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### The Magic of a Girdle

*The Magic of a Girdle* By Roberta Angela Dee



I was no more than a five-year-old, when I donned my first girdle. The garment belonged to my grandmother — a tall stout woman from the Caribbean island of St. Vincent. She wore her girdles religiously.

Girdles were not only worn for aesthetic reasons. They obviously lifted a woman's derriere, trimmed her hips and thighs, narrowed her waist, and provided her with a more hourglass shape. However, the additional benefit was that women felt secure in these garments.

#### ***That feeling of being held***

It was one thing to have a panty removed. It was quite a different matter to forcibly remove a girdle. Also, women like to feel held, as though they are in the arms of a powerful lover. A girdle helps provide that feeling of being held.

To my good fortune, my grandparents owned an apartment building in Brooklyn, New York. My parents rented a suite on the top floor of the building while saving for a home. Grandma and grandpa lived on the second floor. So, at least for a while, visiting my grandparents was a simple matter of walking down a flight of stairs.

During the week, my grandmother taught at a local elementary school. My grandfather attended to the apartment building.

#### ***I would transform myself...***

I and my three sisters had free access to my grandparent's apartment, but I was the grandchild most interested in browsing through my grandmother's girdles and bras, wearing her lipstick, and spraying myself quite generously with her perfume. Each day I would select a girdle and bra, then lock myself in the bathroom

across the hall. While inside, I would transform myself into a beautiful girdle-bound princess.

This had nothing to do with any fetish or anything that was of a sexually erotic nature. I was a child. Yet, even as a child, I knew that my body was not representative of what was going on in my mind. I wanted to be a girl. I identified with being a girl.

My desire to be a girl had nothing to do with homosexuality or any of the other labels that psychologists frequently assign to behaviors they fail to adequately understand. As girdles were used to shape women into lovelier and shapelier people, it was my hope that the garment along with the perfume would perform the same magic for me.

### ***My secret practice was discovered***

Understandably, it was not long before my secret practice was discovered. The heavy scent of perfume was readily noticed and led directly to the young culprit. My behavior was discouraged, not only because grandmother's perfume was quite expensive (Chanel No. 5 being our favorite scent), but it was also discouraged because I was a young boy, or at least perceived to be a boy.

Mother did not wear a girdle. Consequently, when we moved to Long Island, I no longer had access to the garment for which I had developed such fondness. However, by the age of 10-years-old, I saved enough to buy three girdles — each from a Woolworth store not very far from my home.

Aromi, an American manufacturer, was my first purchase. It was an open bottom girdle with a very long tiny waist and four garters. Warners, another American manufacturer, produced the second girdle. The design was similar. It had the four garter clips but I remember that it had a tiny white bow in front that I simply adored.

### ***I can't recall how I acquired my third girdle***

However, a manufacturer called Francine of France made it. Like the previous two, it was an open bottom girdle.

What most fascinated me about the girdle by Francine of France was that it was a pinkish color — not the typical white, and it had a beautifully decorative lace front. If anyone can recall this girdle, I would certainly appreciate a note via e-mail. I've not encountered any since my youth.

### ***I eventually established myself as a "legal" female***

At 25-years-old, immediately after graduating from college, I began taking female hormones, in order to live and work full-time as a woman. My first jobs were low paying clerical positions. However, I eventually established myself as a "legal" female and was able to use my degree to attain better paying positions as a technical writer.

Today, at the age of 50-years-old, I have successfully lived as a woman for 25 years, and previously lived with a gentleman as his wife, albeit common-law.

I've added corsets to my listing of favorite undergarments but still feel something wonderful when bound by a girdle. The open bottom types are far more difficult to find today. Rago and Crown manufacture those that I own. Although I'm five feet, eleven inches, and weigh only 155 pounds, I still love my girdles, and wear them whenever I'm not wearing a corset.

Some might consider these garments to be out-of-style or outdated. I, however, enjoy the sense of security they offer along with the heightened sense of femininity — not to mention how much they improve the look of my dresses. They remind me of a more romantic era for women. And isn't it all about romance?