

ICE STORM

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Chapter 20 - Mom

The Cross Dressers Support Group frequently discussed one of their twelve steps of admitting our defects and apologizing to anyone we had offended. They struggled with their poor success at talking with their parents, and I had never talked with mine since the Ice Storm. If they called Andrea and asked for me, I knew I would not be willing to tell them about my wearing women's dresses. I feared what their reaction would be. No one told me about any such calls.

My stomach felt sick as I resolved to do something. One Saturday I went to the AA Club for a colorful card which they stocked in profuse abundance. I practiced my terrible handwriting before using cursive as I had heard at the Jaycees that a hand written note would be received as more personal.

"Dear Mom

"It is time to tell you that I have a very good, well paying, job. It's with a construction company where I am respected and have been promoted several times.

"I wear women's dresses at all times now with the hair, lipstick, and earrings to match. What started as inexpensive denim shirtdresses are now pleated skirts and white blouses, or expensive skirt suits. There is a serious practical reason for this development to tell you when we talk.

"I'm a leader in a Cross Dressers Support Group, and I find them jobs. I attend church almost every Sunday where I greet everyone before the service, and give hugs when most of them let me. I'm a regular at assisting with monthly Communion and giving the weekly Offering Prayer. No, before you ask, I'm not particularly religious. Think of church as a community which is how we describe ourselves.

"I work long hours during the week. Let's have lunch some Saturday." I included my blue tooth phone number.

"With love.

"My new name matching my new image is Sandy."

I had a glossy photo printed of me at Staples from an electronic image from the Exquisite Fit Tailor business. I chickened out with fear at the last moment and didn't mail it with the card. Within seconds of dropping that card into the slot at the Post Office I wished I had included that photo. Anxieties washed over my back every time I thought about what I should have done with mailing that image with the card.

Mom sounded livid on the phone when she called. "You straighten up and fly right before I'll have lunch with you. Quit that foolishness."

"Mom. I wrote you for honesty and healing. Can't you see that?"

A long pause ensued on the phone. Maybe I heard a snuffle. "Maybe. Have a

place in mind?"

She lived in one of the better neighborhoods. I quickly thought of a restaurant near her. "How about the Good Earth?" My memory of it had been clean, brightly lit, upscale, but not too expensive.

The next Saturday I had Andrea take me to her Dentist. I had her tell me everything about keeping my teeth as blazing white as my best new blouse. She did tell me I had masculine canine teeth and lower jaw, but not too much so. Oh well, another personal secret blown all to hell.

I called the Beauty Salon that had been good to me. Or, at least they tolerated me when they already knew my secrets. I told them what I had been planning. I wanted them to do whatever they thought they could do for me to be every mother's prettiest girl. Not flashy; sexy without being too much so; what the parents would like their college kid to be for her year book picture.

They called back a few days later. They told me to bring my proposed outfit on a hanger straight from the dry cleaners. They wanted me to wear a spandex leotard over my padded bra and costume hips. That would be my Exquisite Fit new outfit, and I recovered the leotard from the seamstress there.

They had me in there half an hour before opening time, and praised my new bust and hips under the leotard. They gave my hair a shampoo, a blond color rinse, and a slight trim to be just so for the style they proposed. That style, to which I agreed, and they did, had been based on a country singer with her blond hair over her right shoulder. They shaped and painted my nails with a wonderful color and lipstick to match that didn't seem too bright. My feelings weren't ready for their shaping my toenails. I asked for a pause, explained myself, and told them to go ahead. That still sent shivers up my spine, but I endured it. They even had new hair clips for the new style, and had me practice with that clip behind my head. I tried smiling like they did, but doubted I could be exactly like the proverbial girl next door.

Rachel put her hand on my chest just above my new C cup bra in a comforting way. "First take a look."

Wow. I appeared as 'something else' in the mirror. At that moment I would have paid any price.

She and they weren't done. "We trust you to take this the right way, Sandy, because you asked. Come into the back."

They had a more private section with another of their special chairs. They pulled the shoulder straps of that leotard down my arms as I became scared of their seeing me in my plastic pants and diapers. No, not scared, terrified. But they only pulled those shoulder straps down, hardly noticed down below, and were very discrete. Into that chair I went which almost put my diaper bulge into the most obvious view. Instead, they wrapped a special sheet over my shoulders, around my arms, in a way that left my chest exposed above my bra.

"Sandy; you'll just have to trust us. Do your best to relax. Tell us if you have to have us pause again. OK?" They brought out something I had never seen before. "This makes the million bucks look of a star. We are sending you to the stars, and especially to cover your masculine skin pores. This is a makeup airbrush."

They paused as if waiting for me to say something, but I didn't know what to say. I closed my eyes and leaned back in that reclining chair.

One of them talked first. "OK, let's start."

I flinched as they pulled about a dozen hairs from my upper chest.

I felt the air on my skin as they sprayed and sprayed ever more all over the exposed parts of my upper chest, neck, and face.

"OK, see the new you."

I opened my eyes. "I don't believe what I am seeing. Is this a video of that singer?"

"No, Sandy, this really is you." She pinched my cheek lightly so I could feel her fingers as I watched her hand on me in the mirror.

"Let the makeup dry a little bit before you rub your own face. Hold still, we have touch up work." I closed my eyes again and felt spots of air here and there on me.

When I could see again I turned my head this way and that as I watched in the mirror. That beauty in the mirror had to be me. I appeared so good looking I would never have dared ask a girl this beautiful out for a date. The price for what they had done would not be questioned.

When they gave me their bill, I handed them my credit card without a doubt this big expense had been what I needed to do. They had me stay and sit in the back as a safe waiting area. They even brought a book for me to read that one of their menfolk liked of Tom Clancy's *Red Storm Rising*. I enjoyed it so much I bought my own copy later for finishing it.

They interrupted me when they thought the time had come, at about 11 am. They sent me to the restroom for changing my diaper. As if they hadn't done too much already, two of them helped me dress making everything fit perfectly. They protected my clothes from that makeup, and that makeup from my clothes. They acted as if my wearing diapers had to be no big thing which helped stabilize my feelings. They helped me all the way with pantihose they had selected for matching the tone of my makeup. The pantihose pulled my diaper in tight against me. They fiddled with my new C cup bra adjusting it and the prosthetic inserts until all it seemed right. After that we had an easy time with the blazing white ruffled new blouse, pleated red skirt, and matching suit jacket. They stopped me from using the turquoise earrings I had brought and insisted on an inexpensive costume pearl on each ear and a pearl necklace. They made a final brushing of my hair held in back with a big clip.

They beamed at me as they brought me out front and made a photo shoot for a wall poster. They told their customers why I had been cross-dressing as a disguise, and today had become my big day for my Mom to see the new me. Their customers praised the result, and said they would not have known if they simply passed me on the street. They thanked me for what I had done for community safety, and made best wishes for my meeting with my Mom.

The boss girl handed me a bag of skin cleaners for removing all that makeup later before it damaged my skin. She playfully smacked me on my padded butt. "Go

forth Sandy with confidence you are the loveliest girl in the world.” She made a demur little smile of being caught in a lie. “Or at least nearby around here.”

I cried, and they showed me how to dry my cheeks of the tears without damaging that makeup.

I arrived early for lunch and asked for a booth where I could observe the front door. I asked them to watch for my Mom and gave them her name.

I saw myself in a mirror and which took me aback all over again.

The waitress appeared so cute I almost asked her for a date completely forgetting how I looked. That told me that my self confidence had been increasing. I slid my hand under the back of my skirt like a real girl as I took a seat at a booth.

A waiter brought me a wine list which I laid on the table thinking of my Mom. “Just water please.”

He looked at me funny.

“I have a low voice.”

He relaxed with that and disappeared from my sight.

I kept having to deal with anxieties washing over my back. I dribbled into my diaper. Temptation regularly struck me for bringing my blond hair over my right shoulder, but I kept deciding that would be too much as a first impression. As if my appearance wouldn't be too much already. I fiddled with the hair clip at the back of my head about every five minutes.

Giving in to my anxieties I took my handheld out of my shoulder bag and laid it on the table where I could watch the time. At least the baby blue case matched my feminine image. Noon arrived with no Mom which annoyed me. I asked myself why did I bother with such an expensive beauty salon visit and dressing up in my best new skirt suit for this? My annoyance kept flaring.

Seventeen minutes later on the handheld she arrived at the entrance. If I had dressed well, she had too, but I had made myself the young beauty with the flawlessly airbrushed skin.

I had become too annoyed to stand up as I worried about how she would handle this.

A waitress led the way. Mom looked at everyone in the place and took her time walking through the restaurant, but her eyes never lingered at me.

The waitress stopped at my booth with a hand out for the bench seat on the other side.

Mom's head jerked back in surprise. Her face registered her doubts this booth could be the right place.

I stood up and smiled. “Hi, Mom.” Maybe I should have warned the staff. “It's me, Sandy. I hope you like my new outfit.”

Bless her heart, the waitress remained loyal to her task as she stood there in case I wasn't the right person.

Mom stalled. Anger swept across her face. Then sadness. Her mouth opened but nothing came out at first. "Excuse me. What a shock."

The waitress glanced at me strangely.

"Mom. I wrote you what I wear now. My new name is Sandy, and that's on my driver's license with my long hair. Please, have a seat so we can talk." I held out my hand for a handshake, but I wanted a hug. She didn't seem up for a hug.

She didn't take my hand before she sat down.

I slid my hand behind my skirt again when I sat down. "Here's the wine list. How about a glass of," I glanced down the list, "Rupert's?"

She focused on the waitress. "Have a good white?" Her focus on the waitress felt to me that she had to be ignoring me, but my head told me she needed time for adjusting her expectations.

The waitress smiled. "We have a good house Zinfandel. A glass or a bottle?"

I interrupted. "Sorry, I don't drink. How about a glass?" As a minimum I had to be loyal to the AA readings at the Cross Dressers Support Group.

Mom nodded to that, and returned her attention to me. Her emotions were such she had to take in a few deep breaths as she acclimated to the new me. "OK, why?"

A new thought flashed and I spoke before I knew what I would say next. "Mom, the reason for my new attire is as a disguise. I stumbled into corruption at work and had been at the center of those arrests reported in the newspapers. Those were the arrests of the operators way up in the sky of those tall construction cranes." I felt relieved at not having said what came before all that.

"Oh. OH!" The pitch of her voice went up in surprise. "That was *you*?!"

"Yes, Mom. I'm a bonafide hero among the few that know. Or is that a heroine?"

She scowled at my claiming to be a feminine heroine.

Maybe I shouldn't have said that. "Once I had to wear dresses I had to go all the way for the disguise to work." I fished up my Wyndham crane operator name tag from my shoulder bag and held it up against my jacket lapel. I fished up more name tags and handed all of them to her.

She flipped through them. "Wyndham Construction crane operator. Jaycees project chair. Cedar Falls welcoming. Pies on the Run. What's that?"

"Pies is a business I started for several desperate people. They have to work it as I'm nearly always at my job twelve hours a day making me unavailable. Wearing the wrong clothes is difficult. But I have my job, and am respected by the big rough men of major construction crews. The company owner likes me, and has me running difficult inspections at all of his job sites. But for all that I'm in a Cross Dressers Support Group,

and most of those people are hurting. Hurting personally, feeling alienated, and desperately flat on their backs financially. They look to me for leadership even though I do the least talking. Under duress I thought up that business, and paid for its formation. They make and deliver lunches of hot pies, sandwiches, and quite a menu. I've been told they have to build their own self-esteem, so I can't tell them how good they are. Otherwise I would."

Her eyes were examining me above the table top. She stopped at my bust more than once. She looked at more name tags. "White Top Cab. Cedar Falls Florist. Exquisite Fit. What the hell have you been doing?"

"Mom. I use no swear words as those don't work getting people to do what they want to do, but don't know until I tell them. Just imagine a gruff ole master electrician, plumber, or concrete foreman being told to rip it all out and do it right. My boss backs me up, but I have to be nice about it. Those extra name tags are all the businesses I formed and own so those desperate people can have jobs. They quail at the idea of attending Chamber meetings. I do too, but I get over it and go."

I couldn't stand it. I reached around behind my head, removed my hair clip, and brought my long blond hair across my right shoulder. "Sorry, Mom, but the beauty salon suggested going blond, its on my driver's license, and those big fisted men in construction go nuts over me. They invite me to their Friday evening beer bust. My hunch is they protect me in there as their girl even though they know perfectly well who I am. Others say they would pound the daylight out of any drunk who became too fresh with me. So, please, Mom, let me be what this has turned in to. I didn't want to. I have no idea where this goes. I have no idea what I want to do. I didn't ask for this. It just happened to me. Besides, the police know me in my girl image and name. Let them repose in their own comfort as they know me." I didn't tell her my little secret reason for my new appearance. I dribbled into my diaper again.

The glass of wine arrived. She took a sip.

"Mom. I've been in fights in those corruption interventions, but never about my new clothes."

She frowned.

I asked about her friends. She ordered an expensive lunch. I had a Greek salad. Neither of us mentioned my Dad out of fear he would go berserk and make Mom more miserable. "Here's a thought, Mom. You can tell your friends I have a good job in construction, and have been the hero in those newspaper reports. Don't tell them the parts they don't want to know."

Her shoulders lost tension and relaxed with that idea.

When she had finished her lunch she brought out her handheld. Her way of accepting me didn't say so, but she took pictures instead. I posed for one with my hair over my shoulder. Another with my hair more normally pulled together behind my head. Three more were with me standing up with my pleated dress ending just above my knees.

When she stood up to go I did too.

"Mom. I'm the Greeter at church. Most people there like my welcoming with hugs.

Our meeting feels odd to me without a hug. May I have one?"

We did hug although she felt awkward to me as we embraced. "I'll pay the bill." Which I did.

Andrea blurted "Oh my Gawd" with a hand to her mouth when she saw me at her house later that day. Denny used saltier words. They both expressed amazement at my temporary transformation. I told them my dress suit came from my new business Exquisite Fit which impressed them with their using strong salty language. They liked my having that meeting with my Mom all on my own.

They insisted I call the Exquisite Fit people for a promotional photo shoot right then in all that makeup. Andrea interrupted speaking loudly into my cell phone, and said much more forcibly what she wanted. The three of us piled into my car as I drove them to that light industrial warehouse with the florist and the clothier. By the time we were done with the photography over an hour later Andrea and Denny knew all of those other little business ventures of mine.

By the time we had returned to Andrea's house my diaper had become only damp, but I rushed upstairs to do something else in the bathroom. They had me change clothes before sitting me down in a kitchen chair as they removed all of that makeup and applied healing creme. When they were done cleaning my skin, they wanted to know all over again about those businesses of mine.

The support group quickly understood even better.