

Lakehurst Publications



Cynosure

COLLECTED FICTION

TRANSGENDERED FANTASY



WHAT HAPPENS

when pretty young men are
DRESSED in *girls'* LINGERIE?

***CYNOSURE FICTION:
LACE AND GARTERS!***

Except where otherwise advised, all content published herein is copyright © the authors. Additional material copyright © Kristina Leigh and Cynosure Collected Fiction.

Copyright © Kristina Leigh, 1993, 1996, 1999, 2003, 2015. All rights reserved. All characters appearing in this work are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental. All events portrayed in this work are pure fantasy, existing only in the mind of the author.

Cynosure Illustrated Fiction



<https://kristinaleighblog.wordpress.com/>

Showtime



K.C. waited back stage at the Civic Center, his tummy fluttering with excitement. It was shownight for his dancing school, and everyone was rushing about frantically preparing for their numbers. Very soon, he'd be out on stage dancing before a large audience, the culmination of months of exhausting rehearsals. The long period of training had left him as tense as a tightly strung bow.

The murmuring crowds he'd seen out in the theatre had added considerably to his last minute butterflies. The place was utterly packed with people - parents and kids, teachers and students, old folk from Chamberlain Retirement Village. Hundreds of interested parties, all turned out in their Sunday fineries to cheer and whistle and hoot as the latest generation of Fred

Astaires wove through their steps.

All those faces, all those eyes, turned up towards the stage!

KC took a deep breath, forcing himself to calm down. He really had nothing to worry about. He and his troupe were doing a Broadway style tap-dog number; complicated and tricky at times, but none too difficult after so many hours of repetition. It was pretty silly, really. He knew he'd perform the drill without a hitch, he'd done it at least a thousand times before. But then, he always felt this way on shownight.

Turning away from the curtains, he walked back towards the dressing rooms. Backstage was currently in a state of siege; girls running everywhere in tutus and leotards, boys decked out in vests and tails climbing the wings. A gabble of mothers trailed close behind, fussing and scolding, calling for order above the din.

Well, at least I've got half an hour to practice, KC thought, glancing around in the general chaos, if I can just find a spare corner with enough space to tap a shoe. He considered going outside and using the loading bay, but decided against it. Didn't want miss his curtain call; he'd never hear the end of it. He pushed his way over towards the stairs leading to the changing areas. Everyone seemed to be down here, the dressing rooms were probably empty.

"KC. KC!!!"

"Huh?" KC whirled towards the voice.

It was Ms Deane, his ballet teacher.

Evelyn Deane was a long, streamlined woman in her mid-thirties, willow-slim and lean hiped. Her eyes were always hard and serious, no matter what mood she was in. The woman was wading through a cloud of Lilliputian Kylies, her classical features marked with impatience. KC wandered over to meet her halfway.

"There you are", she said, looking him over with a familiar knitting of the eyebrows, "I've been searching for you everywhere". KC's heart sank roughly six fathoms; he was in trouble. No idea what the problem was, but he knew that tone: honey laced with razor blades.

"I was just looking for a place to -" he stammered in a high, uncertain voice. Ms Deane cut him off with a dismissive wave of her hand.

"You'll have to get changed again. You're on in ten minutes", she said, gesturing for him to follow her up the stairs. He hurried along behind, not quite certain what his teacher had meant. As far as KC knew, he was already in costume: black top, black jeans, and size five work boots. What was going on here?

"I thought I was on in half an hour, Ms Deane", the boy protested fretfully, "I'm in the Tap-dog number".

"Not any more. Toby Macklin will be taking your place".

"What?"

"You're out of the Tap-dogs, KC".

"But *why*?" KC exclaimed, still not understanding. He'd spent what seemed like six years perfecting his routine, and now Ms Deane was tearing it out from under his feet.

"Look, we don't have a lot of time, KC", Ms Deane explained, shooing him up the stairs, "Janey North just twisted her ankle and we need someone to replace her. You'll be taking her place".

"WHAT?!!!"

"You're taking Janey's place".

"Janey North? But she's in -"

Suddenly, KC understood. *Everything*. He gaped up at his teacher, his face a mask of disbelief. Janey North was one of the girls in the Montmartre number, the one everybody had been talking about for the last three months. KC's eyes widened in dawning horror.

"But she's doing the *can-can*, Ms Deane!!" KC wailed, "I can't do that! I'm - you - you'll have to get some one else!!" He knew precisely what she had in mind. Panic rushed in on him like a runaway horse.

"There isn't anybody else, KC. You're the one".

They reached the top of the stairs, dodging a swarm of pink fairies darting out of the girl's dressing room. KC faced his teacher, colour rising to his cheeks in a soft red haze.

"Ms Deane, I CAN'T do it", KC cried, as if in real distress, "I - I just can't!!!" He had to get out of this. Somehow. Anyhow.

"I'm afraid you'll have to".

"But -"

"No buts, KC", she interrupted, vague amusement spicing her tone, "come on, I'll help you get changed". Taking the boy's hand, she led him into the change room, ignoring his shrill objections. The enticing scents of perfume and stage powder wafted through the door.

KC dragged his feet, squirming uncomfortably. They were entering the dreaded GIRL ZONE.

"But, Ms Deane-" KC's voice trembled like an infant's, protesting even as he complied. His heart began turning somersaults as they stepped through the open doorway. A few of the older girls were loitering by near the mirrors, powdering their faces and doing their hair. KC recognized more than half of them from the Modern Dance Class. Tricked out in jet-black leotards and ghostly white makeup, they were the Ravens (like in that movie with Brandon Lee), Ms Deane's elite troupe. KC moaned inwardly. This was getting worse by the second. He groped for an excuse.

"I've never rehearsed with Katrina and the others, Ms Deane, I don't know the routine! I'll make a mess of it, I know I will".

"No, you won't, you'll pick it up in no time. You're one of the best students we have. Now take off those clothes, KC. I'll get your costume".

"Take off my -?" KC sputtered, glancing wildly around the room. The blood virtually froze in his veins: he could image nothing worse than undressing before a roomful of girls. He shot a sideways glance towards the Ravens, all of whom were regarding KC with considerable interest. A huge wave of embarrassment surged through his system, his lower lip tremored in despair.

"Noooooo", he begged, pulse racing in his throat, "please Ms Deane, I don't want to, not in here -"

Unfortunately for KC Evelyn Deane was not a woman to be defied. Transfixing him with an irresistible stare, she leaned in closer, towering over the eleven year-old like a hungry, red-tressed virago. "GET those jeans OFF young man!"

"No, no, *please* Ms Deane", KC pleaded in the hopeless, quailing voice of a first grader, "don't make me do this -"

"NOW", the tall woman growled in a tone that could liquefy steel.

Moaning in shame, KC peeled off his top and began unbuttoning his pants. He bit his lip in childlike dismay, struggling to hold back the whimpers threatening to escape his throat. This *couldn't* be happening! In a matter of moments, the evening had flip-flopped into a nightmare. The girls by the mirror whispered to one another and giggled. KC's blush deepened to the shade of a maraschino cherry.

He wavered on the verge of tears, knowing he had no choice but to follow his teacher's orders. Turning completely away from his tittering little audience, he slipped the jeans slowly down his thighs, revealing his fresh, white briefs to all and sundry. A ripple of tinkling laughter filled the dressing room.

Meanwhile, Ms Deane had stalked over to the costume racks, pulling out a can-can outfit and examining it carefully. KC had a trim figure, a shape as feminine as any of the girls performing in the Montmartre number. He could probably squeeze into a size six with the help of a waist cincher and a suspender belt. Yes, this one would do nicely.

Stepping helplessly out of his jeans, KC stood up in his singlet and underpants, two bright roses standing out on his cheeks. He felt completely disgraced, divested of what little dignity he'd ever known as a boy. Humiliation poured over him like some thick, warm liquid; he shivered with silent outrage - she had done this to him, forced him to parade half-naked before a bunch of giggling eighth graders. Once word got 'round at school next

Monday (as he was certain it would) the teasing would never stop.

Truth be told, KC actually looked like a girl, with his wavy blond hair and his soft, pouting features. He'd always possessed a rather feminine appearance: even now, people often commented on how 'pretty' (and rather effeminate) he was. Narrow shoulders, tiny waist, full lips and a delicate bone structure all contributed to the illusion - which was probably why Ms Deane had chosen him to replace Janey North in the first place (or so he imagined)

He was wearing a snowy white vest and a pair of bikini underpants; the simple, unadorned kind that could be worn by either sex. From a slight distance (or even at extreme close up, for that matter), he could easily have been mistaken for a young girl wandering around in her vest and panties, waiting for the curtain call. His smooth, tapering thighs and slender forearms were almost shining with youth and femininity.

Ms Deane strode up behind him bearing an armload of satin frills. Recognizing the boy's air of soul-consuming angst, she administered a sharp, stinging smack to his pantied bottom (Evelyn Deane had never tolerated self-pity, even in herself). KC spun around with a yelp, hands flying protectively to his firm, round tooshie.

"Oww!" he cried, more embarrassed than ever. The Ravens laughed again, noting his evident discomfort.

"Yes, quite", Ms Deane agreed dryly, placing the costume on the make- up counter, "this is what you'll be wearing, KC. The underwear may look a little complicated, but I'll help you with some of the trickier items."

She spread the ensemble out across the counter like a Las Vegas croupier fan-tailing a deck of cards. The dress was a blaze of garish red satin embellished with florid yellow lace. The halter-style top was studded with rhinestones and oversized frills around the bustline. Brilliant white petticoats had been sewn into the skirt's lining; KC could see the frothy material peeking out from beneath the hemline. The whole outfit looked loud, gaudy and wickedly expensive.

A cold thrill seemed to run the length of his spine as KC surveyed the garish spray of polyester ruffles and gauzy nylon flounces. In a few minutes, he'd be zipped up into this - this *party dress* - and sent out on stage to make a public spectacle of himself. It wasn't fair! Why was she doing this to him?! Why was she making him dress up like a Sissy when there were at least a dozen girls downstairs who could have taken Janey's place?! Hovering at the brink of hysteria, KC looked up at his teacher, his eyes huge and moist and imploring:

"Miss Deane, I can't do it, I just CAN'T!! I - I'm a BOY, not a girl!!!"

2.

Ms Deane leant down, placing her hands on KC's arms, looking sharply into the boy's eyes to gain his attention. There were only seven minutes left.

"Yes, I *know* you're a boy, KC", the ballet instructor told him, speaking in a fast, staccato rhythm, "but it can't be helped. Katrina's class is one girl short, and they need you. You're the only one who can do the steps at short notice. You remember the quadrille I taught you last summer?"

KC nodded, thinking back. It was all still there.

"That's all you have to do, KC. Jenny and Katrina will do the more complicated steps. It won't be hard. All you have to do is hold up your skirt and follow the lead."

KC winced at the image of himself prancing across the stage with his dress over his head (and his undies on display for the whole world, let's not forget that vital piece of information). Ms Deane read his expression.

"Don't worry about it, KC. Nobody's going to recognize you. In a dress and make up, you'll just be another chorus girl", Ms Deane told him, gesturing towards the costume.

"Come on, it's time you climbed into this. Take off your vest".

KC hesitated several seconds, knowing he really had no other choice. There would be absolutely no negotiation here: refusal was never an option where Ms Evelyn Deane was concerned. Surrendering to his fate with an almost imperceptible sob, KC raised his hands and allowed her to peel his singlet off over his head. Gooseflesh played across his ivory tummy.

"Now, the underwear".

(*WHAT?*)

Evelyne shifted her position slightly, then reached out towards KC's hips. *What is she DOING??!* he thought wildly, as Ms Deane hooked her fingers though his plain cotton undies. He opened his mouth to protest, to shriek his opposition, but all he could manage was tearful, defeated groan. The soft fabric slid down his thighs. The room spun around him; KC nearly fainted as the cotton settled gently around his heels. This was literally his worst nightmare.

Eve patted him several times on the bare bottom.

"OK, step into your panties, KC".

The boy flinched at her use of the word 'panties' (*I'm not a girl, I'm NOT*), but followed her instructions without complaint, obediently raising one foot after another. He stared down at himself, feeling small, naked and terribly vulnerable. Evelyne folded the underpants into a prim little triangle and dropped them on a nearby chair, then led KC over to the dressing counter by the hand.

He trailed along on tip-toe, a pretty young boy with platinum hair spiraling halfway down his back. His complexion glowed with a tender rose tint, his girlish figure arched in a graceful arabesque. He endured this final humiliation without objection, wiping his cheeks with his free hand and fixing his gaze on the floor. He didn't even raise his head when the girls started whistling and catcalling from the other side of the room.

"There, that's better", Evelyn said, ignoring the hoots and jeers of the KC Admiration Society across the floor, "now we can get started". Darting a glance towards the clock, Ms Deane began sorting out the costume with swift, practiced fingers. KC watched in mute resignation, aching aware that his pert young bottom was on full exhibition.

He simply couldn't believe he was going through with this - or that he'd given in so easily. It was as if some tiny part of him actually *wanted* to be dolled up like a fairy in a Christmas pageant. He banished the thought with an impatient shake of his head. *I'm NOT a girl*, he thought again, then glanced over towards cancan outfit.

(*Oh*)

KC gasped in surprise as his gaze swept over the virginal lace underthings Ms Deane

was laying out across the make-up counter. A sweet, fluid heat crept through his belly. He hadn't even paused to consider what he'd be wearing underneath - the sight of the dress had driven everything else from his mind. His heartbeat accelerated into overdrive as he realized the extent of his predicament.

"I ... have to wear *this*?" he whispered.

The underwear was nothing short of captivating; flimsy, translucent remnants shimmering with silk and lace. Pristine white panties lay side by side with sheer black stockings and a number of mysterious, complex items KC didn't recognize. Things with bows and clips and hooks he'd never seen before. The very sight of them sent a chill racing through his slim torso. Hot flushes raged through his bloodstream; he tried to glance away, but the lingerie (particularly the panties) seemed to exert an almost hypnotic influence over the boy's bulging eyes.

Ms Deane picked up a long, delicate strip of black lycra between two fingers; an intricate web of lace from which four adjustable straps descended. KC moistened his lips with a flickering pink tongue. His breathing shallowed and quickened. Emotions he couldn't identify flooded his mind as the dance teacher kneeled down to slip the suspender belt around his tiny waist. He had no idea what it was, but inexplicably, he couldn't wait to feel it touch his alabaster flesh.

"Alright", Ms Deane said crisply, "hold still".

Ms Deane fastened the suspender belt into position.

KC felt the hook-and-eye lock into place, dimpling his waistline. French lace teased his skin, long black suspenders dangled lightly against his thighs. Cool, tickling feathers seemed to stroke his tummy as the teacher adjusted the waiststrap, her fingertips brushing his belly button several times. KC trembled with each contact.

"Put your hands on my shoulders", Eve ordered curtly. It was time for the hosiery, and she didn't want the boy tripping over his feet while she slipped the denier up his legs. She worked quickly, smoothing out the sheer ebony nylon and tugging it gently up to mid-thigh. Stretching the elastic to the breaking point, she clipped the suspenders onto the stocking tops, then sat back on her heels to study her handiwork.

Running a hand down KC's inner thighs, Eve marveled at their graceful curvature. KC had exceptional legs for a boy; long, slender and about as smooth as polished marble. Four years tapping the boards had toned up his calves, leaving them sleek and rather coltish. The black stockings were a perfect fit, and served to emphasize their length and beauty.

Probably grow up to be a Barbie doll, she thought ruefully.

Meantime, KC was trembling with apprehension. His head swirled with conflicting emotions: shame, dread, guilt. And *humiliation*. Humiliation, huge and irresistible, roaring through his body like a river bursting its banks. He was nude, stark dripping NAKED, and Ms Deane was dressing him in GIRL'S UNDERWEAR. The image flashed through his consciousness with neon intensity.

But I'm a boy, he thought in silent protest, looking over at the mirror. Very soon, his metamorphosis would be complete. He'd be a she. A pretty little girl with a brilliant smile and a mischievous glint in her eye. He'd be sent out to flash his panties before half of Chamberlain, squealing with excitement as she spun through her number. Petticoats flailing around his chin, he would twirl across the stage in reckless abandon, his suspenders and

stockings on full view of the audience -

Then: Ms Deane's knife-edged voice, snapping her back to reality:

"OK, stop day-dreaming and step into these".

KC looked down, his heart pausing momentarily.

It was time for the *panties*.

They were a pair of high-waisted full-briefs, glistening white nylon edged with exquisite pink tracteries. The bottom was a mass of dainty frills, hundreds of diaphanous lace ruffles which primped and fluttered at a touch. Glaringly bright, they looked pristine, innocent and easily the most feminine thing KC had ever seen.

"Quickly, KC. We don't have much time".

KC slipped into the pants, shimmying his hips as Eve drew them up over his hips. KC zoned in a fugue of disbelief; in a matter of minutes, he'd be dancing the CAN-CAN before an audience of hundreds. And worst of all -

he was wearing frilly underpants.

Eve looked at the clock, ticking blithely away over the door. Five minutes to go, and the girl didn't even have her lipstick on yet. The dress lay in a glittering huddle over the dressing counter, its sequins reflecting the lights above the make-up mirror. They'd never make it down to the stage in time. If it was just the costume, they'd be alright, but there were the gloves, the make-up and the waist-cincher to consider. And then there was the hair ...

I'll have to cancel the Montmartre number, Eve thought (not without regret, considering how hard her troupe had worked on it). Katrina and the others would be disappointed, but there was simply no other option at this point.

Unless ...

Ms Deane called out to the girls by the mirror.

"Could you give us a hand, please?"

Six pair of eyes wheeled towards KC simultaneously, then the Ravens were on their feet, jostling each other aside in adolescent exuberance. All of them understood what their flame-haired instructor wanted, and each wanted a piece of the can-can boy.

"Yes, Ms Deane!!"

Shrill, birdlike voices echoed off the ceiling as the Ravens charged their quarry. Eve stepped aside to allow them a clear view of their prey, and the girls descended on KC in a body. He was swallowed up in a storm of flurrying hands and midnight leotards. Their voices blended incoherently around him.

"What first?"

"The dress! Unzip the back. Here -"

"How do you do this up?"

"Give me a hand, will you?"

"Does this thing hook or clip?"

"Hooks *up*, I think-"

"He's not wearing a bra!"

"He doesn't need one."

"Neither do you".

"Hey, shut *UP!!*"

"Hold still, KC!"

"CUTE!"

"How do you - ?"

"- straight up under the skirt -"

"Cheryl, grab the rouge!"

They raced KC through his transmorphosis in under two minutes, leaving him hot and flushed. One of the girls fiddled with his hair, tying it up with plastic hair clips and a handful of orange feathers. The rest stood back to admire their efforts. All of them went quiet with surprise. Ms Deane stepped back to view him at a distance. She wore the expression of someone utterly astonished despite herself. The dance instructor had known it would work all along, but still ...

"Uncanny", was Ms Deane's only comment.

The girls began to chatter in amazement. They were no longer looking at a feminine boy playing dress-ups. A few seconds ago, he'd been a child of vaguely indeterminate sex, now he'd somehow morphed into a perfectly normal-looking ten year old girl. No, more than normal - *pretty*. Surprisingly pretty.

"You look great, KC", one of the girls said, a remark followed by an instant chorus of approval.

"She doesn't have any garters", someone piped up, "you can't dance the can-can without garters, KC".

"She's got suspenders", said another girl, "that's good enough isn't it?"

"Well, yeah, but -"

And suddenly, they were all over him again, touching and prodding, adjusting his clothes, smoothing his hair, fussing and fidgeting about so much that KC didn't even notice they were starting to use the female pronoun to describe him. It might have gone on forever if Ms Deane hadn't broken them up.

"Okay, that's enough. Time's up, KC. Let's go".

Ushering the can-can boy ahead of her, Ms Deane exited the dressing room with her usual air of self congratulation, leaving the Ravens alone to gossip amongst themselves (and boy, did they have a lot to talk about now). None of them noticed brief exchange that passed between teacher and student as they approached the stairs.

"Here", Eve said, handing KC a pair of hot red garters, "put these on".

3.

Katrina and Jenny and all the others were waiting anxiously downstairs, uncertain as to whether they would still be performing this afternoon. Janey's sprain had come at the worst possible time: they needed at least six to do this number, quadrille or not. They had some idea as to what Ms Deane had in mind, but a flat refusal was more than a possibility. What if KC said no? There was no one else their age who could fill in for Janey - at least no one as good as KC was.

"How could Janey break her ankle at a time like this?" Katrina was demanding of no one in particular, "she's put us right out of the show with her dumb stunts".

"It wasn't a dumb stunt", replied Cindy Bayliss, defending her absent friend, "she was

practicing her handstands and fell over. And it's just a sprain, she didn't break anything, Kat".

"Well, it's still left *us* stranded up the creek, hasn't it? We'll never find someone to replace her in time".

"What about KC? Ms Deane said she was going to -"

"He'll probably say no", Gail Williams cut in pessimistically, "what boy wants to do the can-can? Everyone'd call him a sissy".

"Hey - there she is now", Katrina said, pointing to the stairs.

"Who's that with her?"

They watched narrow eyed as Ms Deane approached with their new can-can girl in tow. A slim, shy looking little girl in a red satin ball-room dress, none of them recognized her at first. It was several seconds before the penny dropped. Debbie Thomas stepped forward, mouth a-gape:

"Kay-See?!"

KC hugged his arms in embarrassment, lowering his face and nodding toward the floor. Gail and Cindy ran forward, gasping with delight (*WOW - is that really YOU, KC? Hey!!*) and KC found himself surrounded for the second time in as many minutes. Katrina and Jenny waded in, touching his hair and checking his petticoats with cries of disbelief - particularly when they saw what he was wearing underneath. KC tried to hold his skirt down against their explorations.

"All right, time to get ready", Ms Deane interrupted, bringing the party to a premature halt, "You're on next, girls. Over by the curtain, let's go".

Eve clapped her hands smartly together. The girls ran lightly across the floor with little screams of excitement, scooping up handfuls of satin and lace. KC followed after, his skirt billowing around him like a satin cloud. No time now for reservations. His heart was hammering in his chest, and his blush had spread all the way to his hairline.

4.

Out in the theatre, the Hostess of Ceremonies was looking over the programme. The Civic Centre was packed to capacity tonight - must have been more than a thousand people filling the rows. As it was, the seats were booked out for nearly a week in advance. Not bad for a small-town dance festival, especially this far out in the suburbs.

Glancing towards the wings, she noted that Evelyn Deane's dance troupe was in place for the next number – six young girls in garish costumes, petticoats hiked up to their thighs. This was going to be quite the spectacle, according to all accounts. Gesturing for silence, she tapped the mike, adjusted her glasses, then introduced the imminent festivities with a hint of spice in her voice:

"Well, the next number will certainly be a treat, ladies and gentlemen. The Spencer District Dancing School is pleased to present a taste of Gay Paree. *Monsieurs et madamoiselles - the French Can-Can!!*"

The auditorium's loudspeakers rung into life as the audience began to applaud. Offenbach's universally familiar overture to *Orpheus in the Underworld* echoed across the floor as the *can-can*es made their entrance, skirts bunched up to their hips. All of the girls

wore prim white garters - all save one; a tall, stunning blond with a saucy grin and legs that could kill at a hundred yards. "She" was wearing a pair of bright red garters just below her stocking tops. Flaring and flashing with every movement, they almost screamed for attention.

And attention was what they got.

KC dominated the performance from the first step. The spotlights followed his spirited dash to centre left. The girls circled the stage, falling into position with their petticoats whipping about their thighs. KC took his place between the two principals - and the Can-Can *really* began.

KC lifted his hemline clear up to his throat, allowing the crowd a spectacular view of his thighs, stockings, and lavishly frilled underpants. Crinolines were raised across the floor, and the girls sprinted forward in a dazzle of shining lingerie. A startled gasp sailed up from the audience. The hall erupted with cheers of satisfaction; howls and wolf whistles split the air.

Moving slightly forward off the others, KC kicked his right leg over her head and brought it down in a circular motion, an action repeated by the remaining five dancers. Inexplicably, KC had taken the lead, and the rest were following his cue. Smiles beamed from face to face, silvery laughter chimed above the music. None of them had realized just how much *fun* this was going to be.

The girls began spinning like tops, their skirts threatening to fly away. Several begin turning cartwheels and handsprings, all calculated to reveal every inch of their lingerie. They worked their way through a complicated series of high-kicks, flip-flops and turn-overs with undisguised enthusiasm.

Seized by an irresistible impulse, KC suddenly doubled over and executed a perfectly balanced handstand. His petticoats immediately fell away, showing off his slender legs and flimsy nylon panties. With his hair brushing the floorboards and skirt reversed over his head, KC couldn't see the audience, but there was no mistaking their roars of appreciation. The walls were almost shaking with the thunder.

Still holding his balance, KC scissored his legs open in mid-air. His suspenders elongated by at least six inches, straining against his upper-thighs. KC giggled in spite of himself - wouldn't it be embarrassing if one of those tense black straps snapped right here in front of the crowd? Then again, he had *plenty* to be embarrassed about as it was.

Being closest to the edge of the stage, KC's knickers were on full display to everybody in the first four rows. Every ribbon, every bow, every dainty scrap of lace was clearly visible. His nebulous black stockings stood out in urgent contrast as KC concluded his aerial splitz. His pulse was thudding like a trip-hammer; he'd never felt so pretty, so *feminine* in his life.

Bringing his legs together once more, KC dropped over onto his feet like a gymnast in dismount. His dress fell back into place, covering his underwear behind a curtain of red satin. Can't have that now, can we? No room for false modesty here! Throwing both hands high over his head, KC launched into a forward handspring. Polyester frills frisked about stockinged calves, cheeky little panties flickered back into view. Another cheer burst up from the audience.

Katrina and Jenny cantered to the front of the stage whipping their petticoats from side

to side, joining KC as he landed on her high heels. The timing seemed almost supernaturally correct: KC never stumbled, never hesitated, never placed a foot wrong. Raising his crinoline up to his shoulders, he flung himself into the dance with renewed vigor, firing highkicks in rapid-fire bursts. Katrina and Jenny followed suite, proudly disclosing their gartered stocking-tops to half the population of Chamberlain. The rest of the girls spun about, tossing their skirts over their heads and exposing their bottoms in a flourish of white lace.

Watching unseen from the wings, Evelyn Deane studied KC's form in subdued fascination. She'd known the boy was talented, but she'd never suspected he was capable of such (all right, let's be truthful here) *virtuosity*. Twenty minutes ago, he'd been on the brink of tears, now he was undergoing some kind of transfiguration. Eve shook her head in awe. She felt as though she were looking at the next Nijinsky ... or maybe Fontaine, depending on the costume.

Out on stage, the troupe had whirled into its final configuration. Kicking up their stilettos in a welter of lace and garters, they offered the crowd a final glimpse of their firm young calves, their tightly strung suspenders, their girlish, naughty smiles.

What am I DOING?! KC asked himself, lifting his left sole into a tendon-straining *pat en l'air*. What was he doing here, exhibiting his PANTIES to like a million people at once?! Panties were sacrosanct; an unmentionable secret to be kept hidden beneath layers and layers of silk and satin. Except, of course, while he was dancing the Can-Can.

And what could be more exhilarating than *that*?

Reaching the grand finale, the girls turned in a line, bent over and presented their panty-clad bottoms to the audience. Skirts flipped inside out in a wave flowing left to right: *one two three four five SIX!!* Pert young bottie-cheeks were thrust out in a halo of foaming crinolines, sussie-straps stretched to their limits, glossy red pumps clacked together with the sound of breaking ice. Frilly round buttocks clenched and jostled for centre stage, their lush curves bulging through their gossamer sheaths.

KC peeked out from below her layered underskirt, looking out towards the theatre. The audience had exploded into a standing ovation: row after row of spectators rose their feet, clapping their palms and yowling their congratulations, their bravos, their encores. The boards beneath the girls' feet started vibrating in resonance as the tumult continued to climb.

"KC - *that* was fantastic!!" Katrina Waylan whispered, her face the colour of a wild strawberry.

"Yeah", Jenny Griffiths agreed with an admiring giggle, "you're the *bomb*, KC!!"

The motion was carried by all present; KC certainly *was* the bomb. All six girls wriggled their fannies in a unanimous declaration of triumph. Faultlessly white panties glared beneath blazing spotlights. Out beyond orchestra pit, the cheering swelled towards a crescendo. Encore, Encore, ENCORE!!

Now I'm really blushing, KC thought, shyly regarding her new friends with a touching mixture of affection and gratitude.

And with that, the curtain came down on the Montmartre number. Purple Velvet swept the stage, bringing an end to the evening's festivities. The footlights dimmed, the applause began to fade. The cancan was over.

But for KC, the show was only just *beginning*.

Lace and Garters!



Misha Waverley adjusted his beret as he made his way along Lyndhurst Road. It was late in May and the wind carried a promise of snow. The breeze was particularly brisk down here in the middle of town, where the office blocks cast their long morning shadows. Misha glanced at his watch; his appointment was for half-ten, which left him five minutes to find the place he was looking for. He hastened his pace a little, his tangled blond hair whisking out in the Autumn mistral.

He saw the sign as he crossed the intersection at Mansfield Avenue: a large orange marquee reading LACE & GARTERS in brilliant mauve letters. Setting off from the sidewalk, he scanned both sides of the crossing, anxiety stamped on his features. If anyone from school saw him sneaking into a dancewear store he'd spend the rest of his life eating lunch with the geek brigade.

Maybe worse.

Having ascertained that the street wasn't crawling with informants from the nerd squad, Misha strolled across the intersection and made his way to the store's front entrance. It was essential to look calm, relaxed - the least sign of guilt would expose him in a second. It had taken all of his courage to come this far, and even now he wondered if he'd have the nerve to go through with his plan.

He paused outside the shopfront's display window, struggling to control his galloping heartbeat. The window bore a fifties-style illustration of a young woman twirling in a ballroom dress, skirts flying up around her waist. The logo read: LACE & GARTERS!! SPECIALISTS IN COUNTRY, LINE AND BALLROOM DANCEWEAR. Beneath that, in smaller lettering; Custom fittings available on request.

Gazing in through the plate glass, Misha made out rack upon rack of glittering costumes; gowns, leggings, tutus, leotards - and petticoats. Hundreds of them by the look of things. The sight did little to sooth his racing pulse, although it did steel his resolve somewhat. Here he was, wavering on the footpath while the object of his desire was virtually within arm's reach. All he had to do was open the door and step inside.

A small silver bell rang over Misha's head as he walked into the store. He hesitated two paces in, staring around in awed silence. A gust of warm air caressed his face with insubstantial fingers; he felt as if he'd slipped into some glittering fantasyland. The store

was literally dripping with satin; dresses and skirts hung in rows stretching off to infinity. Sequins sparkled like tiny clustered diamonds, black velvet rippled in luxuriant folds everywhere he looked. His face was literally glowing with child-like wonder.

"May I help you?"

Misha glanced around with a start. For a moment he couldn't locate the owner of the voice; then he saw a tallish woman looking over a rack of body stockings. She had dark blue eyes and curly brown hair tied back in a short ponytail. Misha estimated her age to be maybe forty. She stood regarding him with a sharp, business-like expression.

"Oh, hi ..." the boy replied, a little hesitantly, "I'm Michelle Waverley, I called you last Wednesday. I - I have an appointment at ten-thirty".

He cast a nervous eye around the shop, noticing for the first time there were close to a dozen customers wandering between the rows. Most of them were female, and all of them seemed to be looking at him. An identical pair of Mariah Careys were standing in the hosiery section, diligently comparing stockings whilst casting him suspicious glances. Misha tried to ignore them, focusing on what the tall woman was saying.

"Appointment?" she repeated, stepping out from behind the clothes rack. She was wearing black slacks and a loose yellow t-shirt. Her name tag read HI, I'M JUDY. A tape measure hung carelessly about her neck. She folded her arms neatly over her ample breasts, her face engraved with scepticism (or so he imagined).

"Yes - an appointment," Misha answered uncomfortably, "for a costume fitting".

The woman's features visibly softened.

"Oh - right," she said brightly, "you're the girl who called a few days ago. You're in a musical ... *Calamity Jane* or something?"

Misha began to relax.

"Yes, that's right. I'm in the chorus."

That was his story, his rationale for visiting a costumier specializing in girls' dance wear. He had grappled with the problem for weeks, ever since his latest transvestic obsession had emerged. Obsession being the operative word in this case; an inexplicable desire to own a ballroom crinoline had seized him over a month ago. Irresistible as well as inexplicable, to be precise. It had tortured his evenings, invading his dreams and robbing him of sleep for nights on end until a solution had finally occurred to him. It seemed to make perfect sense at the time, and appeared to be working now.

"In the chorus?" Judy asked, "well, let's see what we can do for you." Indicating the direction with a wave of her hand, she led him through an aisle of spandex tights, then called out to the back of the show room: "Donna! That girl's here, the one from Chamberlain Musical Society. The one we talked about."

"Who?!" A peppery, somewhat crusty voice, tinged with mild annoyance.

"The one who's playing the dance hall girl. She's come in for a fitting."

"Oh, right."

Misha followed quietly, almost squirming with embarrassment. *The one who's playing the dance hall girl.* She'd virtually shouted it at the top of her lungs. Everyone in the store was staring at him now, he could feel their eyes drilling into his shoulder-blades. He kept his face to the floor, hoping to conceal the rosy flush invading his cheeks.

Still, he really had no reason to hide his face in shame. His charade was going according

to plan. No one in the store suspected he was actually male.

At thirteen, Misha Waverley had the face and figure of an adolescent girl, his natural beauty enhanced by a cascade of thick golden hair. As a child, he'd wondered if he'd somehow been born in the wrong body, sometimes believing that there was a pretty young girl locked deep inside him. In recent weeks, this female persona seemed to have taken on a life of her own, almost compelling him to undertake this risky little enterprise.

Amazingly enough, the masquerade was working fine, despite his earlier misgivings. All he'd needed was a dab of make-up and a pair of low-hipped jeans.

"Over here," Judy said, taking him through to a traditional oaken counter at the back of the show room. A thin, bird-like woman sat behind the cash register, her face marked with the lines of perpetual irritation. She was reading a *Silhouette* romance, and like Judy, she carried a measuring tape around her neck.

All similarity ended there, however. Her tag read MRS D. ADDLER. No customer-friendly 'Hi, I'm Donna' for this blue-rinse matriarch: call me Missus, or get the heck out of my shop. She looked up as Misha approached the counter, scrutinizing him through a pair of expensive, gold-rimmed glasses.

"So, you're playing a saloon girl in *Calamity Jane*, then?" she asked rather sourly, adopting the tone of a woman who expected the worse of everyone she met.

"Yes, Ma'am," Misha replied automatically. His parents had always taught him to respect his elders, regardless of how they approached him ('courtesy costs you nothing', was one of his mother's favourite sayings, although he frequently doubted the veracity of this particular quotation). Mrs D. Addler shot her partner a sidelong glance, eyebrows raised.

"You hear that? 'Yes, Ma'am'. Pretty *and* polite. I'm impressed."

"Sign of good breeding," Judy remarked airily.

"Yes, I'm sure," Donna replied, narrowing her eyes to a razor-edged squint. Leaning over the counter-top, she studied the boy's slim waist; his small, pouty mouth; his innocent, doll-like features. Misha shifted nervously beneath that protracted, unblinking gaze. What was she staring at? Had she penetrated his disguise? He fought down a tide of rising panic, knowing that a clear head was essential to maintaining his cover.

"How *old* are you?" the older woman finally asked.

"Thir - thirteen, ma'am."

"A little young to be dressed like *that*, aren't you?" she demanded testily.

Misha almost fainted with relief. The old biddy was referring to his choice of clothing: a skimpy purple tank top that barely reached past his ribs; a pair of faded blue Levis with the top button undone and the zipper split open to reveal his lacy pink underpants. His pert young belly-button was clearly visible, poking out above the denim rim of his jeans.

"Oh, this is just the Brittany Spears look," Misha explained in his high sing-song voice, striking an unconscious pose. "Everybody's dressing like this." Even the boys, he added silently. Mrs D. Addler remained singularly unimpressed by this disclosure.

"Yeah? Well, any daughter of mine who went out dressed like that wouldn't sit down for a week". End of conversation. Pushing her glasses back up her nose, Mrs A went back to her *Silhouette*, dismissing Misha from her thoughts. He bit his lip, wondering if he'd made the mistake of a lifetime, coming down here dressed as a girl.

"Don't mind her," Judy said, placing a light hand on Misha's shoulder, "she's just angry

because somebody dropped a house on her sister. Come on, let's get you started. I think we've got what you're looking for over here. We supplied costumes for the Chamberlain Arts Festival, did I tell you that? Anyway, there was a wild west routine in that one: *Okalahoma*, if I remember correctly"

She ushered him away from the counter, prattling on like a country housewife deprived of company. Misha remembered to breath again, realizing that neither of these women were questioning his motives. They'd swallowed his story, accepted him as a girl. His secret was safe. All the same, his complexion continued to darken. At the end of the day, he was still a teenaged boy, no matter how feminine he may have looked. He was taking an enormous chance. If anyone here discovered he *wasn't* actually female, he'd be -

".... with your underwear."

(ohuh?)

Judy's words sliced through Misha's reveries like a pizza knife through mozzarella. What did she just say? Something about taking off his jeans and t-shirt? No, that couldn't have been right. He'd only come in to have his measurements taken, he didn't need to undress for that. Granted, he wanted to buy some of those petticoats he'd seen through the window, but he didn't need to -

Misha suddenly noticed where his guide was leading him.

(wha -?)

A prickling of goose-flesh thrilled down Misha's naked arms as they approached the accessories display. His warm pink blush suddenly flared a torrid crimson; a tremor ran through his thighs. Excitement filled his tummy like some hot, sweet liqueur. All thought of being discovered was driven instantly from his mind. He had something else to fixate on now, something which froze the breath in his lungs.

She was taking him to the Lingerie Stand.

2.

Misha almost paused in mid-step, his eyes snapping forward in a classic double take. A long display marked ACCESSORIES took up an entire wall to the left of the counter. Most of it was tawdry window-dressing: feather boas, tiaras, sequined gloves, plastic derbies and similar paraphernalia. Cheap, gaudy trinkets that harkened back to the glory days of vaudeville.

Next to this was a plain, white sign containing a single word: LINGERIE.

Misha halted before the stand, surveying the merchandise in gape-mouthed astonishment. Mounted in pride of place was a flurry of shining, satin panties. Sleek, gossamer g-strings with floral insets; outrageously ruffled sissy-pants; skimpy red thongs with naughty black trimmings around the waistband. Pants of every size, description and colour: fresh white cottontails, pale blue bikinis, glistening lycra full briefs. This was something totally unexpected, a delicious shock which raised his temperature to feverish heights. He hadn't realized they stocked underwear.

No, he immediately corrected himself, *not underwear. Lingerie.*

Yes, Lingerie: demure, lacy underthings that clung to the body like a second skin. Exotic, lavish foundation garments that teased the flesh with a silken, feather-light touch. Wickedly

seductive garter belts with adjustable suspenders, chic black stockings with seams running down the back. Magical, figure-hugging corsets with a thousand tiny hooks. Basques, brassieres and torsolettes so complicated they took half a day to strap yourself into.

Half-mesmerized, Misha barely felt Judy's fingers on his elbow.

"Michelle? *Michelle?*"

"Yes ...?"

"You'll be dancing the *can-can*, won't you?"

Misha fell speechless with embarrassment. He hadn't counted on this, hadn't stopped to consider the kind of questions he'd be asked. He'd never actually seen Calamity Jane, had no idea what it was about, beyond being set in the Old West. Why was this so goddamned complicated? He'd come in for was a fitting, not a lecture in theatrical history. What was he going to say now?

"Uhm ... yes, there's a musical number I have to ...", he stammered after an agonising five second delay. He tried to finish the sentence but discovered the words had fled into some endless, grey limbo.

"Well, then," Judy said brightly, "the first thing we have to think about are your *panties*".

Misha opened his mouth to say something, but nothing came to mind. Everything was happening too fast, he didn't have enough time to think. Worse still, their conversation was attracting a great deal of undue interest. Over by the hosiery display, the Mariah Carey clones were offering him their undivided attention. At least four other customers were drifting in his general direction, necks craning for a better view of the proceedings. Several more had started creeping out of the woodwork, attracted by some obscure form of magnetism unknown to science (or maybe by the words 'can-can' and 'panties'). He had to put an end to this discussion. Immediately.

"Well, I don't really think - "

Unfortunately for Misha, Judy Ryan could talk through a mouthful of wet concrete once she had a sale in her sights. She steam-rolled over the boy's objections without missing a beat:

"Now - you'll need something sassy and saucy, like they used to wear in those old westerns. You know; long dresses with hoop skirts and about a thousand petticoats underneath? Every movie back in those days had a bar room scene, and the girls always wore long black gloves and orange feathers in their hair. We've got some of those too, over in the accessories department. Anyway, you'll also need some garters and stockings - can't dance the can-can without stockings - but right now, we'd better start with *these* ."

Misha's eyes bulged with surprise.

Judy held up a pair of white satin panties. Sheer, gossamer full-briefs, they were adorned with flimsy lace ruffles along the sides and bottom. The front was embroidered with delicate floral patterns and edged with a dainty pink frill. They were breathtakingly feminine, as fragile and insubstantial as a dream. Misha shook his head slowly, covering his mouth in amazement. He'd never known such things existed, even in the Victoria's Secret catalogue.

"Well? What do you think?" Judy asked.

"They're beautiful", Misha replied in hushed tones.

"Yes, they are rather pretty, aren't they? Original design too, did you know that? One of a

kind, like most of the stuff we sell here. Mind you, I can't take the credit for these - Donna takes care of all the lingerie orders, lingerie's her specialty; she's had work in the *Pret a Porter*; would you believe it? All that was years ago, of course, but she's never quite lost the touch. Anyhow, time is money, and we haven't got all morning, so if you'd like to strip down to your *bra* and *pants*, we'll get started -"

(?????)

"What? I'm sorry -?" Misha interrupted, her eyes widening in surprise.

"Your fitting," Judy answered conversationally, "climb out of those things and I'll take your measurements". Laying the panties down on the display shelf, she reached out and unzipped Misha's Levis. Too stunned to react, he could only stare in disbelief as Judy lowered the faded denim over his hips. Shimmering nylon panties were revealed, inch by teasing inch.

(*WHAT IS SHE DOING??!!*)

Voicing a little shriek, Misha stepped away from the Mad Seamstress, snatching at his jeans with both hands. He tottered back in shock, hi-cut pink briefs on full view. A small group of spectators had gravitated to the Lingerie stand, chattering softly amongst themselves and commenting on Misha's choice of underwear. The two Mariahs stood together, trading backhand comments in low, whispering tones. Even Old Mrs Addler had abandoned her novel and sat watching from behind the cash register, scowling like a barn-owl.

"What's the matter?" Judy asked, genuinely bewildered.

"I ... you ... I can't ..." Misha sputtered, cheeks burning like passionfire roses, "why ... why do I have to get *undressed*?"

"So I can take your measurements, of course."

"But -" the boy hesitated, completely lost for words. What was going on here? Is this what a fitting actually involved? Abject humiliation before a crowd of total strangers?

"Oh, what are you worried about?" Judith laughed, zeroing in like a barracuda, "we're all girls here."

Misha shrank back in alarm, raising his hands as if to ward off a blow. His mind was groping for an escape route, some excuse, anything to avoid this public shaming. Everybody in the store had converged to witness the morning's entertainment; there must have been close to twenty people gathered 'round him now.

"Wait!" Misha cried out desperately, "I - I don't *WANT* to take my clothes off out here!! I ... I'm *shy*."

A ripple of laughter followed this breathless admission. The tension went out of the room; the Mariah clones started giggling behind small, lacquered fingertips. Misha almost collapsed with relief. Disaster had been averted by microseconds - at least for the time being. He glanced longingly towards the door, calculating his chances of making it onto the street before Baracuda Judy could tear his clothes off.

"Shy?" Judy chortled, bubbling with condescension "Why didn't you say so? We have changing booths right over there. Look - tell you what. Take these (she handed Misha the frilled pants and an underwire bustier) and put them on in that little room. When you've gotten changed, we'll finish taking your measurements out here".

"Out here? In front of all these people?" Misha gasped, seeing himself parading around

half-naked with the entire room looking on. "Couldn't we - couldn't we do the fitting in there?"

"No, the changing booths are too small for that - we'll be bumping around like two elephants in a volkswagon. Not saying you look like an elephant, of course; no, far from it, you have a lovely figure for your age, but you know what I mean. Look, you might have trouble with the bustier, you'd need to be a contortionist to do up all those clips at the back, so maybe I'd better come in and give you a hand -"

That was enough for Misha.

"NO!!" He exclaimed in a shrill, piping voice, "no, I'll be fine, honestly. I'll call you if I need any help." Hugging the lingerie to his chest, he spun on his heel and bolted for the change rooms. His firm, ripe bottom turned in tight little circles as he scampered past the two Mariahs. The crowd parted with a smattering of good-natured applause. This was one show nobody was going to miss.

"What a strange girl", Judy said to no one in particular, adding as an after-thought: "cute butt, though."

The resulting burst of humour chased Misha into the cubicle.

3.

Closing the pinewood door behind him, Misha took off his beret and scrutinized his image in the mirror. Under normal circumstances, he would have found his reflection quite pleasing. Even without the make-up, his high cheekbones and sensuous lips gave Misha a youthful, girlish appearance. His supple physique was both lush and slender, poised at the very cusp of adolescence. In many respects, it had been a blessing, allowing him to live out his deepest fantasies (at least in private). But right now, trapped in a changing booth with The Mad Seamstress patrolling the show-room, Misha couldn't conceive of a worse nightmare.

What had he gotten himself into? This was the worst mistake of his life!! What had he been thinking, waltzing in here like Jennifer Lopez on a buying spree? He must've been crazy, delusional, totally off the rails. How had everything gotten out of hand so quickly? All he'd wanted to do was buy a couple of crinolines. Now he had to go back into the showroom wearing nothing but his underwear (no: *lingerie*, he reminded himself again, he didn't come here to buy underwear), while half the female population of Chamberlain stood by laughing up their sleeves.

Except they wouldn't be doing that, would they? Not exactly.

Sure, they might chuckle to one another behind their palms, but it would all be in the spirit of good, clean fun. Because as far as they were concerned, Misha was a girl. None of them knew any differently, none of them suspected Michelle Waverley was anything other than a thirteen year old dance student (which was close to the truth anyway; Misha had been treading the boards since his seventh birthday).

He looked down at the flimsy white remnants in his hands. He really had no other choice: if he tried to back out now, they'd almost certainly start asking questions. And that could land him in a world of trouble (forget lunch with the geek brigade; there were probably laws against what he was doing, although he hadn't considered that until now). No, there

was only one way out of this cross-gendered labyrinth.

Misha took a long, calming breath, clearing his mind for the task ahead. He had to complete the performance. No, that was wrong. He couldn't simply act like a woman. He had to BE a woman, every word, every gesture, every thought. If there really was a Michelle hidden within his subconscious (as he'd imagined since his sixth birthday) - he had to allow her to take over. Completely.

Laying the lingerie aside (there was a hook with a clothes hanger set into the door), he began to disrobe, peeling off his top in a single lithe movement. His hair spilled over his shoulders in a blond waterfall, cascading down to the small of his back. His pulse lurched into overdrive; a gentle, carmine radiance permeated his neck and shoulders. Cool air whickered around him like the breath of winter. A delicious shiver swept the length of his spine.

Dropping the spandex tube to the floor, he lent down to unbutton his jeans. They were blue stretch Levis, wide-hipped and thin-waisted (the only kind he could wear, considering his womanly shape), a birthday present from his mother. He worked them slowly down his tapering thighs, enjoying the way his lace-edged panties came into view.

There was a sequence to removing his clothing, a protocol he had to follow. It made his periodic, ritual stripteases a thousand times more sensual (though he couldn't have explained why). Perhaps it was the gradual exposing of the panties, the knowledge that his dainty nylon secrets were being revealed. His belly was clenching with anticipation, his breathing shallowed. Wriggling his bottom from side to side, he slid the Levis over his knees, dropping them to the floor.

And as Misha stepped out of his jeans, everything changed.

4.

Michelle Waverley straightened up, flicking her golden tresses away from her forehead, and appraised herself in the mirror. Misha was gone, overwhelmed by rising flood of shame, guilt and sexual delight. Trembling with arousal, she ran her palms over her nude, ivory torso, caressing her waist and belly. Her mouth parted in a gasping, rapturous sigh.

(yessssssssssssssss)

Turning sideways, she studied the lean columns of her legs, the luscious arabesque of her thighs. Her sleek pink underpants glistened like liquid silver. The sight of them sent a wave of pleasure surging through her bloodstream. They were plain, high-cut briefs, but she'd always loved the smooth touch of nylon against her skin.

Of course, she had something far more exotic near at hand, something she'd been sent in to try on. Something that made her weak at the knees and brought a rosy flush to her cheeks. Her head swum with embarrassment. In a few minutes, she'd be called out to model her flimsies in the showroom - and yet she couldn't wait to show them off. Keeping her legs completely straight, Michelle took her pants down to her ankles.

Flicking the remnant aside with a careless gesture, she stood up, gleaming like an alabaster figurine. Sweet, liquid heat flowed through her tummy. Her entire sensory system shuddered at the brink of overload. Critical mass had been achieved, ecstasy was only inches away. The transition was finally upon her.

What am I doing? she thought as she took the frilly satin panties down from the hanger. She felt immersed in a sea of humiliation. Because cross-dressing was a kind of torture; a sultry, inescapable torment that always left her breathless with joy, agony and bliss. It was both surrender and a betrayal, triumph and defeat. No matter how much she enjoyed this, there would also be that sense of inner conflict, the legacy of her divided personality.

She hesitated no more than a second. The allure, the compulsion was too powerful to resist, even if she'd wanted to. Misha's voice was a tiny, remote pleading in the back of her mind, a petty distraction to be ignored and forgotten. This was her true nature, and she had no intention of denying it.

Bending double from the hips, Michelle stepped carefully into the sissy-pants and drew them slowly up her calves, luxuriating in the torrent of emotions they released. Her eyelids fluttered as the glossy satin brushed her inner-thighs; her moist, pink tongue flickered across her full, red lips. The tension was unbearable. Every nerve in her body was screaming with hair-trigger passion.

(oh GOD!)

She slipped the panties into place and looked back into the mirror. Placing her weight on one leg, she smoothed out the fabric with infinite patience. Posing in her sheer, platinum underpants, she was a stunningly beautiful girl, hovering at the threshold of womanhood. Her tawny limbs gleamed with the freshness of youth, the crimson petals of her mouth sulked like a spoiled child's.

Having concluded the panty adjustment ceremony to her satisfaction (the wide frills exaggerated her natural curvature, give her a rounded, classical outline), Michelle took the bustier off the hanger and inspected it at close range. Heartbreakingly lovely, it was a complex web of French lace and diaphanous lycra. Detachable shoulder-straps gave it an exotic, decadent appearance; wispy floral trimmings suggested innocence and purity. The underwire cups were tiny, but that didn't matter - her breasts were little more than token buds on a blossoming adolescent flower.

Smiling impishly, Michelle slipped her arms through the shoulder-straps and reached around to fasten the restraints. Easier said than done, of course. As Ms Judy had warned her, there were at least two dozen hooks lining the back of the corset-like garment. She managed to clip the first three or four through blind luck, but the remaining twenty evaded her best efforts. Well, that shouldn't be a problem, Michelle told herself. Help was close to hand, after all.

Almost precisely on cue, the Mad Seamstress rapped on the door.

"Michelle? Michelle, are you all right in there?"

"Yes, I'm OK," she answered, facing the mirror, "I'm having a little trouble with the bra."

"Yes, I thought so," Judy hollered, as if she thought her customer had gone deaf for no apparent reason, "would you like me to come in and give you a hand?"

"Yes, could you please?" Michelle replied without hesitation. A mischievous smile played across her features. She could hear her Otherself wailing at the back of her mind, groaning in protest over this violation of his masculine dignity. This deliberate violation! Misha didn't want Barracuda Judy strapping him into a corset; the very idea had him quivering in outrage. Well, they'd gone too far to stop now. The die was cast, so to speak.

Sorry, Misha, she thought to her Otherself, but this is what you wanted.

The door opened. Judy stepped inside, hands fluttering around like a pair of frightened doves. Outside, a cluster of inquisitive faces craned forward, eager for a peek inside the cubicle. Must have been close to thirty by now, Michelle could see them parroting about in the mirror. She felt Judy's fingertips spidering up her back, hooking the bustier faster than she could have pulled a zipper.

"You'll look utterly *ravishing* in this," Judy gushed, slotting the last clip into place, "once we get you into some stockings and a cinch-belt, you'll be the prettiest dancer on the stage. They'll be lining up to see your underwear!!"

A naughty giggle escaped Michelle's lips.

I sure hope so.

5.

"Mommy, why is that girl standing there in her *underpants*?"

Sally Rainford was six years old. She lived in Chamberlain Heights with her Mommy (Gwen) and her older sister (Andrea). Like most girls her age, Sally liked Barbie dolls, Pokemon cards, Gummy Bears and dancing. In fact, she liked dancing so much that she had recently started lessons at the Spencer District Academy, where her teacher, Ms Evelyn Deane, taught her the Bunny Hop, the Butterfly, The Seven Steps, and lots of other neat and interesting things. That was why her Mommy had brought her to Lace & Garters Dancewear Shop ("What are *garters*?" Sally had asked, but Gwen Rainford had only smiled), so they could pick out a tutu for the dance recital next month.

Being somewhat bright for her age, Sally understood there was a time and place for everything, and knew that women didn't take their clothes off in the middle of a busy store. Which was why she'd been so surprised when The Big Girl had emerged from the changing booth wearing nothing but her bra and panties. It was OK to walk around the house in your undies (she and Andrea had plenty of experience doing that), but Big Girls weren't supposed to show off their knickers in public. *Everyone* knew that.

A good-natured burst of laughter followed Sally's ingenuous inquiry; even The Big Girl seemed amused by the question (although her face darkened to the colour of a wild strawberry). Sally looked round, wondering if she'd said THE WRONG THING again, as she so often did these days. Mommy usually gave her The Frown when she said THE WRONG THING (which was how she thought of it: in capitals and italics). Sally had been trying extra hard to watch her P's and Q's, but sometimes she just couldn't help herself: the words just blurted out with a life of their own.

Fortunately, Mommy didn't seem too upset with her this time.

"She's a dancer, sweet-heart, just like you. She's come in for a fitting."

"A what?"

"A fitting. She's being measured up for a costume."

"She's really pretty," the little girl commented artlessly.

"Yes, she is," Mommy agreed.

The object of Sally's attention was standing on a small platform in the centre of the showroom, blushing to the hairline. Hands on hips, right foot slightly extended, Michelle modelled her panties before an audience of close to fifty. Her impromptu striptease was

drawing people in off the sidewalk, the steady trickle of shoppers was building into a stream. Word was spreading quickly up Lyndhurst Road; Lace & Garters Dancewear was putting on a demonstration, a beautiful teenaged girl was being measured in her underwear.

Hot flushes were coursing through Michelle's bloodstream, her belly was knotting with excitement. The display window had been cleared of merchandise to allow a clear view from the street, and she felt like the star attraction in a lingerie parade. Waves of helpless embarrassment washed over her like a rising deluge. And why not? She was wearing nothing but a halter bra and a pair of frilly white panties.

"Raise your arms", Mrs Addler instructed in gravel tones. She was taking the girl's measurements and had no time for airs, graces or social niceties. Michelle lifted her hands obediently, grinning playfully down at the crowd. With her slim legs on display and a mischievous twinkle in her eye, she looked like a 1940s pin-up queen. Several older gentlemen whistled in mock lechery, prompting another round of light-hearted chuckles.

Mrs Addler impaled them with a single, penetrating glare. Instantaneous silence descended over the room.

Muttering something through a mouthful of pins, Donna looped the tape around Michelle's flat stomach. The old woman clicked her tongue like a disapproving grandmother, then turned to the Mad Seamstress: "She'll take a size eight garter belt with nine inch suspenders. Make allowances for the crinoline".

"Check", Judy replied, who was kneeling down on the platform, measuring the girl's inside leg. "Midnight talls, 32 denier. Seamed." She looked up at Michelle, dropping her a conspiratorial wink "Legs all the way up to your throat, kiddo. Dunno if we've got anything in stock that'll fit you. Make do with what we have, I guess. Still, good thing you've overcome your jitters, or you'd still be locked in the dressing room."

Michelle tittered in spite of herself. She hadn't overcome her jitters; that was the whole point. She was nearly swooning with guilty exhilaration. Her pulse was thundering in her ears, gooseflesh buzzed across her torso like a static charge. Her heartbeat had quickened to a frenzied gallop. She'd never imagined revealing her underthings would be so ... electrifying.

"OK, hold still, Missy", Judy told her, "time for the cincher."

Michelle glanced down and gasped with delight.

The 'cincher' was a gorgeous, ribbed garter-belt, the kind with adjustable suspenders and little white bows on the clasps. Transparent lace roses decorated the central waist-strap; the sides were reinforced with taut lycra panels. Unlike the slimline versions Michelle was familiar with, this was a genuine garter-belt, designed to flatten the tummy and contain the figure.

"All right, breath in - this is going to pinch a bit", Judy warned her.

Michelle held her breath as the cincher was clipped around her waist. The merest touch of lace was enough to blow her circuits. Huge, bluish stars detonated in front of her - for one infinite second, Michelle feared she was going to explode with desire. The room spun around her momentarily, morphing into a vortex of neon lights and colours.

Can't take much more of this, she thought, knowing that her yearnings could never be fully gratified.

"Yep - a perfect size eight." Judy remarked, nodding with satisfaction. The spectators

murmured in admiration, whispering amongst themselves. Even the Mariah clones were suitably impressed with what they saw. The girl on the platform smiled modestly and placed a coy hand over her panties (although her palm was too small to really hide anything). The garter-belt was stretched tight about her middle, sinking into the soft pad of her abdomen. Her waist seemed impossibly tiny. Michelle looked achingly feminine.

"Works for me", Donna remarked neutrally (and coming as close to a compliment as she ever got), "but we ain't finished yet. You got those stockings, Judith?"

"Right here".

There are very few things as fascinating as the sight of a young woman slipping into a pair of black, seamed stockings. An expectant hush fell over the store as Michelle drew the sheer ebony hose up her tapering thigh. The effect was enthralling, spellbinding. Men stared in slack-jawed amazement, women stood motionless, their features inscribed with mute reverence.

Michelle sighed as she attached the stockings to her straining white garters. Exuding a light, fragrant perspiration, she bent over to adjust the straps, tuning them like the strings of some implausible musical instrument. Her pliant, dimpled bottom was thrust out towards the crowd, gossamer frills fluttering with her every move. She tinkered with the garters for a remarkably long time, coaxing them gently into position while the audience looked on, hypnotized. The suspense was insufferable.

Two agonizing minutes later, Michelle stood up, tossed her hair back off her shoulders, and allowed the audience a heart stopping view of her underwear. *Yes, underwear*, she smiled to herself, recalling Misha's obsessive, hair-splitting distinctions. No point in denying the obvious, was there? The spectators were cheering loud enough to shake the windows, and many of the younger women were extolling her virtues. They weren't applauding her lingerie, whatever Misha may have thought.

They were applauding her underwear.

Michelle accepted their acclaim with a graceful, heartfelt curtsy. Dipping her head and spreading her arms wide, she bowed before her congregation, a trim, nubile blond in pert white underpants and black suspender stockings. The gesture was totally unaffected, a spontaneous display of gratitude. This was the consummation of all her nighted fantasies. She felt transfigured, transported. Brushed by divine wings. The applause thundered on and on.

Of course, not everyone present was swept up in the jubilant atmosphere. Wearing a face that could have tamed a Texas bull, Mrs Donna Addler summed up the situation in six terse words:

Girl needs a damned hard spanking!

7.

Fifteen minutes later, Michelle had been irrevocably transformed. Judy tied her hair back in a French braid while Donna squeezed her into her costume. The two Mariahs volunteered to retouch her make-up, glossing her lips the most impertinent shade of red they could come up with. Violet mascara was applied to Michelle's eyelids and a subtle rouge to her cheeks. They worked with an indefatigable purpose, painting and strapping

and primping and grooming. Vermillion feathers plumed her hair, silver ornaments ringed her lobes.

The dress itself was quite breathtaking. Consisting of a full-circle skirt and a halter top, it rippled electric blue beneath the showroom's harsh industrial lights. Wide black stripes ran from bust to waistline, while the bodice was fringed with racy yellow ruffles. The skirt was belled out by roughly eight pounds of petticoats, their flimsy polyester frills peeping out from beneath the cobalt hemline. Shoulder length gloves sheathed her arms in scarlet lace, tall black pumps added inches to her height.

"Mommy, LOOK at her NOW!" Sally Rainford cried as they unveiled the Vision Splendid.

Michelle stood on the platform with her crinoline hitched up her calves. Her brilliant smile brightened the darkest corners of the room, her crystal green eyes flashed with cheek and impudence. She looked unspeakably naughty, with her petticoats raised and her come-hither glances tempting the crowd.

Several cameras popped simultaneously, lenses zoomed and whirred. Word had finally reached the local press, evidently. Michelle raised her right hand in coquettish salute, knowing her image would probably grace the pages of *The Chamberlain Messenger* next Monday.

"Is she going to DANCE, Mommy?" Sally asked hopefully.

"I don't know darling," Sally's mother answered, "maybe if you ask her nicely"

Hearing this exchange (and thinking this would be the perfect end to a perfect morning), Judy stepped up behind Michelle, cupping a hand over her mouth.

"Well, how about it, kiddo?" she crooned in the girl's ear, "I think you owe it to them."

Michelle looked over towards Mrs A, sensing she had to get the old harridan's approval, regardless of what Judy said. She was right, needless to say. Still wearing that same bull-taming expression, Donna shrugged her shoulders and nodded her assent.

"Yeah, all right, go on", she said in a tone of grudging surrender, "you've drummed up more business in one morning than we've had in a month of Sundays." She peered across at her partner, eyes narrowed to slits; "we still got that Offenbach CD, Jude?"

"Sure do", Judy replied, and made for the cash counter. She gave Michelle an affectionate slap on the fanny as she walked past. "Just wait here, it'll only take a minute".

Michelle acknowledged the smack with a barely audible laugh. She enjoyed being the focus of attention, even when it involved a hot, stinging bottom. Misha would have considered it a blatant attack on his manhood, an insult bordering on contempt - but Misha wasn't here now. Misha had fled into the darkened catacombs of Michelle's unconscious mind, and she had no use for the boy's pathetic male ego. She was free: free for the first time in her existence, and she planned to make the most of her new-found liberty. However long as it lasted.

Meantime, Mrs A was addressing the crowd, pulling herself up to her full height and breathing fire from her nostrils:

"Well, what're you waiting for? Y'all deaf or something? Get out of the way, the kid's gonna dance for you."

Babbling with excited gibberish, sixty-odd free-loaders cleared a space in the centre of the store, pushing back against racks and shelves and mannequins. Husbands stumbled over

each other in a frantic scramble for the best seat in the house. Girls tripped up their boyfriends and issued snarls of warning. Yowling children were hoisted onto shoulders or lifted onto bench tops. More photographs were taken, several digicams were smuggled in below the tinkling doorbell, and one old man was heard to ask what all the commotion was about. Chaos ensued for precisely sixty-three seconds, and then -

The opening strains of *Gaite Parisienne* rang out over the sound system.

Michelle raised her skirts to her chin. An avalanche of glaring white petticoats spilled down either side of her legs, framing her sheer black stockings in stark contrast. Virginal satin knickers leapt into plain view, as clean and fresh as the driven snow. Long, white suspenders descended from her underwear, stretching and shortening with every move she made.

An exultant roar went up from the mob, drowning out the Overture in its intensity.

Michelle Waverley gazed out across the dance floor, her face beaming with pure happiness. An indescribable rush of pleasure coursed through her veins. This morning she'd been a clumsy, effeminate boy trying to scam a couple of old women; now she was a beautiful young girl, a talented, self-assured dancer poised to take the stage. She surveyed her audience with a sultry blend of warmth and embarrassment: they'd come in droves, swarming in off the streets just to see her underwear. Her pristine white panties; her lavish lace garters and frivolous midnight hose.

They'd come to see *her*.

Could she deny their expectations?

It's can-can time! Michelle thought as she stepped down off the platform.

Royal Flash



You know, I remember when the cancan was considered *very* sexy. Petticoats were just going out of fashion when I was growing up, and practically every girl I knew wore fluffy little petti-sets back in those days. Needless to say, we all loved revealing our pettis on the flimsiest pretexts - mainly because we knew how cute we looked. Fortunately, the opportunities came thick and fast in our part of the empire: my folks were "Lindy" fanatics from way back, and encouraged me to join in the festivities. As a matter of fact, I became the star attraction.

It was the practically the same thing every night - come 6.30 pm, they'd put Benny Goodman on the record player and I'd twirl around the living room with my skirts flying almost straight out from my waist. Mom and Dad always praised my antics, apparently it reminded them of when they were courting during the war. Given the circumstances, my

eventual segue into the cancan was inevitable. Here's how it happened – more or less:

One day, I was turning cartwheels in the backyard for my friends, raising a storm of catcalls every time my skirt flipped upside-down. Mom came to the back door to see what the racket was, and laughed out loud as she saw me wheeling across the lawn. Contrary to popular belief, this was normal behaviour for girls back then, and Mom jokingly asked if we were practicing the cancan. I replied with an indignant "No!" but of course everyone was giggling at sight of my white cotton knickers.

I think I was about seven or eight at that time. I knew what the cancan was from movies and TV; like most girls my age, I thought it was the cheekiest dance imaginable, because it involved showing off your undies in public. Mom's teasing comment set some wheels turning in my mind, and a few days later I asked her if she could teach me how to dance the cancan.

Mom wasn't really an expert, but she had a good idea of the basic steps and gave me some mock lessons in the living room. It wasn't much different from what we did in gym class at school (cartwheels, handstands etc), I just needed to throw in a few high kicks here and there. Mom even put the "Cancan Polka" song on the radiogram so I could sing along while I practiced.

Mom mentioned it to my Dad a few nights later, and naturally, they both agreed it was time for a Command Performance. At first I played coy, but after a little coaxing, I let Mom take me upstairs to change into my Official Costume (which consisted of an ordinary red sundress, a three-tiered petticoat, and a pair of black mary-janes). Once I was ready, we went back to the living room, where Mom put Offenbach on the player (the "real" cancan from Orpheus in the Underworld this time). I couldn't stop grinning - I'd known this moment would be inevitable, and I'd been looking forward to it all day long.

Anyway, as soon as the music started, I launched into my routine, dazzling my parents with lots of panty-flashing kicks, spins and handstands. The best part was at the end, where I bent over and flipped my petticoats up at the back, shaking my bottom from side to side. Mom and Dad both applauded this "Royal Flash," demanding an encore in the spot (which I graciously obliged, following a full minute of bald-faced ego stroking). It was the first of many such spectacles: sometimes at Christmas, I was called upon to entertain friends and relatives with my scandalous routine, sometimes winning a standing ovation for my efforts. On one occasion, I even talked my girlie cousins into joining in - but as I often say - *that's* a tale for another day.

Cancan!



It's often said that childhood memories are the clearest and sharpest we ever experience. This was certainly true in my case; my earliest recollections are a rich tapestry of image and emotion. In many respects, they laid the foundation for the person I would eventually become.

One memory in particular seems to have shaped my entire destiny.

It goes back a *very* long way, almost to the beginning. I doubt I was even five years old, all I can recall was a bright, golden summer, when each day followed the last in a never-ending limbo. A minute could last an hour, an hour could last a day, and a day frequently lasted forever. Time was a sweet, quiet afternoon drifting off into eternity.

Then something happened.

Something *completely* unexpected.

It started off with a mounting sense of excitement. We were going out for the evening, a trip downtown for dinner and a movie. The house bustled with activity as clothes were changed, shoes were shined and windows bolted down for the night. Decked out in our Sunday fineries, we piled into the car in a chattering mass of knees and

elbows, a subtle mist of hair spray and aftershave tracking our every move. The dashboard glowed a soft, comforting yellow as we backed down the drive way, whooping and laughing and poking. Doors were locked, gears were shifted and the road swept by in a blur of street lamps.

This was a *first time* for me, a moment of surprise and revelation. I suppose I must've known all about restaurants and cinemas before that point, but they were things that belonged to the daytime world. Now everything had changed – the sudden flood of strobing neon practically overloaded my nervous system. Music blared from every corner, spectral colours flickered across the sidewalk. This was a fantasy land beyond anything I'd previously imagined.

Dinner flashed past with a rush of menus, waiters and neatly folded serviettes. There was no time for desert: the show started at eight and the box office was sure to be crowded if we arrived late. A small queue was just starting to form as Dad secured our tickets. Jostling our way through the lobby, we followed a uniformed usher into a darkened gallery, taking our seats just in time for the Coming Attractions.

This was one of the biggest events of my life up to that stage. We weren't just seeing a movie, we were seeing a *scary* movie – the kind I wasn't even allowed to watch at home. I

also had some idea what it was about – my sisters had been talking all about it on the ride into town. It was set in The Olden Days, when men wore top hats and ladies wore long, bell-like dresses. There were no werewolves, vampires or demons, but there was a mad scientist who drank a potion and turned into a monster (or something). Like most kids, I loved a good fright every now and then, especially since spook-flicks were strictly off limits for me. This was shaping up to be the *best* night of my life.

Truth be told, it *was* ... but *not* for reasons I was thinking.

2.

The movie was far better than I'd expected. Dr Jekyll transformed into a suitably monstrous Hyde, ruthlessly terrorizing the gaslit streets of London. Women shrieked in terror as the hideous creature descended on them; stalwart Bobbies plunged through the fog in swift pursuit. Torch-wielding mobs raged through dank urban catacombs, blood spattered across back-alley walls in a crimson shower. Needless to say, there was plenty of lurking and skulking about in cobweb-strewn passageways.

However, the best was yet to come.

Thirty minutes in, Detective Abberdine of Scotland Yard was chasing Mr. Hyde through the Whitechapel labyrinth. After several hair-raising encounters (and equally riveting escapes), the trail eventually led to a Soho den of iniquity known as *The Judas Pit*. Accompanied by his intrepid band of constables, Abberdine burst into the raucous music hall...

And here is where *my* story truly begins. This was my very first introduction to *The Cancan*.

Up on the screen were eight beautiful young women, dancing with their skirts over their waists. Twirling swiftly before the camera, they whipped their petticoats from left to right, openly displaying their underwear to the audience. Black suspender stockings enhanced their slender, tapering legs, lending a sharp contrast to their glaringly white crinolines.

Shrieking with delight, the girls cantered before the footlights, turning cartwheels and handsprings to reveal their lavishly frilled panties. At one point, they spun round, flipping their dresses up at the back. Plump, round bottoms were presented to a roaring crowd, jiggling back and forth in time to the music.

I was utterly entranced by this spectacle. I sat staring up in open-mouthed astonishment. My heart raced like a trip hammer, a wave of liquid heat swept through my veins. I was literally on the edge of my seat, fingernails digging into the faux-leather arm rests. This was - without exception - the most thrilling second of my brief existence...and it altered my perceptions forever.

The image was permanently imprinted on my consciousness, preserved in deepening layers of awe, mystery and amazement. I went home that night with a thousand questions ringing through my head: *who* were those girls, *what* was the dance called? *Why* were they doing it, *why* would they flash their *knickers* to a room full of drunken, cheering strangers? Did they actually enjoy it? They certainly *seemed* to, no denying that.

We got home around ten PM, almost two hours past my regular bedtime. I should have

been dead on my feet, but my mind was filled with visions of swirling petticoats. Climbing into my short cotton PJs, I replayed the scene over and over: the music, the dancing, the beautiful, smiling chorus girls. And the underwear, of course. Mostly the underwear.

Panties.

They'd been deliberately showing off their panties. It was no accident, no momentary hint of satin, like when a girl goes ice-skating or country dancing. They'd been holding up their dresses on purpose, so that everyone could see their undies. *On purpose.* The implications left me speechless.

I fell in love with the cancan that night. It was the beginning of an affair which would span decades.

3.

I thought of very little else over the next few days. It became something of an obsession, and I was eager to know literally everything about the panty-dance. Oddly enough, I wasn't prepared to discuss the matter with my parents — talking about girls' underpants was sort of embarrassing — so I knew from the start I'd have to figure it all out on my own.

Natural curiosity spurred me on, at least at first. I wondered if women still did the panty-dance in the present day. I understood that the film's events took place over a hundred years ago (I hadn't been afraid to ask my folks about that), and that life had been much different back then. How did the dance first start; who invented it? Did only *pretty* girls show off their panties like that? It was genuinely fascinating; new ideas occurred to me almost every waking minute.

Most of all, I wondered how it must have felt, knowing that your lacy, white KNICKERS were on view to all and sundry. That was a question I was most determined to answer. The idea of whirling across a stage with a skirt raised to my chin made my heart race every time it crossed my mind.

Trouble was, there was only one possible way to satisfy my interest.

I knew what I'd have to do, but simply thinking about it made me blush with a kind of breathless, guilty pleasure. What if I got *caught*? Young though I was, I knew that boys weren't supposed to wear girls' clothing. If anyone found out, I'd absolutely die of shame — and that was the best case scenario.

Despite these misgivings, it took me less than a minute to make my decision. The temptation was too great, the desire too strong to deny. I'd have to be careful, need to sneak around while nobody was looking. At any rate, I really had no other choice: the impulse was virtually irresistible.

I would have to *become a cancan girl.*

4.

My initial attempts at dressing up were modest improvisations, using anything that resembled a skirt. I started out with one of my Mother's aprons, smuggled out of the kitchen early in the morning while everybody else was asleep. It was an old-fashioned pinafore, reminiscent of 1950s sit-coms, complete with a red gingham pattern. It seemed a natural

choice, being so unambiguously feminine. That was how I saw it: only women wore aprons, so putting one on would make me a girl.

Slipping into this makeshift "dress" was incredibly exciting, awakening the same emotions I'd felt in the cinema. It would begin as I removed my pajama bottoms, stripping down to my plain cotton briefs. My pulse quickened with anticipation, raising a fine, pink hue across my features. The fear of discovery added spice to the ritual; I always glanced round to make sure no one was watching.

Wandering about in my little white knicks, I usually shivered from stem to stern. It wasn't just the morning chill, I knew I doing something extremely naughty. Goose flesh swept over my tummy as I walked bare-thighed across the floor. The bedroom was my stage, the panty-dance was about to begin, and I was the star attraction!

Having completed all the necessary preparations, I stepped carefully into the apron, passing the collar over my head and wrapping the draw strings around my waist. Naturally, it only covered my front (leaving my bottom exposed), but that didn't really bother me at the time. Being a child, my imagination was more than capable of filling in the blanks. It was long and frilly and looked like a frock. The transformation was finished: I was a girl.

It's impossible to describe the sheer delight I experienced, sweeping up my dress to exhibit my silky white underthings. Scampering around this phantom stage was a joy beyond anything I'd ever known. I could hear the roar of the crowd, the clash of the cymbals, the wild shrieks of the chorus girls. It was like entering another world, a place of blazing lights, thunderous applause and pure childhood magic.

5.

As the weeks went by, my fantasies became increasingly more elaborate. I developed an impromptu routine which included high kicks, cartwheels and skirt flips, cantering my feet from right to left. My favourite move was the royal flash towards the end, where I bent over and revealed my pantied bottom to the audience. This was, of course, the climax of the show, the moment everyone had been waiting for. Inexplicably, the thought of jiggling my bottom-cheeks back and forth seemed almost indescribably wicked.

I also continued experimenting with my costume, graduating from pinafores to mock-frocks and cast-offs. Both of my sisters studied ballet, and I knew where their old hand-me-downs were stored. Most of their outfits were too big for me, but I managed to cobble together a few mismatched items that served my purposes. I didn't bother with the leotards or tutus (neither of which appealed to me), setting my sights on the jazz skirts and sequined tops. The highlight of the act was a pair of fancy-pants covered with tiny lace frills. Heart-stoppingly pretty, they were precisely my size when drawn up to the belly button. I literally couldn't believe my luck when I found them: it was practically too good to be true.

In the meantime, I finally worked up the courage to ask what the dance was called. Once again, I was reluctant to talk to my parents (Dad in particular seemed to have become rather distant in recent months), so I eventually approached my older sister, Rachel. She was only two years my senior and we'd been thick as thieves for as long as I could remember. All the same, I was still a little embarrassed about the whole topic, so I decided to wait until the right moment to broach the subject.

That moment presented itself one cool spring afternoon when we were lounging on the sofa, watching TV in the rumpus room. This was not long past my seventh birthday, and I'd noticed for close on a year that the panty-dance appeared on television at regular intervals (though not as regularly as I might have liked). I'd also come to recognize the tune — apparently quite famous from what I could gather — and figured that Rachel would have to know everything about it, being a ballet student and all.

We were watching some rattling old cowboy flick, a late-forties adventure about a Mississippi gambler shooting his way across the Wild West. Half-way through the movie, the hero ended up in a Silver Dollar casino, and we were confronted by a face-full of flailing petticoats. My eyes automatically widened at the sight of all those frilly silk panties, and I turned to my sister, barely able to conceal my excitement.

"Rachel", I asked, pointing to the screen, "what's that *dance* called?"

"Huh?" she replied, evidently distracted, then raised her eyebrows as the question registered. "Oh...that's the cancan."

We blinked at each other for a couple of seconds, then stared back at the TV without further comment. It occurred to me that Rachel was just as fascinated as I was, though maybe in a slightly different manner. We watched the spectacle unfold, occasionally casting sidelong glances at one another. The panty shots continued for another two minutes, during which the tension became agonizing. We were kids, a great unspoken mystery had been raised, and there were no grown-ups around. We *both* wanted to talk about it.

The silence was finally shattered during the commercial break. The cancan hung thick in the air between us, despite having vanished off the screen five minutes before. The conversation was a little awkward for the first thirty seconds, but then we both giggled when I asked why the girls were showing off their knickers (that's one of the best things about living in the United Kingdom: the word "Knickers" is guaranteed to break the ice in any company).

Having found a common ground, we talked through most of the afternoon, nattering away in the loose, careless fashion of childhood. She told me that the cancan was a French dance invented by a guy named *Sharks Offinbark* at a place called the *Moolin Rooge* (yes, that was precisely how she pronounced it). According to her ballet teacher, there was a special academy in Paris that taught the cancan, where only the world's greatest dancers could get in.

"What about the chorus girls in the Jekyll and Hyde movie?" I asked. "That was set in London."

Rachel shrugged her shoulders and said that the cancan was popular all over the world. This led on to various stylistic comparisons: France vs Britain, England vs America and so on. After intense speculation, we concluded that the original French version must have been the best (all the others being pale imitations, of course).

It was all terribly intriguing, especially since I had no idea what she was talking about half the time. Rachel knew her subject, and the terminology she employed amounted to a foreign language in my ears. On the other hand, I was utterly mesmerized by the notion of a Cancan school, and most interested in visiting Paris (where every girl in the city was required to learn the dance in primary school, from all accounts).

The conversation invariably returned to the revealing of the girls' knickers, and Rachel

was surprisingly candid about the matter. Apparently, the exhibition of the panties was an absolute necessity.

"That's how it's *supposed* to be danced," Rachel explained in tones of casual authority, "you have to hold up your skirts to do all those high kicks."

It all sounded perfectly reasonable, but personal experience suggested there was considerably more to it than that.

"Do you think they actually *like* showing off their panties?" This sounded perfectly reasonable: the dance seemed specially designed to display every inch of their underwear.

"No," Rachel replied instantly, then gnawed her lip in evident consternation. Apparently, we were both keeping secrets too mortifying to disclose. An eye-rolling pause later, she lowered her voice and admitted that she and her friends liked to flash their undies when there were no adults around. "It's kind of fun when we do that bottom-wriggle at the end," she added, looking away to hide her pinkening cheeks.

At that second, I came as close to sharing my fantasies with another person as I ever would. Needless to say, I was desperate to know more about Rachel's private cancan troupe, but she flatly refused to say anything else, other than confiding that the last performance took place at Janey North's slumber party). From what she'd just told me, they felt precisely the same way I did, and I would have sold my soul for a chance to join them.

6.

From that day forward, the cancan became a recurring topic of conversation between the two of us. In many respects, Rachel was amazingly patient with my prodding inquiries. I think part of it was that she enjoyed playing the expert, imparting wisdom to the less fortunate. I was her kid brother, it made her feel important when I came to her for advice. She probably suspected the source of my interest (possibly even knew about the borrowed knickers), but was considerate enough never to let on about it.

Our ongoing discussions opened a great many doors for me, solving many of the conundrums that had haunted me since that night at the cinema. Sensing the depth of my fascination, Rachel suggested I join her ballet class — Chamberlain Dance Academy was desperately short on male students, and there was always the chance that the senior class would put on a *Moolin Rooge* number for *Bass-steal Day* (again, that was precisely how she pronounced it).

Although predictably reluctant at first, my curiosity got the better of me, and Rachel eventually convinced me to tag along one afternoon. Within a week, I was learning my first steps under the rigorous gaze of Ms Evelyne Deane, struggling to arch my spine and avoid tripping up the ballerinas. I was the only boy taking classes at the time, for which reason Ms Deane quietly tolerated my stumbling antics. I was never as graceful as my siblings, but I persevered long enough to learn the basics. Over the next two years, I gained sufficient confidence to appear on stage, first with Rachel, then with an ever-expanding range of partners. Following my third recital, even Ms Deane appeared satisfied with my progress, telling Rachel that I'd graduated from being a lump of lard to a block of wood. Coming from a woman fundamentally incapable of uttering a good word about anything, this was high praise indeed.

Equally pleased with this state of affairs was my Mother, who now had all three of her children pursuing careers in the arts. She was supportive above and beyond the call of duty, devoting endless hours to sewing costumes and applying makeup, clucking and fussing over the tiniest details during rehearsals. She was a whirlwind of activity behind the curtains, her enthusiasm stunning even the most diehard of stage-moms.

Not *quite* so enthusiastic was my Father, who had grown increasingly distant over the past two years. Spending most of his weekends parked on the sofa in front of a football game, he showed little concern for any of us, viewing his offspring with the kind of indifference common to males of his generation. Having married in his early thirties, middle age struck him with near-lethal force on his fortieth birthday. I guess it might have been worse; lesser men would have spiraled down into heavy drinking or domestic violence. Fortunately, Dad was inclined to neither, and we gradually adjusted to his mute apathy.

For close on a year, I wondered if I were to blame for his impassive moods. Maybe he'd found out about my early morning dress-up games. I could only surmise how shocked he'd be that his own son was one of *them* (whatever "they" were; I was slightly too young to fully understand the concept). Perhaps he'd disowned all three of us on my account, refusing to even acknowledge our existence.

It wasn't until much later I realized that Mom and Dad had stopped talking altogether around the time I entered elementary school. Their marriage started disintegrating long before I was born; by the time I turned nine they were little more than two house-bound strangers working double shifts to pay an unwanted mortgage. Mom did her best to smooth the rough patches over for us, but she was more-or-less postponing the inevitable.

Dad moved out not long afterwards. He'd met a younger woman through a workmate, and his bags were packed within a month of their first date. Just like that, our father was gone. Rachel cried a little when he said goodbye, Mom and Kate just stood to one side staring after him with a kind of weary contempt. He barely spared me a glance as he lugged his bags out the front door, even after I raised my hand to signal farewell. At the end of the day, I'd become the most alien of his children, and he had nothing to say to me.

Not that it mattered, one way or another. Given the circumstances, there wasn't much to talk about anyway.

7.

Fortunately, the world didn't end that afternoon.

We each recovered from our individual losses, and life trundled slowly along its rocky slope once more. Mom took an administrative position at the local council, earning enough money to pay off the house. Kate grew up to marry a well-established barrister, settling down in one of the more affluent suburbs of London. Rachel graduated high school and managed to get into RADA, majoring in Voice and Movement with a bit of modeling on the side. Evelyn Deane cast me in a couple of Christmas pantomimes, evidently to prove that even a block of wood has its uses. There was some talk of scholarships and academic auditions, though nothing much came of it. I was a good student, but I wasn't a great dancer. As Evelyn eventually told me — not without some regret - my *true* skills lay elsewhere.

In the meantime, I coped with the usual complexities of adolescence. I rowed with my

Mom, squabbled with my teachers and learnt how to deal with schoolyard bullies. Like any boy hitting puberty, I developed crushes on girls who never noticed my existence and willfully ignored the ones who did. Of course, my situation was perhaps slightly more complicated than most. While I was exclusively attracted to girls my age, I also constantly fantasized about *being* one.

Inevitably, this led to many sleepless nights, pondering the paradox of my identity. I'd come to understand the meanings of words such as *transvestite*, *transgender* and *transsexual*, but they had a sterile, clinical sound. They couldn't describe the overwhelming delight I felt whenever I dressed up, the sense that I'd somehow morphed into my true self. Even now, I suspect there are no terms which express the deep, insatiable longing people like myself experience. Such notions are - by definition - inexpressible.

All I knew was that I was *different*. It was obvious to me, obvious to everyone around me, especially my classmates. They weren't openly cruel or belligerent, but they made it clear that I would never fit in. It wasn't simply my feminine personality. It was everything: my appearance, my posture, my manner of speaking. Much as I tried to conceal it beneath a veneer of faux masculinity, it was always present.

Entering my early teens, I learnt to accept the good with the bad. I was small and delicately built, with the lithe figure conferred by years of choreography. This occasionally made me the target of playground taunts, but it also allowed me to pass as my preferred gender. Looking considerably younger than my years, I was constantly mistaken for a girl of twelve, particularly when I went shopping with my Mother (at first, she used to correct people on this matter, but decided to let it slide when she noticed it didn't bother me).

It was around my fifteenth year that I started volunteering at the *Red Shield* store down in Waverly Avenue. Initially, it was part of my school's work experience programme, but I soon discovered I was perfectly suited to the position. Having spent half my life filching my sisters' hand-me-downs, I had an affinity for second-hand clothing. Mom was extremely proud of my charitable commitment - Friday afternoons and most Saturday mornings - but she never realized that my actions weren't *totally* altruistic.

You see, the store's manager, (Grace Oakland, by name) allowed me first choice of anything that came in. She'd sussed me out during my first week on the job, and we quickly sealed a mutually beneficial agreement. Apparently, I wasn't the first cross-dresser to walk in through the front door, but I was the *only* one who'd been willing to work behind the counter. Mrs Oakland kept my secrets and rewarded me well for my services. By the end of three months I had collected a huge stash of bras, skirts, knickers and frocks, many items in pristine condition. Barely a week went by when some flimsy, girlish thing turned up in my size; Grace would hand it to me with a wink and a nod, brokering the latest deal.

I got on well with all the staff, most of them silver-haired Grannies with wide, open hearts and families in the midlands. If they knew anything about my extra-curricular activities, they never mentioned it. I don't think they would have cared anyway - I was quiet, polite and hard-working, and that was all that mattered to them.

All the same, it wasn't a perfect life by any means. Far from it; there were months of utter despair, when anguish and confusion overrode every other emotion. I wasn't just different - I was a freak, an abnormality, some loathsome *thing* without a name or purpose. There was always a feeling of loss and rejection at the back of my mind. I'd never forgiven

Dad for ditching us so callously, and since Rachel had gone to RADA, I'd felt more isolated than ever before.

However, the worst thing of all was the *doubt*. In many ways, it was worse than the shame, worse than the self-loathing. What was wrong with me, why was I so bent, twisted and sick? Maybe the school yard rumours were right, maybe I deserved to be alone, pushed aside and cast out like a worthless pile of refuse. I had no idea who I was, what I truly wanted.

But then again, what teenager ever does?

Then, quite suddenly, I was sixteen.

It was the summer break, the final respite before my senior year. Mom was planning to visit Grandma up on the coast, Kate had long since moved to Edinburgh, and Rachel was touring Europe with her boyfriend. The house would be empty; I'd elected to stay behind to play homemaker. Mom wasn't too happy about leaving me alone, but I convinced her that I had to prepare for my upcoming matriculation. The pantry was stocked, the neighbours could keep an eye on me, and I was smart enough not to open the door to undesirables.

Mom capitulated after a half-hearted attempt to dissuade me; worry though she might, she knew deep down I'd be OK. This minor triumph raised my spirits considerably: this was recognition of my maturity, my need for privacy. Being alone didn't seem so bad at all. I'd have the place all to myself, an entire weekend to read, relax and just be myself.

Most importantly, I finally *knew* what I wanted.

8.

It had taken me a while to assemble the costume, starting with a garish satin dress I found at the *Red Shield* depot downtown. It looked practically brand-new when I took it down from the rack. Mrs Oakland told me it was an authentic chorus-girl outfit, donation from one of the local theatrical societies. I offered her ten pounds for the dress and a pair of black stiletto heels I'd seen in the window, but as always, she gave them to me *gratis*. Everything fit perfectly; I literally couldn't believe my luck.

The layered petticoats were a little more difficult to locate (not to mention expensive) but I eventually came across a dancewear supplier specializing in music-hall accessories. I used my mother's credit card to place an order and had them mailed to a post-box number at Chamberlain Mail Centre. Naturally, Mom thought it was just something I needed for an upcoming recital, so she never bother asking what the transaction was for.

I picked up the lingerie at a *Valentine's* sale out of town, pooling my allowance for weeks in advance. The sales assistant wasn't sure whether I was a girl or a boy, but she was helpful enough once she saw the colour of my money. So helpful, in fact, that I bought four of everything; bras, panties, garter-belts and suspender stockings. Variety being the spice of life, I settled for matching sets of white, pink, red and black - except for the stockings, which I purchased in midnight, tan, and flesh-tone. The outfit looked absolutely fantastic once I added a cincher-belt and a pair of shoulder-length lycra gloves.

I couldn't wait to try it out in our rumpus room (which my imagination transformed into a 19th century Soho music hall). Unfortunately, it was still weeks before I'd find myself

alone in the house. Nowadays, my bedroom was too small to perform in, and I didn't want to run the risk of being discovered.

9.

By the time Mom headed off to Grandma's place, I was almost climbing the walls. If you've survived puberty, you'll know how desperate the situation becomes when you're a teenager struggling in the grip of raging hormone levels.

Finally having the house to myself, I pulled the ensemble out of its hiding place in the wardrobe and carried it down to the rumpus room. It was large and well-lit, with plenty of space for twirling and kicking. There was a cheval mirror set up to one side of the television. Walking over to the sofa, I laid the garments out in careful order, preparing for the afternoon's festivities.

Peeling off my t-shirt, jeans and hipsters, I stood before the mirror, ready for my transformation. I paused a few moments, allowing the excitement to surge through my system. I'd been waiting months for this moment, feeling the exhilaration build up inside me like a slowly burning fire.

Shivering with anticipation, I reached for the lacy, black *garter-belt*.

It was the sort with adjustable suspenders and a hook-and-eye arrangement at the back. Just looking at the thing made me delirious with embarrassment.

Clipping the flimsy piece of lingerie around my slim waist, I picked up a pair of seamed midnight stockings and stepped carefully into them, cautious not to tear the sheer fabric. Adjusting the suspenders to mid-thigh, I turned to pose in the mirror, enjoying the touch of nylon against my bare flesh. My legs looked long and tapering in their ebony sheaths.

Next, I pulled on a pair of pristine white panties, slipping them over the garters with a whisper of liquid satin. Delicate and nebulous, they shimmered like platinum in the lazy afternoon light. The garter-belt was plainly visible through the gossamer material. A seam ran down the centre decorated with a delicious floral trim. I was blushing at the thought of exhibiting them to my imaginary audience.

I put on a matching white underwire brassiere, adjusting the shoulder straps with vaguely shaking fingers. My tummy was fluttering with arousal; the girl in the mirror was tall and slim and quite beautiful. Shining blond hair tied back in a long ponytail, she looked maybe sixteen years old; her large blue eyes and tiny mouth giving her an innocent, child-like appearance.

Turning around, I looked back over my shoulder, enjoying the curve of my figure; the lush, full shape of my bottom. The panties were a little high-cut at the back, exposing a generous amount of cheek on either side. I wriggled my fanny impishly, smiling back at myself. Raising one hand, I slapped myself, very hard, on the right buttock, leaving an angry red mark. My smile broadened in pleasure. I needed a good, hard spanking; I was an extremely naughty girl, after all.

Returning to the business at hand, I pulled on the petticoats, their flouncing bulk accentuating the luscious swell of my hips. Two layers of alabaster frills, an absolute pre-requisite to dancing the cancan. Waved above the waistline, the crinolines formed a kind of backdrop for the underwear, a curtain raised to exhibit the panties and stockings.

However, the costume wasn't quite complete. I drew the satin hemline over my head, allowing the dress to drop into place over the massed petticoats. It was beautifully designed, with a halter top and a full-circle skirt that swept down to just below the knee. The frock was ornate and rather gaudy, red and black stripes ran the length of the skirt. Lace trceries embellished the bust line. I finished my preparations by pulling on the long, crimson gloves and fastening the cincher around my waist.

And *then* I was ready.

10.

I posed in the mirror, stepping forward on one foot and lifting the petticoats to reveal a saucy black garter. My heart was racing in my chest, my eyes twinkled with mischief. Was this how it felt, waiting backstage while the band warmed up its horns and strings? I could almost hear the murmur of the crowd, the popping of corks and the clinking of glasses. In a very few moments, I'd have to run onto the stage with my panties on full display. My entire body was trembling with expectation. Gazing into the mirror, I saw a rich, pink glow suffusing my features.

Snatching up two handfuls of flocked white lace, I conjured up a packed Victorian nightclub on the south side of London. For one second, I could almost see the chandeliers flickering overhead, the coils of smoke rising to the rafters, the dim shape of the audience beyond the footlights. The band had started up with a clashing of drums: I was being summoned out before the crowd. It was time to reveal my gauzy white underwear to the world!

Grinning my most brilliant smile, I raced onto the stage in an avalanche of gossamer frills. I launched into my routine with a series of classic high-kicks, straining my garter-belt to the breaking point as my feet swept towards the ceiling. A vast star of joy seemed to explode in my belly. Heart pounding in ecstasy, I spun into a long, wheeling pirouette, skirts flying out in a perfect circle. I orbited around the room, exposing my panties all the way up to the belly button. Stockinged thighs flashed in the mirror as I whirled past, my hair flailing about my shoulders.

Every nerve in my body seemed to tingle with electric fire. Drawing a deep breath, I pitched forward into a cartwheel, scissoring my legs in mid-air to allow the crinolines to fall away. I paused at the height of my arc; suspended upside down with my petticoats cascading over my head. Cool air whisked between my thighs as I went over, almost shrieking in rapture. It was wonderful, better than I'd ever imagined.

Landing gracefully on my feet, I whipped the dress back up to my throat and kicked my heels over my head, giggling like a child as I leapt from foot to foot. The audience roared its approval, their deafening shouts echoing around the ceiling. I rushed forward, waving my skirt as high as it could go. I felt sweet, feminine and unbelievably naughty. Tight black garters snapped against my haunches, virginal white panties glared in the mirror.

The performance lasted about ten minutes. Pulse thudding in my temples, I careened through a succession of kicks, handstands and flip-flops, taxing my gymnastic abilities to the limit. My stockings crept imperceptibly down my thighs, exhibiting more bare flesh until the suspenders were as taunt as violin strings. Wild exhilaration filled my veins; I spun

ever faster, giggling and screaming as my petticoats rose and fell.

I finished up with by bending double and tossing my skirts over my back, baring my ripe, pantied bottom to the entire room. Breathless with arousal, I stood with my heels together and my dress hanging over my head. I clenched my bottom-cheeks impulsively, listening to the crowd cheering; thundering for more. I smiled to myself in pure, innocent delight, ready to stand up and give them the *encore* they deserved.

PUBLICATION HISTORY

"Lace & Garters!" originally published in *Cynosure Illustrated*, Lainsbury Publications, 2000-2002

"CANCAN!" originally published in *Cynosure Illustrated*, Lainsbury Publications, 2000-2002.

"Showtime" originally published in *SPICY Tales*, 2003. Reprinted in *Fragments and Memoirs*, Lakehurst Press, 2011.

"Royal Flash" originally published in *Girlie Tales*, Lainsbury Publications, 2001. Reprinted in *Bittersweet*, Lakehurst Press, 2010.

Cover illustration and all interior art copyright © Transfemme, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016. Illustrated pages, including the cover, may be uploaded to Wikimedia Commons as examples of self-published fiction.

