

For Want of a Safety Pin

By Donna Bishop

As Julie prepared for her second date with that ever so handsome Romeo better known to his buddies as Joe, she carefully tied her stiff petticoat into a secure bow. She then slid the blue taffeta floral dress down her slender body, smoothing the hemline just over the edge of her petticoat.

The year was 1959 and fashion dictated that a woman's undergarments were just that. Fancy or plain petticoats were worn under your clothing as were shoulder straps from your whole slips or your bras. It simple was not proper for underwear to be worn visibly as outerwear. Keeping to this propriety Julie used small gold colored safety pins to hold her slip and bra straps together in an effort to keep them from sliding down her arms. Julie examined herself one last time in the full length mirror, twirling around to be sure her dress was just right for her date to the dance with Joe.

The college was hosting a famous dance band. The music was a mixture of the latest tunes suited to jitterbugging and those favorite tunes for the slow, hold me tight and whisper in my ear dancing. Julie and Joe soon found the comfortable rhythm of swinging and swaying in unison. Julie moved into Joe's arms as the dance started when suddenly she sensed that something was wrong. The hem of her skirt felt like it was getting longer. Realizing that her petticoat was slowly slipping down her legs, she whispered to Joe in panic "I have to go!"

Like Cinderella she fled from the dance floor with her dress and petticoat gathered in her hands. Joe, now playing the role of the Prince sped after her. "Julie, Julie what is wrong? Are you sick? Do we have to go home?" Smiling Julie said "No, just turn around while I tie my petticoat." How she wished for a safety pin. Returning to the dance floor Julie kept checking her dress for signs of her petticoat. Joe whispered in her ear, "Next time just step out of it and we will dance away."