

In Finery

Part 2



Sofronia Anne Strong

An "Adult TV" Novel

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In Finery 2

By Sofronia Anne Strong

CHAPTER SEVEN: HELL WEEK

Back at school, my male garb again disappeared and I resumed my role as Cindy Coed. Final exams came and went, the semester ended and, at last, those pledges who had “made their average” could look forward to the final rite preceding initiation: Hell Week. A week in which every indignity and piece of idiocy left unused during the fall term was trotted out.

Pledges would be seen running about campus in bizarre costumes carrying raw eggs on teaspoons, cleaning up and eating each that was dropped. Some girls were subjected to the ultimate indignity of attending classes with no makeup, their hair in curlers and wearing shapeless bathrobes and grungy slippers. A very few, very naughty girls were sent to class in slips, without dresses at all or were

done up as tarts. Various boys appeared in tuxedos or tails, often without pants. Even the ROTC's Pershing Rifles got into the act with their custom of putting their initiates in comic opera military uniforms with sabres clanging and making various of them drag an old cannon around the campus to be fired at sunrise, noon and sunset. If you were born with a sense that the world is mad, Hell Week would have confirmed your opinion.

I should have realized that my unique penance would not go unamplified during this Saturnalian festivity. Hope springs eternal, even in the face of the obvious. I thought they had humiliated me as much as possible. I was wrong. The Green Dragons had a very special Hell Week plan for me and I didn't even see it coming.

Reporting at the Kappa House bright and early Monday morning, I was greeted at the front door by Leslie who took me directly to her room. She stood me on a pedestal in the center of the room, apologizing for what was about to transpire, saying that she had managed to convince the others that I should be allowed to dress, at least partially, in some privacy. In another minute I was deprived of my freshman girl's uniform and clad in only bra, panties and gaffe, and waited while Leslie opened the first of several boxes that lay nearby.

Atop the tissues in the box lay an envelope which Leslie handed to me. I watched Leslie in anguish as her one hand lifted an outlandish, rigid boned Victorian corset of blue satin and pink ruching with six satin garters. It hooked up the front and laced up the back. In her other hand, Leslie held a bizarre

looking collection of rolled wire, hoops and ties. I decided I'd best read the note:

Dearest Cynthia:

My friend, Dean Colbert, asked me if there was anything feminine around here that you might wear during the week before your initiation. It was a great chore, but I found these in the attic. They belonged to my great aunt. I am not sure that she ever wore the dress improver as I found the advertising flyer and price tags still in the trunk but I do know that she often wore the corset for I can recall her marvelous hourglass figure; a shape I am sure it will impart to you.

I am so pleased that your fellow students have chosen to help you learn humility and regard for others. Perhaps these garments will make you think before you decide to defy authority. May they put you in your place. Heaven knows, I never could!

Your loving stepmother, Doris

The yellowed American Braided Wire Company flyer advertising four of their finest products including the Style Paris, which Leslie held in her hand, was paper-clipped to the note.

This brought me as close to walking out of the Kappa house and off the campus as I ever came. I remembered, however, that this would be tantamount to walking into Doris's trap, so I swallowed hard and sucked in my breath as Leslie hooked and laced me into the antique, wasp-waisted cage. I had worn a corset for my debut, but in that case a

proper figure was the object. Here it was only meant to torment me . . . and it did.

In a few minutes I was compressed in the steely grip of the corset with sheer silk hose gartered to it and was teetering on four-inch spike heels. Leslie wasted no time in opening the next box and helping me into a pair of voluminous silk knickers that tied about my waist and just above my knees. Before draping the silk camisole or corset cover over my torso she fastened the “dress improver” about my waist, cinched the tie down across my groin, then motioning for me to remain on the pedestal, opened the door and admitted several other actives and pledges. Each of the pledges bore yet another part of my costume for the day, the nature of which I had at last divined. It was clear that I was to depict a Victorian lady!

A stiffly flounced cover was laid over the massive wire bustle and tied about my waist. My behind now trailed me by about an hour and a quarter. I was told this garment was a crinoline tonure donated by the Dean of Women. The cambric petticoat with train that reached the floor and added yet another yard to the area encompassed by my backside had also come from her family trunks.

As the dress was dropped over my head and tugged into place, I realized that the toile de jouty of Emerald green, the pleating of the rounded skirt and the delicate lace hems around my ankles in paler shades of green and the bise lace, forest green velvet ribbons and double shell ivory lace concealing the opening at the front of the skirt were all in keeping with the colors of my usual freshman girl’s

costumes. Victorian lady or no, I was still to be a freshman girl.

A dizzying hour was spent raising and lowering my arms as various garments were dropped, draped or tied about me until I was cocooned in a weighty mass of satin, lace, velvet, and tulle. In the mirror I saw the acme of Worth's designs in the eighteen-nineties. The emerald velvet collar ruched with ivory lace defining the deep Vee of what seemed to me to be an excessive expanse of pale bosom . . . and it *was* a bosom, with my breast flesh lifted and raised as it was by the strictures of the corset!

Leslie had done my makeup while the dressing had progressed and one of my wigs, restyled into a fashionable, for a Victorian, array of loose braids wrapped about the top and dainty curls framing my face and ending in waving loose strands of curls reaching to just below my shoulders. Now a filigree straw hat bordered with a tourmaline velvet puff, topped with pale white roses and cream colored plumes was pinned into my wig; suede gloves of delicate ivory were slipped on my hands and up my forearms to be buttoned just below the elbow. The lace-trimmed close-cut sleeves were tugged low enough to cover the glove buttons and a brilliant leaf-green parasol with a border figured like the lace trim on my overskirt and carrying an emerald velvet bow on the handle, was thrust into my hands.

My sisters stepped back, surprised, with looks of admiration on most of their faces. Leslie took my hand to help me step down from the pedestal and get ready to go to class. As I took those first steps in

this cumbersome structure of velvet and lace, whalebone and steel, it occurred to me that carrying my books for each class, managing my parasol and flowing skirts, and dealing with the great mass of bustle, bows and flounces trailing behind me, might be more than I could deal with for the day. I mentioned this to Leslie.

“Never mind, Miss Cindy, the Dragons have worked out that detail. By the way, there is one thing Dean Colbert asked us to show you. She said she has heard that you love finery and wanted you to know that there is more to come.” I was handed a folio-sized volume with the name “Harpers Bazaar” on the binding edge. Opening it to the marked page I realized instantly that my costume was an almost identical twin to the one on the right of the cover of the August 23rd, 1884 edition of the famous woman’s fashion magazine! I stared at it and at myself in the mirror for a few seconds before the girls took the book from me and I was led from the room, and down the stairs to the front hall while I nervously pondered the ramifications of that “detail” Leslie had mentioned.

My worst fears were, and were not, realized when I reached the front hall. There, resplendent in boaters and bowlers, celluloid collars and high buttoned shoes, and ill fitting, 1880-ish suits was a collection of “young men” waiting, as I was told, to escort me through the day. It took only an instant for me to realize that these escorts were a group of pledges from the other sororities who were being made to do their Hell Week thing in my company. I looked into their faces and saw a mixture of annoyance, humor, and even some very naked envy for the finery in which I

was caparisoned in contrast to the darkly stiff masculinity of their costumes. In minutes, we were off to class, a little parade from the past, with the “boys” splitting up my load of books and one being pressed into service to take my arm for the trek to class.

The rest of the day passed in much the same way as any other day of my ordeal save that for the first time in months, I was a center of attention thanks to my costume and the constant attentions of my entourage. It also did not help that the restrictions of the bustle did not let me fit into any of the chairs in the classes and so left me standing at a side lectern in the front of each class for the day.

My return to the Kappa house at the end of the day brought yet another surprise. The normal routine of being fitted out in my Monday formal was not changed, but the vintage of my costume was, though not unexpectedly. I was apparently moving through time, for by the time I was laced into my gown for the evening, I had been shown the reproduction of the cover of the April 15, 1893 cover of Harper’s and realized I was once again at the height of fashion, but this time only sixty years too late.

Under other circumstances I might have loved this creation; a pale blue, almost white, damask richly trimmed in embroidered pink lace, chrysanthemum petals and pearls on the delicate blue ground. The pointed corsage was edged all around the low neck in white tulle with crystal pendants at my bust and curved to the right at the waist where it was fastened by clasps of St. Jacques shells. The damask skirt carried similar garlands of pears and

crystal festooned diagonally across the front above a flounce of embroidered lace dropping down the left side to join the side of the damask train. The foot of the skirt, which was gored in an umbrella shape emphasizing the swelling curve of my hips, ended in a deep flounce of embroidered lace under a ruche of tulle. A look in the mirror and a foiled deep breath let me know that my appearance now epitomized both the hourglass figure and the fabled “S-curve” so desired by women of the 1890s. Having experienced in my own person the rigors of making such an appearance, I still wonder at that peculiar desire for fashion.

My wig had been tidied and was now entwined with twists of pearls as it was set upon my brow. After a tasteful touchup of my makeup, a lace-encrusted fan with dangling pendant was thrust into my hand and I was led to the foyer of the sorority where my gaggle of suitors waited patiently, if unhappily, for the tour of each of the fraternities where I was to learn I would become “pinned” to each of my earnestly unwilling suitors. I wondered what sort of girl the Dragons thought I was . . . to be accepting fraternity pins from five “boys” at once! Five pinnings, five kisses and five serenades later, I was returned to the Kappa house and my Freshman girl’s uniform and sent off to the Sig house with the warning to be back by six-thirty the next morning.

Gram would have been proud of my Tuesday morning performance parading about the campus in great ruffles of white, my head weighted by an immense, spreading, yard-wide hat and waving my “Suffrage for Women” sign at all and sundry. That afternoon, after lunch at the Kappa house, the cor-

set was at last removed, but only to be replaced by an uglier garment wrapped around me after a hip-length chemise and knee-length, elastic bot-tomed bloomers in pink crepe de chine had been put on me. This grotesquerie was an almost canvas-like corset that began at my waist and extended to mid-thigh where the bloomers bulged out under the corset and tended to slip down over the tops of the knee-length silk hose I had been given. My unsupported breasts jiggled freely under the chemise top and were still embarrassingly present even after the silk and satin dress was in place and zipped up the back.

Leslie took one look at the chemise strap peeking from under the shoulder straps of my dress and promptly slipped them off my shoulders and tucked them into the top. She then fastened a pin in the back of the chemise which gave me some assurance that it would not end up down around my waist. The only problem with this was that the tightened fabric emphasized the curve of my nubile breasts above the low neckline of the dress. I whispered a complaint to her but she shushed me and went on with the remainder of my dressing.

Once the dress was in place I wanted to question the need for the stiff and bulky corset. The double skirting of the darted overskirt and close-cut tunic skirt gave an unnatural flair to my hips, offsetting the constriction of the corset. I wanted to question, but I already knew what the answer would be, so I kept my peace. At last, a pink felt cloche was fitted over the rhythmic waves of my Marcelled hairpiece and I was allowed to look in the mirror. There was little doubt as to my new identity. I was a Flapper.

This time, Thalia, the keeper of what I had come to think of as the “Book of Fashion,” opened her “bible” to a reproduction of the May 1921 issue of *Femina Magazine* depicting my twin for the day: a woman whose appearance to my limited fashion sense, was vintage early-flapper in spite of the womanly breadth of her, and my, hips in our nearly identical costumes. I gazed at her face in the book, then at my own alabaster china doll’s painted countenance in the glass and knew that we were indeed, sisters above the skin. I spent the afternoon prancing from class to class, snapping my gum, batting my mascaraed lashes and pursing my crimsoned lips at all the boys, twirling my beaded purse and kicking up my heels in an impromptu Charleston on demand.

In the evening, after supper, arrayed in an almost skin-tight, red satin, string-strapped, sheath of the late Thirties, my wig in a stylish, spit curled bob, I was paraded to the Sig house, where, Louise, a particularly recalcitrant Kappa pledge was revealed as the winner in the competition for my hand. Louise, now “Louis” in her baggy slacks, blazer and boater, and I were serenaded by all the pledge classes, and our “engagement” toasted by all the active chapters on campus. We were then sent off to bed to worry about what Wednesday might bring. For my part, it brought no surprises.

At six-thirty on Wednesday morning I was again greeted by Leslie at the front door of the Kappa house. This time she led me to the living room, where all the drapes and doors were closed. Once again, I was told to strip to my gaffe and step up on the peripatetic pedestal in the center of the room. In

a very few minutes, I was tightly bound into the confines of corset over panties dripping with lace and white nylons tautly suspended from the corset's dangling garters.

While Leslie helped me to balance, I stepped into strip pumps in gleaming white slipper satin with seed pearls sewn around the edge of the vamp. Leslie had me step down from the pedestal to drop a full-length white silk slip, copiously decorated with lace over my head. I had an inkling as to what all this elegant underdressing was leading to. Then, with an apologetic look, Leslie left me to unlock and open wide the doors and allowed several of my "pledge sisters" to enter the room. One of the pledges was carrying a white gown so voluminous that it seemed to engulf her. Behind her was another bearing aloft a huge set of petticoats, and finally a third girl holding a cap, with a veil streaming behind her like a cloud.

As I had suspected, I was to play the bride! Suddenly, I was frightened. I don't know why. After the gown I wore for my debut, after the constrictions and embarrassment of the Victorian gowns, after the revealing tawdriness of my thirties negligee/evening gown, a bridal gown shouldn't have seemed overly effeminate, but I now realize that no gown, no matter how grand, can be as feminine as a bridal gown. The bridal costume is the ultimate expression of female grandeur and they were turning me into a bride to cap my six months as a coed.

Leslie had supervised my application of a very special makeup job before this dressing began. I wondered why she was demanding such care and

elegance. Now I knew. I was to radiate the glowing freshness and demure colorings of a blushing bride.

Everyone gaped as the huge gown was lowered, tugged and arranged over the petticoats, then zipped and flounced into place. It engulfed me. I was satin and lace from my neck to the floor, and more. I was encased in a high collar of lace that rose from a bodice of the same openwork. Over my breasts lay sculpted coverings of heavy ivory satin which descended to my crushed waist. There were three layers of skirts, overlapped and edged with more lace, like overlapping petals. The hem of the last skirt broke away in a curve, revealing my ankles and dainty pumps and sweeping behind me in a long train. The upper skirts passed around to my back where they were gathered into a fishtail of tumbling silk, satin and white lace joining the long train. I was totally encumbered in incredible finery.

Huge balloon sleeves attached to the fitted shoulders of the gown tapered to my forearms, where the lower fitted sleeves came to points over the back of my hands. From my right wrist dangled an ivory and lace fan which, I was informed, I must open before my lower face whenever I spoke.

One of the girls fitted my blonde pageboy back atop my head and Leslie supervised securing the long, intricate veil of fine, soft silk edged with more lace which fell away to my train from a satin cap. Yet another pledge handed me a huge bouquet of white and red silk roses and I was instructed not to put them down.

The ensemble swallowed me up. I disappeared into it. It wore me. I could barely breathe. I teetered on the unaccustomed higher, narrower heels. As they sprayed me with perfume, I thought I might faint. The covey of actives and pledges that had filtered into the room tittered and whispered behind their hands while I stood, stunned and unbelieving on the pedestal. I couldn't imagine how I was to move, let alone walk or sit down in this outrageous finery.

Everyone turned at the sight of four bridesmaids gliding down the staircase clad in identical gowns of mauve lace over taffeta dresses of the same color. They wore taffeta pillbox hats with short veils and carried lovely bouquets. As they minced to my side, Leslie announced that I would be accompanied on my wedding day by these pledges from the other fraternities whose "worst in the house" demerit records had earned them the privilege of being my attendants. For the first time since my ordeal had begun six months ago, I was joined in my feminine finery by other males. They gave little solace. Clearly, none of them were thrilled at this development. One of my problems was solved, at least: two of these would attend my every moment, carrying my train so that I could move about and the other two were to attend me continually, carrying my books and so on.

I wondered just how long I would have to remain in this mass of lace and satin. This question was promptly answered as we were whisked by limousine to Pankin Hall, where all Hell Week assemblies were held. The midweek's entertainments would begin with a wedding and reception at which all the

pledges and their masters could honor the bridal couple. This was not explained to me in advance. As we climbed out of the car at Pankin Hall, I had no notion that a bridegroom and his attendants would be waiting at the end of the auditorium aisle. I balked when I realized I was there to play the bride before half the school, but the ceremony went on.

The mock wedding lacked none of the detail of the real thing, from the clergyman's vestments, to having my pledge father give me away. The groom, of course, was Louise Sherman, who awaited me in striped pants, morning coat, ascot and boutonniere. "Louis" and "his" attendants seemed no happier at being made boys than I and my fellow males were at being overwhelmed in our voluminous and ultra-feminine gowns.

A reception followed at which "Louis" and I were informed that I would be accompanied everywhere by my poor bridesmaids, who would carry my train and wait on me every moment. I would walk on "Louis's" arm and we would parade our nuptial state everywhere we went.

In classes, as with my bustle, my wedding finery would not allow sitting at a regular desk, so, once again, I returned to the lectern. That evening "Louis" and I and our attendants were feted at a traveling bridal dinner. It began with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres at two of the fraternity houses, Dinner at the next, dessert at the next, aperitifs at the fourth and finally, a wedding dance at the Sig house. "Louis" was attended by his Best "Man," an unhappy pledge from the Tri-Delt sorority, turned out in white tie and tails as well as an assortment of

“groomsmen” selected from sorority pledge classes, similarly attired.

For the entire day and night I was resplendent in that cumbersome, awkward, piss-elegant bridal costume and in that day I learned to hate the thing. The bridesmaids learned to hate me. I already disliked “Louis,” even when he had been Louise. I must say, in truth there was enough hand-holding, kissing and hugging on command through the week that I even softened my dislike for her. The friendship might have had a chance if we hadn’t gone through eighty years of fashion and a year of married life in less than a week.

On Thursday the campus was treated to the constant billing and cooing of the just-returned “honeymooners” flitting about the campus in their honeymoon finery. Louis was almost handsome in “his” Brooks Brothers gray flannel suit and I saw envy of my Jacques Fath and Dior originals on every female face. The tedium of putting on our newlywed act for the entire day was almost too much for me, but the joy of my pink silk Fath suit with its hourglass shape spreading into the billowing circle skirt, all over my new Warner long-line Merry Widow in the morning and the Dior in the afternoon with its wide, inverted bell Coolie hat, the fitted, belted jacket flaring out over the immense fullness of the charcoal skirt had a charm I acknowledged only reluctantly. I knew that Marjorie and Gram would be impressed by the skirt-matching kid gloves and the three-inch heeled Court pumps colored to match my bolero jacket. This was Fifties finery at its feminine best!

Friday may have been the worst day of Hell week: I arrived at the Kappa house to discover that sometime during the night I had become pregnant . . . eight months pregnant! Two of the Kappas had made a project in their Home-Ec sewing class of giving me a baby . . . or at least the appearance of carrying one. Over my usual lingerie that morning I was strapped into a heavy, bulky, and overbalancing torture device which all the sisters agreed would indeed allow me to appreciate to some extent the joys of pregnancy. The heart of the device was in the bra cups, into each of which had been stitched a balloon stretched over a six-pound shot and pumped up with a gelatin to allow the shot to move about in the balloon as I moved. The torso was equally diabolical. The girls, with some help from the campus meteorologist, had fit a bowling ball into a weather balloon, added the same gelatinous substance, then sewed it into the abdominal cavity of their accursed contrivance. The entire device was strapped about me in such a way as to force my body into every posture imposed by my advanced state of impending motherhood.

In several changes of maternity clothes during the day, I waddled, roiled, surged, billowed, and generally lumbered about the campus all day. By noon my own breasts were mashed and tender from being pulverized by the shifting and rolling of my "milk-filled breasts." My shoulders ached from the cutting of the shoulder straps and my back and neck were in agony from the dragging weight in the bra cups.

The pressure and weight of the bowling ball rolling around back and forth, to and fro, over my

stomach soon exhausted my stomach muscles and the pressure on my bladder set me to going to the bathroom at least twice an hour throughout the day. By the time I returned to the Kappa house to assume my maid's duties, I was exhausted, but my wicked stepsisters were unrelenting. The little mother-to-be performed her final penance, dragging about and feeling she had come to a deep and abiding understanding of womanhood and the travail of the path to motherhood.

Apparently the baby was born sometime during the night for when I reported to Leslie on Saturday morning, I was outfitted in a matronly housedress, overly padded bra to simulate the breasts of a nursing mother, and sent off to campus to my first class, pushing the baby buggy in which reposed my "baby," a doll that would wet itself and require changing several times during the day. By noon when my last class was finished, I had held the baby for four hours, changed it six times, pretended to nurse it at least as many times as I had changed it. Louis had not escaped this penance unscathed. The girls proved to be remarkably progressive, insisting that the daddy should also change the baby, give the bottle and share in the holding and pushing of the carriage.

By tradition, Hell Week ended at sundown on Saturday. The end found Louis and I saying good-bye on the steps of the Kappa house. It wasn't much of a family breakup. We shook hands and "he" went into the Kappa house. I kicked the baby carriage off the porch, pulled the gelatin-filled balloons out of my bra and stuffed them in the mail slot, which ruptured both of them and must have made a fine

mess in the mail box, and went back to the Sig house to find that my male clothes had replaced the finery in the room I shared with Rollie.

And so it all came to an end, thank God. I was finally initiated on Sunday, the next day, at the Sig house, wearing a very masculine tuxedo, in ceremonies which I am sworn not to reveal.

I was so fed up, however, that immediately after the initiation ceremony I put my new fraternity pin on the mantelpiece and walked out forever. Half the campus thought I was out of my mind. The rest understood! I didn't dress again that year, thinking maybe I had lost the joy in it. I would soon learn otherwise.

The remainder of the semester was spent over-compensating for my public spectacle by joining the Mountain Club and clambering up and down the faces of great peaks to demonstrate my macho daring. For a while I didn't miss dressing at all.

Outside the insulated little world of Carleton College, the world seemed once again in ferment. The Great Red Menace loomed on the horizon in Eastern Europe and now in the late spring, some bunch of loonies the world was calling the "North Koreans" had invaded someplace the world was calling "South Korea" and every young man in sight was either joining the Air Force or dashing off to college. They all had the same purpose: To avoid the draft and service in the infantry.

CHAPTER EIGHT: LOVABLE LESLIE

Before I returned home in May, there was a serious family conference about my plans for the summer. I refused to return home to Doris and was finally allowed to move in at Marjorie's. For the first time in my life, I asserted myself and refused, for the most part, all overtures from Aunt Marjorie and Gram to assume my Cynthia persona. Privately, I was beginning to miss my frocks and gowns but after my long stint en femme at school, I didn't really want to get tangled up in more finery. I admit that I did dress on an occasional evening when at home, but mostly retained my appearance as Bob, going out with the guys whenever I wished and escorting the ever-delicious Melanie on every possible occasion. With Melanie, the thrill of the girl actually exceeded the thrill of her clothes. Only a very few girls affected me this way. Melanie was the first. I was about to discover another.

When I returned to school in September, new mountain conquests uppermost in my mind, the last person I expected to run into was Leslie. She had stayed on to do graduate work in zoology. When I saw she was still there, I shied away from her, for obvious reasons. Then one day, she cornered me in the Student Union during lunch.

As we ate hamburgers and sipped Cokes she came directly to the point.

"You really enjoyed it, didn't you?"

"Enjoyed what?" I responded ingenuously.

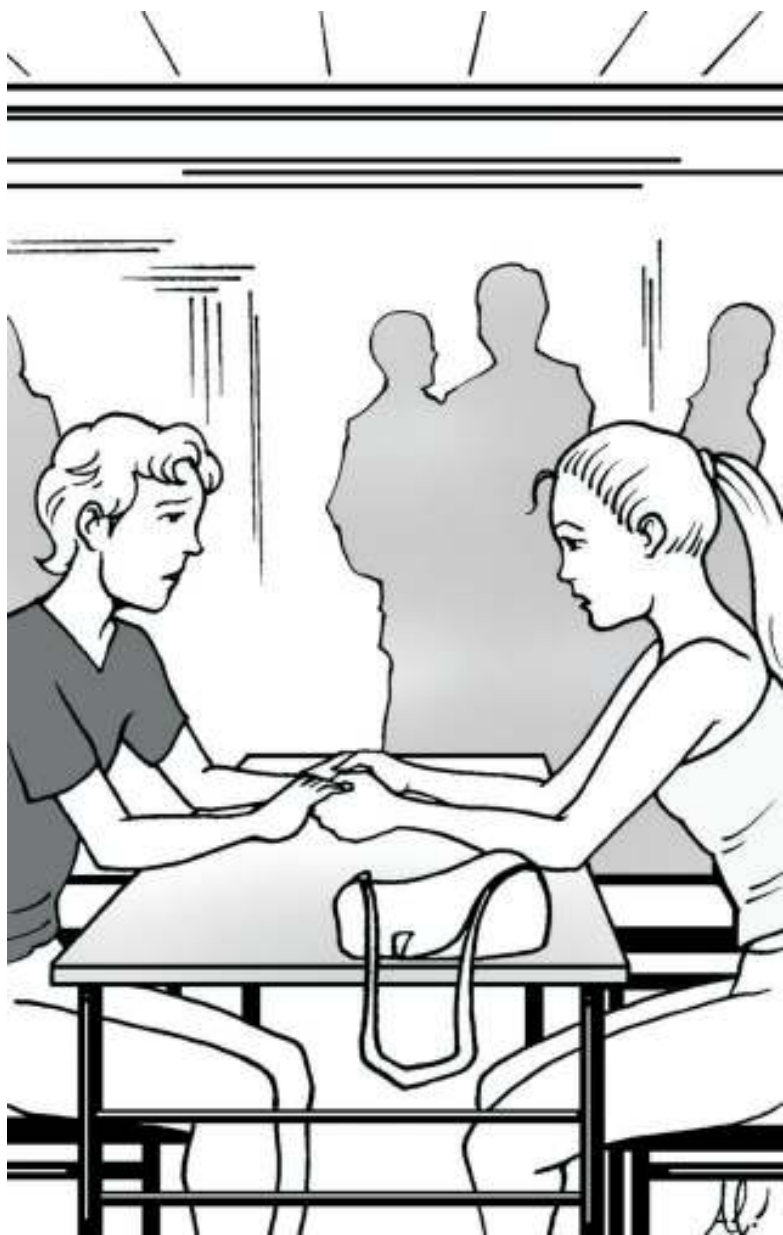
“Oh, cut the crap,” she shot back. “I’m not your pledge mother and you’re no longer a freshman dink in drag. You may not have liked being made to do penance in dresses but you liked wearing them. You weren’t like other frosh guys that we’ve switched.”

My stomach sank. I wondered what trouble faced me now.

“Don’t get me wrong,” Leslie smiled, reaching across the table and holding my hand. “I don’t have a problem with transvestites. I have an uncle who is a regular fashion plate. My little brother doesn’t dress often but when he does, he’s gorgeous. You’re not homosexual either. That’s obvious! Our family has dealt with crossdressing enough to know that most of you guys are very virile in spite of your dressing. I like you, Robert, you know that. You showed a lot of grit and courage when you decided to make your tormentors see they couldn’t get you down. Poor jerks! They had no idea how much you liked it, or how accomplished you are at it.”

A girl had never come on to me with such honesty. I didn’t think girls ever stopped being only cute and coy, and I fell for her on the spot. Gone instantly was the old relationship, replaced by a torrid love affair that would consume my sophomore year.

Leslie had rented the upper floor of one of the fine old mansions on Grand Street. I didn’t know she had money until I saw the elegance and taste with which she had decorated it. This flat became our love nest where we enjoyed cozy evenings by the



fire, emptying a bottle of Moet et Chandon, necking and petting with joy and pleasure.

We were well into the first semester and I had recently undergone the trauma of registering for the draft. The war in Korea raged on but for the time being, I was safe from it with my student deferment. Leslie, my sensitive lover, knowing I was somehow upset about sitting in school while so many of my old friends from prep school days were either being drafted or were enlisting, invited me for an intimate supper of tournedos of Beef Fiossini with asparagus hollandaise and a lovely Montrachet. After the chocolate mousse, accompanied by a Chateau Haut Erion, Leslie led me into the boudoir where, on satin sheets, lay an exquisite, deep gray nightgown of shimmering, silk charmeuse with a bodice of lace and chiffon. An opulent robe of silk velvet, in the same color, with gold filigree on shoulders and bodice, lay beside it. On the floor was a pair of high-heeled mules with rosettes of tulle on the toes. The whole thing was erotically inspiring beyond my imagining. This girl knew how to turn a transvestite on.

“I want to prove to myself that my fine lover, loves even finer in finery,” she said as I ogled the nightwear and her.

My dreams had come true. She had finally offered to let me love her in finery. I knew then that our fates were eternally entwined. The gray charmeuse nightgown was cool and sleek against my skin. Silk, lace and our bodies all blended into a symphony of passion. I learned that night how explosive and transcendent lovemaking can be. For

the rest of the school year, we carried on a love affair that knew no bounds, much of it with me in my finery.

Unfortunately, the school year ended and Leslie, master's degree in hand, announced that she was headed back east to pursue a doctorate. I was devastated. I had thought my dream would continue forever, but Leslie had other plans and, despite our love, I didn't figure in them.

Undaunted, I told my family I wouldn't be home; I was going to Long Island in pursuit of my great love. Leslie tried to fend me off but I wasn't giving her up so easily. My family howled for my return. Leslie advised me to go home. But I wanted her and told her I would follow wherever she went. I would not be deterred.

Eventually she caved in and at the end of May I flew to New York with my precious girl. She planned to spend an idle summer, recovering from the rigors of graduate work, socializing with the country and yacht club set. The problem with my accompanying her was the social implication of her having a summer-long boyfriend as a house guest. It would upset the social balance in the local milieu. The solution was obvious: I debuted on the Long Island scene as Leslie's girlfriend. I was Cindy again, this time by my own choice.

Then, on a moonlit night early in July, there was a family confab on the verandah overlooking Long Island Sound. I sat on the glider with Leslie; she in a delicate, white cotton, halter topped, evening dress and me in an equally casual summer gown of cotton

jersey. Opposite us was her Uncle Claude in an elegant Italian creation of yellow raw silk. Leslie's mother was regal as usual and her brother Miles, who had chosen not to crossdress on this particular evening, was dashing in dark blazer and duck slacks.

The Lockmans had decided to bring to a head the issues I was avoiding. Leslie was entering a three-year doctoral program, I was told, and an amorous entanglement would be a distraction. Leslie told me she loved me and would always be glad to see me but in the Fall she must leave, and so must I. I should have seen this coming. Nothing perfect ever lasts, but even so it was all devastating to me.

We then turned to a frank discussion of my plans. I said that without Leslie there, I had no interest in returning to Coleman College. They knew that if I returned home and was not in school, Doris would stake her claim on me. Knowing I wanted to avoid that, the Lockmans' expressed sympathy and offered to help in whatever way they could.

The matter remained open for a couple of weeks until Leslie, her mother, and I attended a showing of fall couture at the salon of Trina Norman. Mrs. Lockman was a regular customer of the salon and so we found ourselves in Mme. Norman's office, sharing an elegant lunch and discussing the dresses Leslie had selected.

I knew Mme. Norman had not read me and as the luncheon progressed, Leslie mentioned that I was looking for a way to stay in New York for the winter.