• TURNABOUT PRESENTS One Summer in Petticoats



By Siobhan Fredericks

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A TURNABOUT NOVELET

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ONE SUMMER IN PETTICOATS Siobhan Fredericks

Before I begin my story, let me get one thing straight, so there'll be no confusion: I am a man — maybe not one hundred percent male (and who can honestly say he is), but I live a man's life in a man's world, and I do not regret it for a single minute. I don't want to change my sex or live as a woman or do anything more than give in now and again to old established urges to "dress" and drink of the heady wine of femininity.

After all, if most of us TVs weren't really men, this whole business of dressing up in gal's clothes would be a bloody awful bore, wouldn't it? The kick we get out of crossdressing comes because we are men — not because we're answering some mystic call of some sort of "girl within." It provides us with some healthy relaxation and a change of pace from the brutal ratrace of a world gone entirely mad.

So when I tell you my little story, when I reveal to you this tender little slice out of my life, try to keep in mind what I've just said.

*

My mother -- bless her dear, demented soul -- wanted me to be a girl. Long before I was born, she was determined that I was going to be a girl, no matter how capriciously the genes and chromosomes arranged themselves. So when I was born a normal, healthy boy, it didn't make too much difference to her.

At that stage of the game, it didn't make much difference to me, either, and I enjoyed being dressed in frilly girl's attire, which went on until I was five. After that time, I was allowed to dress up as a little girl any time I wanted to. My father died when I was three and left us quite well off, and I suppose Mom's overindulgence of me was a result of her loneliness and frustration. But lest you think the idea of my dressing up was Mom's alone, let me point out that I was never forced to do it and that I really enjoyed the whole bit of going out to play in dresses and being accepted as a little girl when I did so, which was several times a week, if I remember correctly.

The other kids in my neighborhood seemed to be entirely in the dark as to my double life. They didn't know that the roughneck little boy who sometimes joined their games was also the demure little girl who played with them at other times. I learned quite early to be a skillful actor or actress, as the occasion demanded.

As I grew older, of course, things were a little more complicated, and my dressing up subsided for a time. However, the kick was still there, and I'd have an occasional fling.

So far gone was Mom on the idea that I was to be a girl that, long before I was born, she had even enrolled me in an exclusive girl's boarding school, where I was scheduled to begin during my fourteenth summer. Somehow, she never got around to cancelling the pre-enrollment, and when the notification came from the school, her old longings returned.

The school had a policy of starting the first-year students off in a three-month orientation session which took place during the summer months before they actually entered the ninth grade. In this way, the newcomers could sort of get used to idea of being away from home and accustom themselves to school routine. There were no academictype classes given during the summer session, only lessons in deportment and social grace and the like.

So when the notice came from the school, Mom asked me if I'd consider trying out her plan — a sort of experiment which could be terminated at the end of the initial session if I found it not to my taste. It was up to me entirely.

Well, I must say that I didn't waste much time thinking it over before I decided to go along with her idea. Several factors led to my quick decision.

For one thing, I was still very much addicted to feminine frills even though my cross-dressing activities were infrequent. I was built somewhat on the small and slender side for my age. And the challenge of my ability to act out the social role of a girl was too great to pass up.

What really swung my decision, however, was something strange that had begun to happen to me during the early days of puberty. My breasts had begun to grow!

The condition was not severe or particularly alarming, but I was well aware of it and hated like the devil to have any of the other kids see me without a shirt on. The condition itself was not too unusual in boys of my age. Sometimes during puberty the hormones get a little mixed up and a temporary gynecomastia is created, which usually disappears a few years later.

While my strangely budding breasts were a source of some distress to me, I found also that they were a huge asset when it came to dressing up as a girl. At the time I had no idea that they were temporary, and it gave me the notion that perhaps I was destined to be a girl. My mother was aware of them, of course, and I suppose she took them as a kind of omen. I'm sure that it played a large part in her decision to go on with the experiment.

Mother was so pleased when I decided to go along with her idea, she marched right out and bought me the kind of feminine wardrobe that would make any girl - or any young TV - starry-eyed with delight. And she didn't wait until the summer session was about to begin. She had me all outfitted two months in advance, so as to train me to take care of my clothes and to act out the part of a girl before I was put to the ultimate test. My usually longish hair was permitted to grow even longer, and by the time the special session began it was of a length suitable for a girl's coiffure. I got a bit of razzing from my eighth-grade classmates that Spring, but I discouraged that by dealing out a bloody nose or two.

I'll never forget that April day when Mom introduced me to my new wardrobe. My old feminine wardrobe which I'd used for play purposes was nearly outgrown and it was discarded entirely, to be replaced by new, up-to-date, perfectly fitting sub-deb clothes which brought joy to my heart.

I'd just emerged from my morning shower that bright Saturday morning, and when I reached for my bathrobe, I found that it had been replaced by a lovely pink negligee, all frothy with lace and ribbons. I knew then that Mom had planned a surprise for me, so I slipped it on happily and rushed to my bedroom, where Mom was waiting for me. On the bed were piled packages and boxes bearing the names of some of the most fashionable girls' shoppes in town, and I opened them eagerly to find they contained dresses, sweaters, skirts, lingerie of all descriptions, brassieres, tiny panty-girdles, nylon stockings, and a variety of shoes - some with medium heels and some with low heels for sport wear.

We quickly emptied a couple of drawers in my chiffonier to make room for my windfall, and Mom put some delicately scented sachets in them to lend their fragrance to the new clothes. I laid each item gently in its proper place, gloating over it like King Midas must have gloated over his gold. I really wanted to try everything on then and there, but I decided to introduce myself to each change of attire at the time I would wear it, to sort of spread the pleasure out.

When everything was in place — dresses and skirts hanging neatly in the closet and shoes in a shoe rack — I stood back and smiled my appreciation.

Mother put an arm across my shoulder, her face beaming. "I can see that you'll take very good care of your wardrobe," she said, "but don't you want to select an outfit to wear today?"

"I don't know where to begin," I said, shyly, "and there's so much to choose from."

"Why not start with the lingerie?" she suggested. "That's the logical place to begin. Here, let me help you."

She reached into a drawer and brought out a delicate pair of pink lace panties and a matching sub-teen bra. She held up the panties in front of me, and I almost fainted with desire for them, but I managed to take them from her and go over to the fulllength mirror. I loosened my filmy negligee and slipped the soft panties up my legs with trembling fingers, then admired their perfect fit in the mirror. Finally, I tore myself away from my reflection, fastened the negligee about me once again, and returned to where Mom was regarding me with amusement.

"Come now," she said, "you needn't be so modest. Let me see if they fit you right." I removed the negligee and modeled them for her, blushing a little. "Why, they're just fine," she said, holding out the bra so I could slip my arms into the shoulder straps, shuddering with sheer pleasure. It was the first time in my life I'd ever worn a bra, and I had some inkling of the emotions of a young girl trying on her first bandeau.

The bra was lightly padded and had some sort of mechanism which uplifted my breasts and gave me a bustline any girl my age would envy. Mom adjusted it carefully and showed me how to arrange the flesh to give the best cleavage. I was amazed at the results.

Next came a tiny garterbelt which matched the bra. When it was arranged about my slender waist, the lace-covered suspenders hung down through the legs of my panties, and Mother helped me roll on a pair of gossamer silk stockings and affix them to the suspenders. Then she bade me to go into her bedroom and sit at her vanity table.

There she showed me how to apply makeup. I didn't need very much — a tiny bit of mascara to darken my long eyelashes, a smidgen of eyebrow pencil after she tweezed out a few stray strands, a little cream rouge to highlight my cheeks, a light dusting of powder, and a bit of light pink lipstick which she carefully brushed on after outlining the edges of my lips. My freshly shampooed hair was then fluffed out into a casual style and a skein of hair which matched my own natural blonde attached at the rear with bobby pins.

Mother stood back to admire her work. "I do declare, Bobbie. You are positively beautiful!" I was momentarily surprised at her calling me Bobbie, even though my name is Robert, and she explained that I had been enrolled in the school under the name Roberta, Bobbie for short.

As Mom turned her attention to my nails, which she painted with a nail polish which matched my lipstick, I stared at myself in the mirror, dumfounded at the transformation she had effected with so little makeup. I looked only slightly like my male self, and I was indeed lovely.

Then she led me back to my own room, where she helped me into a nylon slip which was frothy with lace at hemline and bust. She adjusted the shoulder straps carefully while I marvelled at the feel of the soft lace against my sheer stockings. I even swished the skirt to and fro in delighted abandon, causing Mom to laugh merrily.

From my closet, I selected a sheer cotton shirtwaist dress with a wide skirt to accent my hips, and Mother helped me into it, voicing her approval of my selection. It was a bright yellow, with a bit of lace trimming the bodice which softly accented my bustline. I then sat down on the side of the bed while she put a pair of black patent-leather pumps with medium heels on my feet. Although I had never before worn heels, I quickly got used to walking in them and I knew a little more practice would give me a properly feminine gait.

Mom then affixed a pair of pearl earrings to my earlobes and placed a charm bracelet around my wrist. "There, now," she said, "you're ready to go down to breakfast."

In my excitement, I'd forgotten all about breakfast, but now I realized that I was ravenously hungry. Mom and I went downstairs to the dining room, where our cook was just finishing setting the table.

"My goodness," said Martha, "don't we look lovely this morning!" The sincerity with which she said this put me immediately at ease. She had worked for us for many years and had seen me dressed up on a number of occasions. "I'm certainly going to enjoy having such a lovely girl around here, Miss Roberta."

"Thank you, Martha," I said, squeezing her hand affectionately. "You're very kind."

*

The days which followed were filled with delight. There were shopping trips to add to my wardrobe, afternoon teas to which Mom took me, introducing me as her nièce when there were people present who knew me in my male role, and many excursions of various kinds — to picnics, to the theater, and so on — to add to my confidence when in public. Each afternoon after school, I would rush home to change from Bob to Bobbie, and each night I'd crawl into bed in a soft, silken nightie, exhausted with pleasure. It was the happiest time of my life in many ways. Then, a week after school was out, the day came to leave for my new school and the adventures which awaited me. That week was a busy one — helping Mom sew on identification labels on my new clothes, a long session at the beauty parlor where I had my first permanent, and a final shopping spree to buy cosmetics and accessories to prepare me for life at school. Since my wardrobe was unusually large for a girl my age, we decided to leave some of it at home. Mother would be seeing me each weekend and I'd have access to whatever I wanted from what was left behind.

By this time, she was so caught up in the spirit of the thing that she looked upon me as really being a girl. I knew better, of course, but I wasn't about to challenge her illusions.

As we drove out to the school that fateful morning, I felt a little nervous. I knew that no one at the school knew that I was not what I appeared to be, not even the headmistress, and I was a bit worried about what lay in store for me. I mentioned my doubts to Mom, but she told me that she had every confidence in my ability to behave as a properly brought up girl should. "In a few days, it will all seem perfectly natural to you, Bobbie, and I'm not worried at all." Her assurances helped a lot to dispell my nervousness, but I still had a few vague doubts.

As our car pulled into the driveway of the school — which was housed in a huge mansion on a hundred acres of wooded land — I had a momentary pang of outright fear. The parking area was filled with cars which were unloading young girls and their parents, and as our car stopped, I sat there as if frozen to my seat. It was too late now to back out, as I well knew, but it took a supreme effort of will for me to move myself out of the car at Mom's urging.

As we met the headmistress at the front steps of the school, I felt as if all eyes were upon me and everyone knew my secret. Of course, this was only my imagination, and I soon realized that I had attracted no more attention than any other pretty young girl would receive in a crowd of other girls. I was dressed in a simple paisley print, as I did not want to appear ostentatious this first day, but I caught a number of less endowed girls eyeing my bosom enviously. I smiled pleasantly at them, and they smiled back, and I began to feel more at ease.

"My, my, Mrs. MacAdams," the headmistress was saying to my mother, "you didn't tell me how pretty your little Roberta is." She was also eyeing me, and I suspected her interest was not entirely academic. She wasn't so bad-looking herself, I conceded — about 25, a willowy figure, and quite feminine. As we made small talk, I found myself impressed with her friendliness.

Soon I was being introduced to my roommate, a lovely young girl named Jennine. "My friends all call me Jenny," she said, and I explained that mine called me Bobbie. I'm afraid I was a little panicky at that moment, for I had been expecting to have a room all to myself. This rather complicated things, as I tried to point out to my mother the first chance we had to talk privately.

"Nonsense, Bobbie dear, she's a perfectly sweet girl, and I'm sure you'll get along beautifully," she replied. I got the distinct impression that Mother was completely convinced that I was a girl, and nothing I said was going to shake that belief. The day was so filled with activities -introductions to the other girls, orientation lectures, goodbyes to parents, and unpacking -- that I had no time for further self-doubts. I knew that everybody I met accepted me completely as a girl, and I resolved to stay on my toes to guard against anything which would interfere with that atmosphere of acceptance.

The room I shared with Jennie was lovely, very feminine with comfortable twin beds and its own private bath. Each of us had a vanity table and dresser and closet, and as we put our clothes away that evening, we oched and aahed over each other's wardrobe. We even tried on each other's dresses and found to our delight that we were just about the same size.

By the time the lights were to be turned out, we were old friends. I selected my frilliest nightie to sleep in, and I was most thankful that Mom had supplied me with a device to keep me modest. It was a kind of panty-girdle but very brief and made of a flesh-colored plastic which feathered out at its various edges to blend in with the skin. It was virtually undetectable and gave me a very girlish exterior where I needed it the most.

After the lights-out bell sounded, Jennie and I crept into our beds and I fell sound asleep almost immediately. A few hours later, however, I woke to hear Jennie sobbing softly into her pillow.

When I asked her what the matter was, she said, "It's nothing, really. I've never been away from home before, and I'm homesick." She reached out and squeezed my hand. "Can I get into bed with you, just for a little while?" She sounded so plaintive that I forgot all about the implications of sharing my bed with her and moved over to let her in. She snuggled up close to me, her short little nightie rustling against mine. The contact of our bodies, innocent as it actually was, reminded me suddenly that I was truly a boy, and it took an effort for me not to take advantage of her trust. She fell asleep immediately, her arms around me, but I had a difficult time for the next hour or so getting any sleep myself. And it was during that time that my mind had the first inkling that I was never intended to be a girl, no matter what my mother believed.

Shortly before the wakeup bell sounded, Jennie slipped back to her own bed, leaving me a bit confused by what had happened or, to put it more accurately, what had not happened. Later on, as we were dressing for breakfast, she embraced me and thanked me for my kindness and understanding.

It should be said here, to avoid misunderstanding on the reader's part, that at 14 I was a rather innocent specimen and was hardly aware that my feelings toward Jennie were sexual in nature. And certainly Jennie[®]s own feelings had very little of the sexual in them. She had turned to me only at a time when she was lonely and a little bewildered at being away from her family for the first time, and I was the logical one to comfort her.

That the overtones in our relationship were destined to become more and more sexual in the ensuing weeks was only natural and normal and, I like to think, healthy.

The days which followed were a virtual kaleidoscope of pleasures and new experiences. I soon became accustomed to being in the company of lovely young girls who treated me as one of their group, and I also became used to taking certain precautions to keep them from becoming suspicious of my gender. Such as in the locker room prior to and after going swimming and at other times when we were all in a state of nearnudity together in the normal course of routine. I even became inured to seeing the other girls more or less in the buff, and I noted with some satisfaction that I was as well-endowed in the breast department as they were.

Jennie and I got along exceedingly well, sharing little confidences and experiencing the pure joy of being budding young girls together. We swapped clothes freely, and I especially enjoyed wearing the things that were hers, that gave off her sweet scent, that seemed to hold the warmth of her lovely body in them. I suppose I was really in love with her, down deep inside me, but it was more a kind of schoolgirl crush in her mind.

On occasional nights we shared each other's bed, and if our intimacy became somehow less innocent, it is only because we live in a world which has ordained that sexual expression is in itself an evil thing to be hidden away and to be guilty about.

Looking back, I'm not sure what motivated Jennie's sweet caressings of me, whether it was some subconscious knowledge that I was male or a kind of naive sapphic experimentation, common to girls of her age. But I became increasingly aware that my response to her and my reciprocative fondlings were of a basically masculine nature. Neither of us felt especially guilty about our relationship, and we hardly ever discussed it, so natural did it seem. All I know is that my relationship with Jennie was harmless to her and healthy for me, for it impressed me with the warm desirability of the female as a love-object. With Jennie, I began a lifelong appreciation of women and gained many insights into their nature that I would never have obtained from the "outside," as it were.

Above all, it was delightful to feel her warm young body next to mine and to exchange gentle caresses through our silken nighties. We confined these to areas mostly above the waist, as I was aware that my protective garment wouldn't pass her close inspection.

For more than two months, this boarding school was a veritable Garden of Eden for me, but during the last few weeks three events occurred which were disturbing to me. I won't say that they symbolized the introduction of the serpent into my paradise, lest some readers accuse me of making an overly Freudian allegory.

The first complication, as might be expected, occurred one night after lights out when Jennie and I were cuddling together in my bed. Out of the clear blue, she asked me a question dictated by what must have been overwhelming curiosity.

"Bobbie ... I don't mean to pry, but ... why do you always wear that little panty-girdle ... down there?"

I was thunderstruck. I couldn't speak for what seemed like an eternity but was probably only twenty seconds or so. I hadn't counted on her being so observant. "Well," I said, trying to stall for time to think. "Well, it's kind of personal." That was the understatement of my life, I suppose, but it was all I could think of at the moment. And then I added: "It's kind of embarrassing, too."

Jennie sat up in bed, and I marvelled at the proud beauty of her young body which showed through the translucent softness of her nightgown as the moonlight shone on her. "I didn't think we had any secrets from each other," she said, finally. "Nothing you could say would change the way I feel toward you. You're my very best friend in the world."

"All right," I said, sitting up beside her and putting an arm around her trembling shoulders. I couldn't bring myself to tell her a lie, even if the truth would probably destroy our friendship. "I'm ... I'm a boy."

Jennie gasped, then started to laugh, but when I didn't join in her amusement at this preposterous joke she thought I was telling her, she grew very grave. "I don't believe it. It's impossible."

"No, it isn't," I whispered gently, and then I told her the whole story — or at least as much of it as I, myself, understood. Finally, she began to believe me, and, to my surprise, she was not angry at being deceived or shocked at being placed in what some might view as a compromised position. And then, to eradicate any lingering doubts, I removed the confining garment which had been till that moment my most effective disguise.

Jennie hugged me to her, not from lust but from sympathy and understanding, and I was so overwhelmed with love and gratitude that I did not take advantage of our close proximity - not then nor later on during our relationship. On her part, Jennie kept her new knowledge strictly to herself and never breathed a word of it to anyone.

The second complication in my idyllic existence that fateful summer came about two weeks later. The school had scheduled a formal dance to celebrate the near-completion of its new students' trial summer. Boys of similar age were invited from a nearby school, and my fellow students were all a-twitter with the excitement of their first formal. I must admit to sharing this excitement, for it gave me the chance to wear the beautiful chiffon gown Mother had just bought me for the occasion.

All decked out in the long flowing pastel yellow gown and perfectly coiffed and made up, I was in my own private heaven as I entered the ballroom. But when I found out that I was expected to dance with the boys who made up the stag line -- or with any boys, for that matter -- I balked. I just couldn't bring myself to do it, and I wasn't even sure why at the time.

My refusal to dance caused a bit of a stir, and my refusal to explain my refusal was looked upon by the various faculty members present as gross rebellion. But I persisted, even though I knew it might lead to trouble. Through it all, Jennie took my side loyally, for she knew very well why I was being so stubborn.

I left the dance as soon as I was able and went to my room, confused and bewildered. Later on, as I sat in my nightie and peignoir, trying to concentrate on a book I was reading, the housemother in charge of our dorm came in and announced that the headmistress wanted to speak to me before I went to bed. I knew it had to do with my behavior at the dance, but I was a little surprised that everyone seemed to be making such a big thing out of it.

As I walked to the headmistress' quarters, I remembered the many occasions she had been kind to me. In fact, it seemed as if I was one of her favorite girls. I was equally fond of her, and I felt that she would not be too hard on me for my uncooperativeness. As it turned out, however, this late night interview was to be the third complication in my otherwise idyllic life at the school.

Entering her apartment, I was surprised to note that she was dressed in a filmy waltz-length nightgown and matching negligee. I had always thought of Miss Hansen as an attractive woman, but in this casual and revealing attire, she was a real beauty and the schoolgirl crush I had on her deepened into something I felt hitherto only for Jennie. I lowered my eyes to conceal the emotions which were burning inside me.

"What happened at the party, Bobbie?" she asked gently as we sat on the sofa together. I tried to explain that nothing was the matter and that I simply didn't feel like dancing. She wasn't convinced and was certain that it was something deeper than that which was bothering me. "Don't you like boys?" she asked.

"Not very much," I replied. "Not to dance with, at least. I just couldn't bring myself to do it."

Miss Hansen put her arm around my shoulders and I nearly swooned at her touch. "I can understand that, I suppose. Sometimes our girls are not quite ready for socializing with the opposite sex. Maybe it's only because you were feeling shy."

"I don't think I'll <u>ever</u> want to be held in a boy's arms," I said, aware that what I was saying was a great truth which had profound implications for my life. Miss Hansen seemed disturbed by what I said and held me closer to her. I suddenly was overwhelmed by my emotions and the inner conflict I'd gone through that evening and began to cry.

Miss Hansen tried to comfort me with kind words and caresses. I laid my head on her shoulder and she stroked my hair, and I finally stopped weeping and began to be aware of the closeness of our bodies and her loveliness and the sweetness of her scent. I couldn't resist lifting up my head and kissing her on the lips. It was intended as an innocent kiss, but it became suddenly very intense and felt as if electricity was running between us.

And then we were lying together on the sofa, our lips still together, and carressing one another with increasing boldness. Looking back, I'm sure Miss Hansen never intended things to go as far as they did but was simply overwhelmed by the intensity of a mutual attraction, possibly complicated by the frustrations of being an unmarried schoolteacher.

In a dim recess of my mind, I remembered that I was not wearing my special panty girdle, since I had not been expecting to be in the presence of anyone but Jennie that evening. But it was too late now and in our mutual onrush of passion, Miss Hansen's hand went lower and lower and, through the soft nylon of my nightie, found incontestable proof of my maleness. But even the shock of that discovery was not enough to bring her - or me, for that matter - back to control. Instead, it acted only as a further spur to our passion, and our bodies blended together in a kind of joyous embrace I never thought possible to achieve.

Afterward, we sat quietly together for a long time. I couldn't bring myself to feel shame at what we had done, for it was too beautiful and, to me, natural for that. Finally, Miss Hansen started asking me how I, a boy, had come to attend her school and if anyone else at the school knew my secret. I told her the whole story, explaining that both my mother and I felt that I had been destined to be a girl and that I now knew that I was in actuality a boy, having proved that fact beyond a doubt.

However, to protect Jennie, I told Miss Hansen that no one else in the school knew I was not what I appeared to be. It was no use involving my beloved roommate in whatever was to come.

After some thought, Miss Hansen decided that I should finish out the summer session as if nothing had happened. There was only a little more than a week to go, anyway, and no one would benefit from my sudden withdrawal, which would have been difficult to explain. We agreed to keep what had happened strictly between ourselves, and I was just as glad to abide by that decision.

However, we both realized that my return to school for the fall session was impossible, and as much as I loved the school and the life it offered, I knew that I was not cut out to be a girl full time. I was even relieved at the prospect of life as a boy. I decided that the best thing to do was to simply tell my mother that the experiment we'd embarked upon had not worked out and that I'd be happier living as a boy and maybe dressing up occasionally.

Thus ended my one summer in petticoats. Before the session ended, however, I had several return visits to Miss Hansen's apartment — where she carefully and gently instructed me in the tender art of love.

My farewells to Jennie were moving and emotional, and we resolved to correspond and see each other whenever possible. As it turned out, that was quite often in the next few years.

Whenever we could, we'd go out together, sometimes on a boy-girl date and sometimes as two girls. Finally, the day we finished college, we were married in a quiet ceremony attended by our respective relatives. Mom has now fully accepted the fact that I'm a male; our three children are proof of that. Still, on occasion, she babysits for Jennie and me while we attend a TV party or go on trips through the countryside as two young ladies.

I certainly cannot say that I regret my one summer in petticoats. Had it not been for my brief stay at Miss Hansen's school I might never have met Jennie. And it was during that fateful summer that I found something of equal importance - my manhood!

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