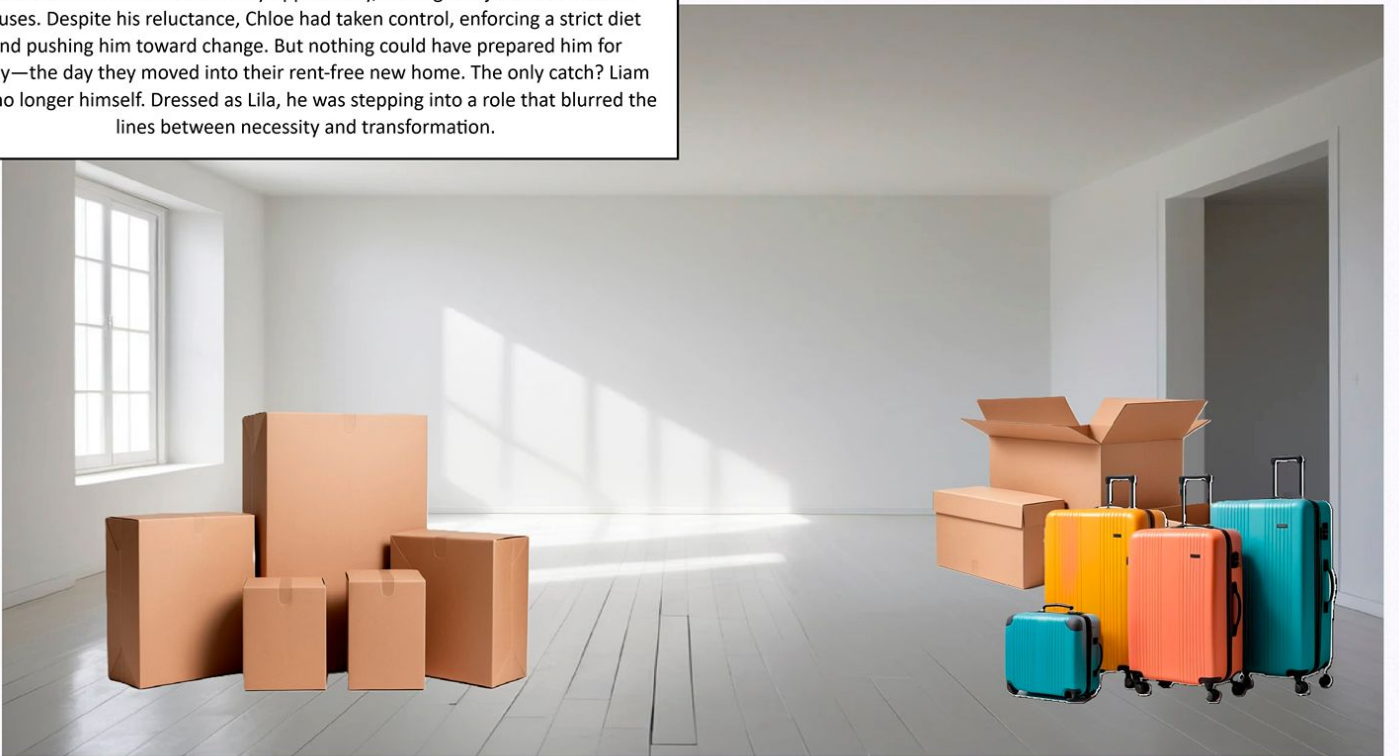


Liam's laziness had cost him every opportunity, leaving him jobless and full of excuses. Despite his reluctance, Chloe had taken control, enforcing a strict diet and pushing him toward change. But nothing could have prepared him for today—the day they moved into their rent-free new home. The only catch? Liam was no longer himself. Dressed as Lila, he was stepping into a role that blurred the lines between necessity and transformation.





"Liam, I know this is difficult, but trust me—without the hair removal treatment, your disguise would have been far less convincing. A single shadow of stubble could have given you away. And the weight loss? It only makes you blend in more seamlessly. Every detail matters if you want to survive this."

"This is all so horribly wrong! Just look at what your friend at the salon did to my face and the body! I—I look ridiculous! My skin is too smooth, too... delicate. And in the last two months, I've lost nearly eight kilos—I look frail, sickly! And this ridiculous breast inserts... Was all of this really necessary for this ridiculous disguise?"

"This is insane, Chloe. Absolutely insane."  
His voice cracked slightly, betraying his panic.

Chloe hands methodically zipping the suitcase.

“What’s insane is us sitting here, broke, with no way to pay rent. Unless you’ve got a job offer hiding in your pocket, this is our best shot.”

Liam let out a frustrated groan, staring at Chloe.

“I can’t believe I let you talk me into this. Disguising myself as... as Lila? Living like this? Do you even hear how ridiculous that sounds?”






Chloe expression calm but firm.  
"Yes, Liam, I do. But what's even more ridiculous is the fact that you've had months to find a better option and haven't done a thing about it."

Liam's mouth opened, then shut again. He knew she was right, but admitting it felt like swallowing broken glass.  
"She's not wrong, but does she have to be so smug about it?"

"This is humiliating. I'm going to look like an idiot."



"No, you're going to look like Lila, my younger sister when Britney is around. No one's going to know, Liam. Just stick to the plan. I'm not asking you to enjoy this. I'm asking you to do this for us. For our future, until we have a better option."

Chloe smiled faintly, the tension in the room easing just a little. "Thank you. I promise, it'll be worth it."

Liam looked up at her, his frustration flickering into something more conflicted. He sighed heavily. "I still think this is a bad idea. But fine. Let's get it over with."





"Remember, you're Lila now," she said, her voice low but firm, her eyes flicking pointedly to his posture.  
"Mind your voice—soften it, like we practiced. And your stance? You're standing like you're about to tackle someone."

Liam hesitated for a moment before nodding reluctantly.

Her words hit him like a cold wind, and a chill ran down his spine. He swallowed hard, his palms beginning to sweat.  
"Lila. Just for a while. I can handle this. Can't I?"

Without another word, they stepped out into the crisp morning air, leaving behind the only home they'd known for the past three years. The door clicked shut behind them, the sound echoing in Liam's mind like the closing of a chapter he wasn't ready to end.

Chloe parked the car in front of their new home. The duplex had a charming, well-kept garden and some parking space. To Liam, it was less a home and more a stage for his ongoing humiliation.





flashing him a playful smirk.  
"Keep fidgeting like that, and people will start to think you're nervous, Lila."

Liam shot her a glare but kept his voice low.  
"I am nervous. This is insane."

As they entered their new home, a woman appeared. Britney, their neighbor, radiated a confident elegance. At twenty-four, she carried herself with a self-assured grace that made Liam immediately uneasy.

Her sharp gaze swept over them, her lips curving into an easy smile.

"You must be the new tenants, Aunt Emma told me about you coming here to live," she said, approaching with measured steps.  
"I'm Britney. Welcome to the neighborhood."

Chloe returned the smile.  
"Nice to meet you, Britney. I'm Chloe, and this is my younger sister, Lila."



Liam's stomach twisted at the introduction, but he forced himself to nod in acknowledgment. Britney's piercing eyes flicked to him, and for a moment, he swore there was something calculating in her expression. Then, just as quickly, it was gone, replaced by warm friendliness.

"You're adorable,"  
Britney remarked, tilting her head.



Adorable?

I know how ugly and stupid I look right now... Liam thought, his cheeks burning.



Britney's brows lifted slightly, as if the answer intrigued her, but she let it slide. "Well, it's nice to have some fresh faces around here. If you need help settling in, just let me know."

Chloe beamed. "That's so sweet of you. Right, Lila?"



Liam gritted his teeth behind another forced smile.

“Yeah. Thanks.”

As Britney lingered for a moment longer, Liam couldn't shake the feeling that she wasn't just being neighborly—she was observing him, dissecting him. And he had no idea why.

The interior of the duplex was warm and inviting, with wooden floors and sunlight streaming through the windows. Despite that, Liam felt an underlying tension knotting in his stomach as Britney made herself comfortable in their living room, effortlessly slipping into their space as if she belonged there.

Britney: "I love this layout," she said. "It has so much potential for a peaceful living."

Liam tensed. Chloe, meanwhile, was already playing along.  
"I know, right? Lila and I are still figuring out the decor, but we'll get there."

Britney turned her gaze to Liam, a slow smile forming.  
"You strike me as the minimalist type. Am I right?"





Britney hummed as if considering something.  
"That's fair, but sometimes a softer aesthetic can make a space feel more... welcoming."

Liam shrugged.  
"I guess."

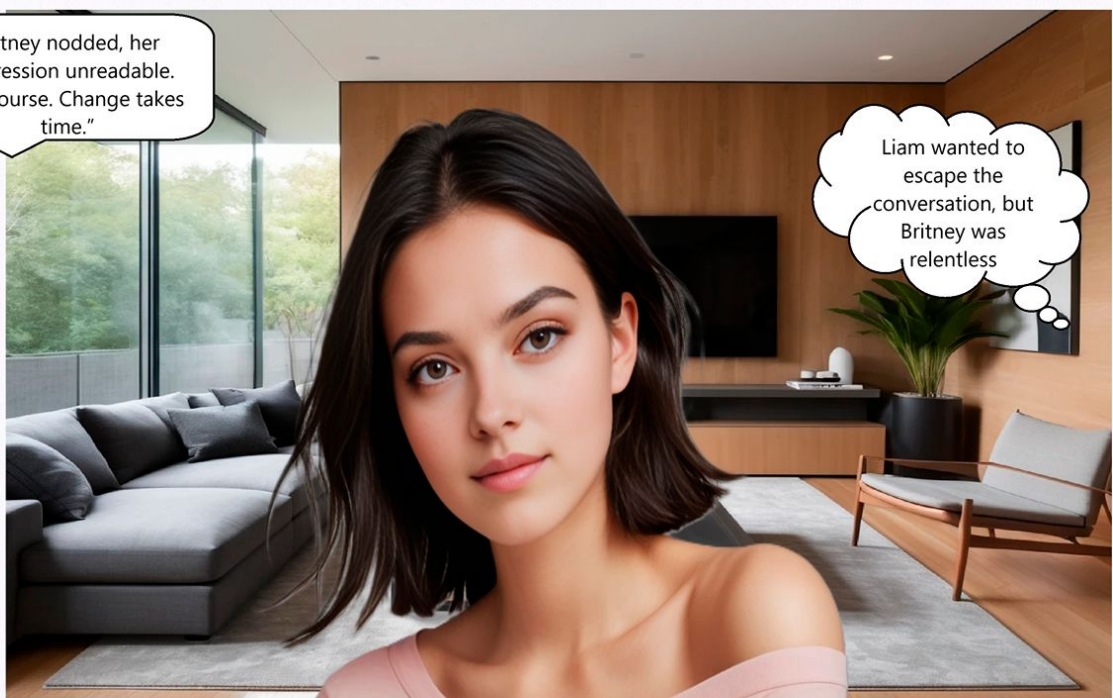


Chloe interjected smoothly.  
"We're taking it one step at a time. Lila's a little introvert. She will take more time to grow."

Liam's breath caught. Did she know? No, impossible. She was just making conversation. He forced a nonchalant chuckle.  
*"I'll keep that in mind."*

Britney nodded, her expression unreadable. "Of course. Change takes time."

Liam wanted to escape the conversation, but Britney was relentless





"So, Lila, what do you do? Are you working, or just taking it easy for now?"

Liam hesitated, trying to find the safest answer.  
"I, uh, just finished college. Figuring things out."

Britney's smile widened.  
"That's wonderful. No rush to jump into anything too serious. You should enjoy this phase—it's a unique time in your life."



Britney suddenly, and excitedly, said,  
"You know what? We should have a girls' night soon—just us. It'll be fun!"

Liam swallowed hard. Something about the way she said it made his skin crawl.

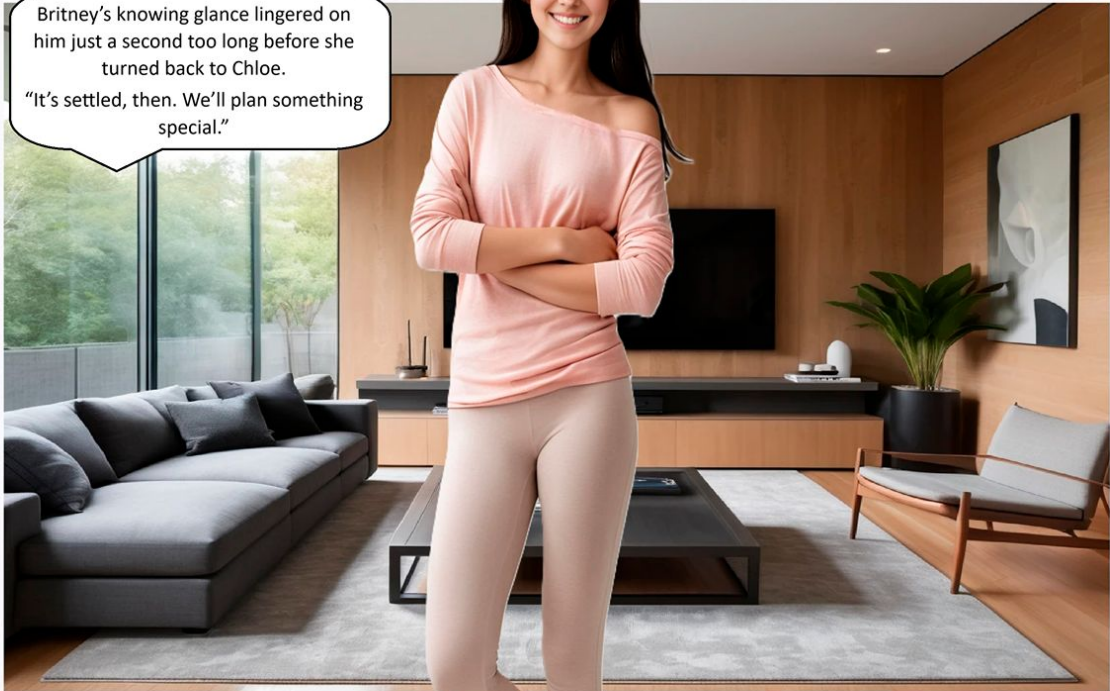


but Chloe was already nodding enthusiastically. "That sounds amazing! What do you think, Lila?"

Liam's pulse spiked. He opened his mouth to protest.....

Trapped, Liam forced a thin smile. "Yeah... fun."

Britney's knowing glance lingered on him just a second too long before she turned back to Chloe.  
"It's settled, then. We'll plan something special."



As Britney left, Liam felt a chill run down his spine. He had a bad feeling about this. And for the first time, he wondered if Chloe did too....

