

**A strange
and
poignant
story
to move
your
heart.
HE always
felt that
he was
a girl
and SHE
always
felt she
was a man.**

TOMBOY'S TANGLED

EXCLUSIVE

By MAUREEN LAWLESS

EUGENE BROWN was just five years old when he realised he was a girl trapped in a boy's body.

Anne Johnson always wanted to be a man. She hated dolls and ribbons in her hair.

Both kept their secret longings hidden from even their families until the day they met—and fell in love.

Today the couple live together, their man/woman roles reversed, and they say: "We have become social outcasts because of an accident of birth. Now we want the world to know the truth."

They fell for each other the night Anne went to a Kung Fu class run by Eugene, an expert in Chinese martial arts. He recalls: "It was the

first time in my life that I'd felt excited by a woman. Yet somehow, I felt that she wasn't really a woman. Her response to me was that of a man.

"All the class thought I fancied her. Only we knew, without putting it into words, that our roles were reversed. She was the male and I the female.

"I can imagine the reaction if I'd told any of the guys that I was a woman. They knew me as a real tough character. I could floor the biggest of them in seconds. At the end of the class Anne came over to me.

"Would you let me take you to dinner?" she said.

"It didn't seem odd that this woman should be asking me out. It was as though someone had recognised me as a woman for the first time."

Anne, 33, has never forgotten that first night.

"From the moment I saw Eugene I was fascinated," she says. "That he was tough was indisputable. But to me he wasn't a man—he was totally feminine.

"It was the most incredible feeling. All the years of keeping my real self in check were suddenly wiped away. I knew there

was someone like myself, someone who was keeping his real self hidden from the world.

"I had to get to know him. I had no qualms about asking him out. It was as though we slotted into our correct roles for the first time.

"We arranged to meet the next evening. I picked him up in my sports car and took him to a restaurant. I had never felt so close to anyone before.

"We didn't discuss our feelings about being trans-sexuals. It was all unspoken.

"When we left the restaurant, I asked Eugene if he would like to take a walk by the canal. It was really romantic.

"I felt so drawn to him, I just had to put my arms round him and kiss him.

Caring

"I've never wanted to do that with a man before. Taking the initiative seemed to come naturally. I felt very protective and caring of a woman."

They parted and arranged to meet again. It was the beginning of an affair that was to change their lives.

Anne, a social worker with a university degree, was married. She had tried to lead a normal life as a woman.

But she left her husband to live with 33-year-old Eugene, who had been taunted most of his life because he wanted to be a woman.

He says: "All those years of trying to hide



THE WAY Anne was as a teenager

ANNE:

I hated the dolls I was given. I swapped them for guns and battleships.

the fact that I was a woman trapped in the wrong body were over.

"I remembered how I'd felt when I was five. I knew there had been some terrible mistake.

"Even at that age I loved dressing in women's clothes. I didn't feel like a boy and I didn't want to act like one.

"I remember being given a cowboy set for Christmas. I just went wild. I cut it up.

"I went off and cried. How could I make anyone understand that I was a girl? I grew more and more removed from other kids. I didn't have many friends. One relief was when my brother Michael was born.

"I loved looking after him. I used to stay away from school to do that.

"I refused to go to school because it was all boys and I wasn't a boy.

"Once, the headmaster called me into his office and asked me why I didn't like it there.

"I just blurted out, 'It's not the school it's because it's all boys and I'm not a boy.'

"You look like one and talk like one, so you're a boy as far as I'm concerned," he said. My heart sank. How could I expect anyone to believe me?"

Many of the boys there constantly tormented him because they believed he was a homosexual.

Eugene was caught

playing truant and sent to a training school where he was beaten.

At 17, he tried to be like any normal teenage boy—drinking and chatting up girls.

"I hated it," he says. "But women found me good company. They used to talk to me about their boyfriends and sex lives.

"But one girl didn't want me as a friend, she wanted me as a lover and said so. I was terrified, but she wouldn't take no for an answer.

Boast

"In the end, I took her to bed. I was so nervous that she took the initiative. I felt that it wasn't right. I wanted to be the woman and have someone make love to me.

"The only good thing about it was that I was accepted by the other blokes in the pub. I could boast about going to bed with a bird.

"My experiences with women taught me one thing. I knew beyond all shadow of doubt that I was a woman.

"When we moved to London I spent all my time wandering through the Chinese quarter of Soho.

"I bought any book I could find about martial arts. Sometimes I would copy one movement 300 times a day until I got it right.

"I became friendly with a Chinese family