

# **The Woman I Was Born To Be**

*by Aleshia Brevard*

*Blue Feather Books, Ltd*

This is a later-in-life continuation of Ms Brevard's memoir "The Woman I Was NOT Born To Be," published in 2001. For those who have not read her earlier book, Ms. Brevard begins with 6 pages of brief, chronological excerpts of her earlier work so the reader knows where she is coming from. To get maximum benefit from this book, you should read her earlier one first. Like that earlier publication, this one reads like a discussion between family members or friends.

"The Woman I Was Born To Be" starts with the death of her mother. Her close relationship with, but lack of understanding of, her mother comes through here as it has in her earlier work. The gap between relationships in their rural East Tennessee town and the bright lights and success Aleshia has experienced is oceans wide. Through additional stories of her life as a college professor, high school teacher, manager of a modeling agency, and – oh, yes – a successful stage, screen, and television actress, Miss Brevard demonstrates unequivocally that hard work and ambition can overcome a desperate childhood.

Her several unsuccessful marriages reflect mostly on the 1950s Southern attitudes about a woman's place. Her goal of becoming a complete woman was based on that training – a "good woman" must be subservient to her man. It was only recently, after four marriages and numerous other unsuccessful relationships that her heart accepted what her brain already knew – she didn't need another person to be herself.

This book reeks with distrust for men. Considering her actual experiences with her father, her husbands, talent agents, and employers, that should be no surprise.

After living most of her adult life in stealth, publication of her first book outed her to anyone who heard of it. Her fears that all her associates – including where she was teaching high school – would shun her as so many had in the past were unfounded. Now, late in life, she has become more of an activist. Like her books; she is in a great position to help young transsexuals find their way.

Reviewed by Dave Parker