

Chapter 2 - I Dress Alone

The attendants at Belle Court South are surprised the first time they see me each morning. They are a bit startled to see that I have dressed myself. What they see is the result of a planned routine that started the night before. I spend some time selecting the clothes I will wear the next day. I choose from four pairs of pants and a half dozen tops. The clothes I have selected are then carefully placed on my over-stuffed chair. The pants are folded on the arm of the chair. The tops are in its seat. My shoes sit on the floor beside it. Left shoe on the left. Right shoe on the right.

I will spare you my preparations for bed. But, I will tell you that I arise at precisely 6:20 each morning. I dismount from my bed into my mobile chair and begin dressing myself. Starting with the pants, I launch into a real wrestling match. This is the part the attendants find hard to believe. I explained to them some time ago that I would not be dependent on their assistance. I have forced myself to learn to dress alone.

Using only my good right hand, I start putting my pants on my weak left leg. I thrust my left foot into the pants and tug them up until my left foot reappears. My right leg is easier. I insert my right foot into the right leg of the pants and pull them up to expose my right foot. At that time I grip the rail that is attached to the side of my bed and stand up. I then pull my pants above my waist and smooth out the band that holds them up. The tug-of-war is over.

Next come my shoes. I slip my right foot into my right shoe and close the Velcro bands. I repeat that maneuver with the left shoe.

Now I am ready to put on my top. While it does not require the same struggle as my pants, an orderly routine is maintained. I lay the top in my lap and carefully dress my left arm. I then slip my right arm through the right sleeve of the top. After that I thrust my head through the opening of the top and pull it down over my chest and body

By that time my hair is messed up, so I wheel into the bath room, complete my ablutions and brush my hair. Voila! Decked out in my finery, I am ready to exit the door of my room and wheel into the halls of Carillon. I am pleased when the attendants voice their approval.