they were ready to go, their mother looked them over and smiled. They looked almost exactly alike, even for her it was hard to tell them apart. They had dressed as Madonna.

They became a hit at the party. No one thought that one of these twins in reality was a boy and Ingrid never gave him away. She just called him Hannah and said she was a cousin from out of town. This experience taught Harald to enjoy dressing as a girl from time to time. But it never became a regular habit. In his last year in Senior High he did it again in general public, and this time Irene was there to support him.

Harald graduated from High School in 1999 and went straight to college. He had been offered a place by a prestigious college in Massachusetts, but decided to start out in Minneapolis. He planned to major in Economics and Financing. At college he shared a small house with a guy named Scott. They had separate bedrooms and studies, but shared a kitchen and a living room. The house also had a double garage. Harald and Scott soon became very good friends.

One thing Harald noticed with Scott was that he sometimes disappeared over the weekend. He knew that Scott hadn't left for home, so where was he. One day Scott's bedroom door was ajar, and he peeked in. What he saw surprised him. He looked straight into an open closet full of women's clothing! He heard noise from inside and soon Scott passed the opening and Harald saw that he was dressed in the finest lingerie and high-heeled shoes. Suddenly Scott turned around and saw Harald standing there. He knew that his secret was out. He decided there and then to tell Harald everything. He beckoned Harald inside and told him to sit down. Scott sat down in front of a mirror and started to put on make-up and tell his story.

“You see Harald, I’ve done this for many years already,” he opened, “and it has become a habit of mine. It started already when I was a kid and it has only escalated since then. I’m a member of a club for people like me, and we like to meet every other weekend and talk about various topics. Later in the evening we go out for a drink, and sometimes dinner. We have some special places we can go to. This is for my transvestite friends and I considered as just harmless fun. We harm no one and make no fuss. Most places we go to the people know what we are and they accept us. But there are places that guys like us never frequent.” Scott finished his make-up, put on a dress and a wig and was more or less ready to go. “If you like, we can talk more about it on Sunday,” he said as he headed through the door.

Harald left for his own room. He sat down in a chair, his mind in turmoil. He didn’t know what to think. Seeing Scott dressed as a woman brought back memories. He remembered the day he was dressed in a bunad; the two Halloween partied when he came as a girl, and the few times at home when he had dressed up. Seeing Scott made him realize that he missed those moments. And then there was a club in town for men that liked to dress up as women.

The rest of the weekend Harald didn’t know what to do. He walked aimlessly up and down the streets of Minneapolis. He went to see a movie, but he had forgotten it the moment he left the theater. He got stone drunk on Saturday, but a walk back to campus made him feel better.

By Sunday after breakfast Harald started to feel OK again. So when Scott knocked on his door around two he was back to his normal self. “Come in,” he said when he heard the knock on the door. Scott walked in and sat down on the coach. “How do feel today,” he opened, “just in case I brought some beers.”

“I feel OK, but I must admit that I was very surprised when I saw you Friday night. What’s this all about?”

“I am what is called a transvestite. That means that I like to dress up as a woman from time to time. There’s nothing sexual about it. I ain’t gay or anything, and I don’t want to be a woman for the rest of my life. I got the urge to dress as a girl/woman already when I was very young. My mother let me try it a few times when we were alone, and I was hooked. Since that day it was no turning back. She is still the only

person in my family that knows that I do this. What do you think? Have you ever tried it? I think I saw something in your eyes on Friday that indicated that you have tried it yourself.”

Harald blushed. He didn't know what to say, and when he finally tried to say something, it came out all wrong. Scott didn't understand a word of what he was saying. “Calm down,” he said, “it's nothing to worry about. After all it's only the two of us.”

Finally Harald managed to speak normally and busted out with his story. “And when I saw you on Friday it all came back to me and I realized how much I missed it.”

“That can be arranged. In two weeks' time we have another meeting in our club. On Friday a woman called Rebecca Wilson will come and show us some of her collections of feminine finery. She has been one of our best supporters for years, and many of us buy all our clothes from her. On Saturday morning her shop is open especially for us, and we can feel free to roam inside and buy whatever we like. We will not be in the main shopping area though, but in a room in the back. It's the best option when there are many of us. She also has to take care of her normal customers, you know. Then on Saturday night there is a club dinner followed by a trip to a nightclub. We always go to a safe place on nights like that. Do you want to come along?”

“I don't know. I've never been in public as a woman before. Except for Halloween that is. Besides I don't have any women's clothes. And don't tell me that I just can go out and buy some, I definitely don't have the guts to do that.”

“No problem. You're about the same size as me, so you can borrow some of mine the first day. Then you can buy your own in Becky's store on Saturday. As far as I know you don't have any financial problems to pull that off. If not, I'm sure Becky will give you credit

“Money is not the option. The problem is, do I have the guts to do it? I want to do it. I sure would like to dress up again, but I also feel very nervous about it. What if I don't look good? What if people start laughing when they see me? I would fall dead to the ground.”

“No way. I think you will look very good as a woman. I can see it in you. And in the club nobody will laugh. People there range from gorgeous to what is plainly a man in women's

clothing. There we don't care how you look; the important thing is that you feel at ease. And when you walk outside just act as normal as possible. Don't stare at people; then they stare back and might give you a glance you don't want to see. You see, when people see someone dressed as a woman, they associate it with a woman and nothing else. It's not in their heads that it might be a man underneath. The only ones that might spot you are other transvestites; and they are not dangerous. Just look straight ahead and walk like woman and nobody will be the wiser."

"Are you sure this will work?"

"Definitely. Let's give it a try next Saturday. I will lend you some of my clothes and I will help you dress up. Then we play it by the ear after that. To make you feel at ease, I will dress up myself as well. Is that a deal?"

"It's a deal. When do we start?"

"Let's say that you're come to me at noon. Then you'll watch me dress, and then I will help you afterwards. OK?"

"That's seems all right with me."

Harald entered Scott's room a little before noon the following Saturday. During the week Scott had checked all Harald's measures to make sure that he had clothes that would fit. He welcomed Harald and asked him to sit down. "Here's what we'll do," he opened, "you just sit there and watch me transform myself into a woman. I want you to pay attention to what I'm doing. I will explain along the way. When I'm dressed, I will help you get dressed. What we'll do with you will be a blueprint of what I did to myself. When we're both finished I will teach you how to stand, walk and sit like a woman. These things might not be necessary when we're at the club, but when we're somewhere else it's a must. I'll also give you some other instructions as well. Ready?"

Harald nodded and Scott started with undressing himself. The first thing he did was to put on something he called a gaff. "It's mandatory if you want to display a flat front," he said. Next came a waist cincher, a pantyhose and a panty. Then Scott took out a pair of silicone breasts that he glued on to his chest. He sat still and explained a few things while the glue dried. He had made sure that the edges were as smooth as possible where they met his own skin. Body make-up was used to make the edges invisible. He put on a bra and a

slip, both in the same color as the panty.

