

The pathetic and incredible fantasy of a peer's son and the 'female imprisoned in a man's body'



April in the days when she was George Jamieson—as a boy and as a young man who joined the Merchant Navy.

THE BRIDE WHO WAS 'AT ALL TIMES' A MAN

By MICHAEL McDONOUGH

MODEL April Ashley, who married a peer's son after a sex-change operation, is a **MAN**—and always has been, a Divorce Court judge ruled yesterday in the first case of its kind to be heard in Britain.

Mr Justice Ormrod—himself a doctor—said: "She is not a woman for the purposes of marriage. She is a biological male and has been so since birth."

Sex operations might relieve the distress of men who thought of themselves as "females imprisoned in male bodies."

But the operations did NOT change their sex. That was fixed at birth.

The judge granted Mr Arthur Corbett, heir to former Chief Scout Lord Rowallan, a decree of nullity against 34-year-old Miss Ashley.

HE claimed that she was still a man.

VOYAGES

Miss Ashley's claim for a similar decree, on the ground of incapacity or wilful refusal to consummate the marriage, was refused.

SHE said she had become a woman.

The judge, in a reserved judgment given after a 16-day private hearing, told:

● How Mr Corbett, married with four children when he met Miss Ashley, liked to dress in women's clothes.

● How Miss Ashley, a female impersonator who had a Casablanca sex operation "mesmerised" him at their first meeting.

● How their marriage ended after 14 days when fantasy gave way to reality—and of the tragic letter Miss Ashley later wrote.

Miss Ashley, in a black velvet maxi coat and fur hat, heard the judge say it was a pathetic, almost incredible story, in which nine doctors had given evidence.

Miss Ashley was born in Liverpool, registered as George Jamieson, a boy, and brought up as a boy. She joined the Merchant Navy but took an over-



April and Mr Corbett, heir to Lord Rowallan, together at Gibraltar in 1962.

dose of tablets after one and a half voyages.

In 1956, in the South of France, Miss Ashley met some female impersonators from the Carousel night club in Paris. Later she joined the troupe.

By this time she was taking the female sex hormone, oestrogen, regularly.

After four years at the Carousel she was introduced to Dr Burou, who practised in Casablanca, North Africa.

On May 11, 1960, she underwent a so-called sex-change operation.

"It consisted in the amputation of the testicles and most of the scrotum, and the construction of a so-called artificial vagina," said the judge.

She returned to London, calling herself April Ashley, and dressing and living as a woman.

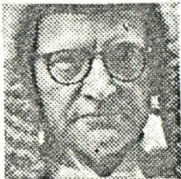
She said she had had

sex relations with at least one man, using the artificial cavity.

In November, 1960, she met Mr Corbett. He was then 40, living with his wife and four children, but sexually unhappy and abnormal.

Mr Corbett said he had had sex with a large number of women. But from a comparatively early age he had wanted to dress up in female clothes.

He had said with considerable insight: "I didn't



Sir Roger Ormrod

—and the bridegroom who was mesmerised by her impersonation

like what I saw. You want the fantasy to appear right. It utterly failed to appear right in my eyes."

Mr Corbett said that after meeting Miss Ashley, his original motive was essentially transvestite

PETTING

But soon he developed the interest of a man for a woman. He said she looked like and acted like a woman.

His description of that meeting in a London restaurant contained the key to the pathetic story.

HE KNEW that she had undergone a sex-change operation.

HE WAS mesmerised by her.

HE SAID: "This was so much more than I could ever hope to be. The reality was far greater than my fantasy."

But in the three years before their marriage their relationship went no further than kissing and mild petting.

Mr Corbett was not

permitted to handle her breasts or any other part of her body.

In December, 1961, he bought a villa and a night-

club called the Jacaranda at Marbella, Spain. He and Miss Ashley shared the villa but did not sleep together.

In 1962 Miss Ashley, who was a successful model, told her story in considerable detail in the News of the World. Most of it seemed comparatively accurate.

After his wife's divorce decree became final in June, 1962, Mr Corbett repeatedly pressed Miss Ashley to marry him.

The marriage was fixed for September 10, 1963 but Miss Ashley continued to vacillate until that very morning.

After the ceremony they returned to Marbella. Some sexual approach was made by Mr Corbett, but Miss Ashley made an excuse.

She left for London for drama school lessons, re-joined Mr Corbett in Marbella and after three

April Ashley as a successful fashion model before marrying peer's son Mr Arthur Corbett in Gibraltar in September, 1963.



days suddenly left again.

"That was the end of their relationship," said the judge. "They had been together for no more than 14 days."

A letter Miss Ashley wrote after her return to London showed that reality had broken in upon her.

She wrote: "I am paying dearly for my sin of marrying you."

The judge said that two court medical inspectors who had examined Miss Ashley reported that there was no impediment to sexual intercourse.

But a professor who carried out a chromosome test reported that all the cells he examined were male.

SURGERY

The judge said: "Her outward appearance at first sight was convincingly feminine. But on closer and longer examination in the witness box it was much less so."

"The" voice, manner, gestures and attitude became increasingly reminiscent of the accomplished female impersonator."

Medical evidence was that her body looked more like a woman's than a man's as a result of very skilful surgery.

But doctors agreed that the biological sex of an individual was fixed, at the latest, at birth.

Mr Justice Ormrod said: "My conclusion is that she is not a woman for the purposes of marriage, but is a biological male and has been so since birth."

'I AM PAYING DEARLY FOR MY SIN OF MARRYING YOU'

THIS is the tragic letter that April Ashley wrote to peer's son Mr Arthur Corbett after they parted.

I have thought and thought and not slept for days. But for all the pain and torture on my mind I see only one thing very, very clear.

That is that I will not ever be coming back to you. I don't know what I will do, I don't know how I will live. But I know I won't be back.

The last three years have been the longest, the unhappiest, the most horrible of my short 28 years. In those three years I have known you . . .

So you must understand that although I don't put all the blame on you, you do seem to have been a terrible jinx on me. I am paying dearly for my sin of marrying you.

I hope one day you find happiness. ♡

THE FIRST ENGLISH JUDGE EVER CALLED UPON TO DECIDE AN INDIVIDUAL'S SEX