

Deception



Deena Gomersall



A "New Woman" Novel



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by Deena Gomersall

Chapter One: A big problem

“So as you can see, I have a problem... a big problem. I could really use your help, and your unquestionable talent and expertise. Do this for me Logan and I swear, I will give you a very big percentage of the money that I will come into, you won't need to work again, man.”

Brendon Frobisher spoke earnestly to his friend, Logan McKlintock. He had been currently living in a huge mansion with his bride to be, Marie, and her father, Sir Charles, who owned the mansion and all of its grounds.

The father was a very prosperous businessman who had made his own money, he idolised his daughter but he held a strong disliking for the man whom she had chosen to marry,

Brendon did have feelings for Marie, maybe he hadn't truly been in love with her, maybe he was

more infatuated with the fact she was rich, but he did have feelings.

The problem was, Marie had recently been in a car crash and Logan had just informed him that she had died in hospital. Whilst he was greatly saddened by her passing it would also now mean his father-in-law to be would discard him as if he was rubbish. Brendon had no job, no income; he had lived off his fiancée for the past year and a half.

Logan looked at the man before him with some disdain. "You and I both know, Brendon, that I am already quite a wealthy man from my work as one of the worlds leading cosmetic surgeons. I do not need dirt money, nor do I need the likelihood of spending the rest of my life in prison." He replied.

"Then do it as a friend... we have known each other since we were five years old, schooled together, grew up together, fought each other's battles. Remember, had it not been for me you would never have met your wife Caitlin, Remember when I saved your skin when you got into all that trouble with the McAllister's?"

What Brendon was asking his life long friend, was, if he could create a new Marie using his or fellow surgeons skills in cosmetic surgery. Find a girl with the same height and build as her who would be willing to pose for a huge financial gain and have her face altered to the likeness of Marie.

The idea, as far fetched as it seemed, was doable to Brendon. Sir Charles Taverner was currently in America on business. He had heard of his daughter being in an automobile crash but as far as he was yet aware, although critical, she was still alive.

Taverner was in the middle of quickly wrapping up his American visit so that he could fly back to Scotland to be at his daughter's side. He was himself an extremely ill man, he had a terminal brain tumour and he had only been given four to five months to

live. Part of his business in America was to ensure his daughter would be financially sound for the rest of her life, all assets transferring over to her name. Now he also wanted to ensure her no good gold digging fiancé was out of the picture just in case he tried muscling in on her own wealth if she died.

“Your idea is ludicrous Brendon, highly dangerous. Yes, I., or colleagues, probably could create Marie’s likeness to another face but If you went around Scotland asking girls if they were prepared to change their faces for a wealth of money, you may well find one low life who would say yes... but more likely, you would also ask a girl who would feel disgusted by your suggestion... and they would go to the police? Investigations would arise, it would be discovered that Marie was already dead and that you were trying to commit fraud. You are not thinking this through, mon.”

“And if I sat idly back and did nothing? The old man returns tae Scotland... he would find that his daughter was nae dead, the man hates me for fuck sake! Now, if I got to marry Marie, then., as her husband, I would have share in the estate, the business, the family wealth and I would run things once the old man died. But, once she is declared dead, he will kick me out the home; I would be penniless, jobless and homeless.”

“You wouldn’t be homeless if you attempted such a thing... you would be living in a prison cell. I cannot put my livelihood on the line for such a fool hardy idea. You cannot take the risk that the first person you asked would welcome doing such a thing and not be so shocked and outraged by the suggestion, as not to report you.” Logan blasted.

Brendon sat down, agitated. Why couldn’t Marie have lived until they were married? He would marry into the wealth of the family and her interfering father would be dead within a few months. Why did she

have to go and get herself killed right now? When he had been so close!

Suddenly he became still... deep in thought. Could he do such a thing to a long-time friend?

“How would yer loving wife feel if she knew about the affair ye had with her own cousin, Maisie, two years back, Logan?” He asked.

Logan turned and looked hard at the man in front of him. “What? You wouldn’t.” He bellowed.

“Wouldn’t I? I am desperate here Logan and I had hoped for ye to come forward for me. It’s alright for you, isn’t it? Ye are wealthy and living in ya own fancy hoose.”

“You could never prove it. Your word against mine, man.”

“You are forgetting that video we made in Montrose. You with her, me with Amelia Aitken... remember? I still have it.”

“Even if you did ever show it to Caitlin, it was two years ago. I would say it was all innocent, she may be annoyed but she would forgive me.”

“And you would like to take that chance would ye? How about the chance of you getting away with your tax evasion for all of those years? That money you laundered in order to finance your practice? If I put out the word to the police they would need tae investigate.”

Logan’s face distorted as his face reddened in rage. “You scoundrel, Brendon Frobisher... to think I have called you my best friend for all of these years.”

“Don’t take it so personally, mon. I am only doing what I need to do. Yes, friend for all of these years and yet when I begged a favour, you dismissed it without

a second thought, regardless that it would ruin me, ruin my life.”

Logan sat down. Seeing how desperate Brendon looked, he had little doubt that the man would carry out his threats. He was very unsure how Caitlin would react to his cheating on her, and Brendon was right, with such allegations made about his tax dodges, the authorities would be duty bound to investigate.

“It would appear you have me by the short and curly’s., yes, I believe my colleagues and myself do have the skills to reproduce Marie’s face with plastic surgery, but I still say just asking random girls if they would be prepared to do something like that, no matter how juicy the carrot, it would be a gravely dangerous thing to do.”

Brendon knew what his friend said was likely true. Somewhere out there though, there would be such a girl, a girl who would do anything for money... but it would be a huge gamble in trying to find her.

“So... can we not just kidnap a girl? Take her against her will... do something to her mind? It could be said that the accident had damaged Marie’s brain in some way?” Brendon suggested.

“You are still thinking illogically. If a girl goes missing then a search for her would be made, she would probably be presumed dead after a period of time, then a full on murder investigation would be launched. And, do you think if we presented Taverner with the girl, even if he did truly believe her to be Marie, if she was no longer compos mentis..., not able to be responsible for her own thoughts or actions., do you think he would surrender her to you in marriage, knowing you would take control of everything?”

Brendon put his head into his hands. “What am I to do, Logan?” he wailed. “Why oh why did she have to go and get herself fucking killed?”

Logan was still angry at his friend for attempting blackmail on him in the way he had, but he did also understand the implications of Marie’s death on him.

“Your ideas, I guess I must say, are not as extreme as they sound. If we did find a person with Marie’s height and build I have every confidence I could build a likeness to her. Even if not fully exact, as you say, slight differences to the face could be placed on injuries sustained in the accident.

And it is entirely possible to slowly alter a person’s thinking. With brain washing and subliminal messaging whilst causing confusion, we could even have a girl start to believe she was Marie. But it would all take time, lots of time... and, with Sir Charles not having long left to live, time is not really on our side, old man.”

Chapter Two: A very special day.

Barbara was all smiles. This really was the best day of her life. She looked upon all of the happy and cheering faces as she stood in the bright sunshine, five bridesmaids and several of the female wedding guests had gathered together ready for her to throw her bouquet.

Her new husband, Alan, joined in the cheering as he shook the hands of several guests, waiting for his bride to join him in the car that his brother, Glen, was loaning them, ready to go off on honeymoon.

The cheers got louder as the bouquet was tossed into the air and it was Cindy, a long time friend from school and one of her bridesmaids who caught it, not that Cindy was currently seeing anyone seriously.

Having posed for numerous family photographs and thanking everyone for coming, Barbara lifted the hem of her satin wedding dress and made her way back into the reception area and into the side room where she disrobed from the beautiful gown she had worn and changed into a more suitable top, cardigan and skirt. She also replaced her matching satin shoes for a pair of flats before brushing her hair and briefly repairing her make up.

Once she was done Barbara walked back out into the courtyard and back into the crowd of laughing and talking guests, making her way over to where her Mom and two sisters were standing.

“Love you Mom. I will phone you as soon as I get to our hotel, okay?” She said as she pressed her lips gently to her Mother’s cheek.

“You had better,” Mom laughed. “You go and enjoy yourself... Oh darling, I am so proud of you, you look so beautiful.”

Barbara felt a tear forming in her eye but she didn’t want to cry, she wanted nothing to spoil this day for her. She had just married the man she loved, the most caring and thoughtful man in the world... and to her, the most handsome.

Okay, Alan wasn’t the manliest of men, he was roughly the same height as she was, maybe an inch taller, and he had the same slim build, but he had the heart of a lion and she knew he would protect her from anything. He was also a wonderful lover.

At twenty five Alan also had very youthful looks too. He had a fresh clear complexion, clean shaven, though his beard growth was not very strong anyway and he had a good head of light brown hair, combed back over his head and sides.

Barbara kissed her two sisters and then, with a wave to the crowd and a blown kiss to her Mom and sisters, she made her way over to her new husband.

Alan smiled as she arrived at the car. “Finally, Mrs Rutledge, I have you all to myself.” He greeted with a wide smile and then leaned to kiss her soft lips. “Well, our baggage is all packed; we have a full tank... let’s get off to that dream holiday of yours, shall we?” He added.

Barbara knew that Alan would have taken her anywhere in the world for her honeymoon, but she had always been fascinated by photographs and documentaries of the Highlands of Scotland, so wild and beautiful. Her Grandmother on her father’s side was Scottish, and spoke about it a lot... but she had never been there. It was her perfect destination.

Alan’s brother Glen had loaned the newly weds his car for their two week holiday and Barbara’s mother had booked them into four different hotels to stay in different parts of the country, their final stay being at an old castle overlooking lochs and mountains.

They hadn’t got far out of town however before Alan was looking agitated. Barbara had not noticed her husband’s change of expression at first as she was settled back in her chair reliving her day over again and looking at photos taken on her cell phone.

“I’m not too happy about the performance of this car honey.” Alan told her.

“Why what’s wrong, darling?” She responded as she now looked at his concerned expression.

“Can’t you feel it juddering? There seems to be a bit of a problem... and the brakes are none too keen, I have to put my foot right down on the pedal.” As he spoke they were approaching a set of lights that had just turned to red. Alan compressed the brakes with his foot.

“Oh! This car of Glen’s is useless. The brakes aren’t very good at all and it seems as though the petrol isn’t getting properly through the inlet valve to the engine... probably due a good clean out. I have to put my foot right down to bring the car to a stop. I think we should go over to the car hire centre and hire a car for our holidays.” He suggested.

“What! But Alan, by the time we have got a car, with all the extra costs involved... the whole reason that Glen let you use his car, and by time we have returned his to him, we are going to be really set back in time.” Barbara frowned in dismay.

“Well yes we will be, but surely it is better to lose an hour or so now than to be going right up to Scotland and have Glen’s dodgy car spoiling our honeymoon.”

“Barbara didn’t look happy about the suggestion, she had really been looking forward to their honeymoon together and they already had a long journey ahead of them. She did not want to get to their first stay and then be going straight to bed because of the time. “Well just how bad is it Alan? I really would be happier just to be on our way. We don’t want anything spoiling the first day of our married lives do we?”

It was exactly that which Alan was trying to avoid. The car was not running smoothly and the brakes weren’t very keen but he supposed he could manage... it would just be more preferable to drive with a car that worked okay... and safer.

“I guess I could manage but I would feel better about not driving a defective car if I could help it.” He answered.

A pout appeared on Barbara’s pretty lips. “Oh honey, Going back now, when we have just set off... I don’t know.., it just seems to spoil things. I mean, we

will be going up on the motorway anyway... not much stopping or turning to do.”

“We are going up the A1 honey, I guess I could stay on the road all the way to Edinburgh though I had intended to turn off on the A697 then join the A68 up to the city, but what about after our drive up? We are going to be using the car a lot in getting around and a lot of the terrain and roads may be a bit tricky.”

“‘A to Z Car hire’ have lots of branches all over the country, there is sure to be one in Edinburgh. So, we can get there this evening then locate their branch in the morning and hire a car up there. I’ll look up where it is on my phone right now if you want.”

Alan sighed. It was obvious that Barbara wasn’t keen on them changing the car at the London branch and he didn’t have the heart to force the issue, the day had been perfect so far and he didn’t want things to spoil it for her. Still, he hadn’t planned on returning back to Edinburgh at the end of their honeymoon in order to return a hire car and pick up Glen’s.

“I guess I can manage with this car, I mean, Glen uses it every day for work, as a rule and he manages. He’s just too tight to pay for a proper M.O.T. I guess we will be okay.”

Soon the two were out of London’s suburbs and heading over for the A1. Alan intended to enjoy himself... dodgy car or not.

Chapter Three: The Return of Sir Charles Taverner

“That is preposterous.” Sir Charles Taverner blasted, “You are telling me that my daughter has been involved in a near fatal accident..., that she is on some life support machine whilst they try to fix her body... yet I, her own father, cannae visit her?”

“There are complications sir, Marie is in a very bad way and... if I may, your condition.., I do not think it would be wise for you to see her as she is, it would be very upsetting for you... there was much traumatic injury to her face, Sir...and then there is risk of cross infection. I do assure you that we have the very best surgeons working on her, they assure me that with cosmetic surgery and time for her to heal; she will be as good as new, hardly any scarring or anything.” Logan McKlintock tried to explain to Taverner.

“I do have to agree with Logan, Sir Charles. It is for the best and I myself cannot be allowed to see my fiancée.” Brendon joined in.

Taverner’s eyes blazed at the man. “And why on earth should I take any notice of you? You already know my thoughts on you marrying my daughter.” Taverner stopped as a thought came to him.

“Tell me, McKlintock, just how long is my daughter expected to be treated in hospital?” He asked suspiciously.

“I really do not have the answer to that, Mr Taverner, but I would suggest it could be several months if not a little longer, for all of her injuries to heal.” McKlintock replied.

A half smile spread across Taverner’s lips. “And I am right in saying that you and this no good waste of space are good friends, am I not?” The old man replied, pointing a finger in the direction of Frobisher. “Do you really take me for some fool? Sadly, I have to

presume that the truth is my dear daughter was killed in that car crash... I can get the records of that from the police, ...and you are both thinking that by telling me she is alive, yet I cannot see her for myself, that I will just believe she is still living and then just conveniently die from my tumour... is that your game?"

Logan McKlintock had not been idle. He had gone to inform his friend of Marie's death before the death had been officially recorded to the police. A certificate of her death had been produced but not yet stamped or officially authorised and recorded.

Whilst Taverner had been jetting back to Scotland, McKlintock had been calling up a few favours owed to him. The doctors and surgeons closest to him, many of whom had made grave medical bad practices over the years, of which he had cleaned up for them, were in the know of Marie Taverner's death and the implications. They were prepared to state that Marie really was still alive and was being treated for her injuries in hospital.

"I am sorry that you have such distrust in me, Mr. Taverner, especially at such a bad time as this is. Please, do feel free to call the police... or phone the hospital, ward twenty two... they will confirm everything. You may even use my phone." McKlintock countered, reaching into his pocket for his cell phone.

Taverner shot the man a look as he took out his own phone and rang the number of the local police station, asking to speak to the chief superintendent.

"...Yes, I truly am sorry about your daughter Sir Charles. I can confirm that she was involved in a near fatal car accident and that she was taken to St Andrew's hospital. I have so far not received anything further of her condition from them and, on that alone, I would presume that mercifully, she is still alive and being given very good care." The chief su-

perintendent informed Taverner, whom he knew quite well.

Still not satisfied, Taverner did ring the hospital and was put through to one of McKlintock's work colleagues... Raymond Broadie, a man whom McKlintock had pressured into keeping the falsified story alive.

"Yes, we do have Marie Taverner at the hospital. She is in a serious but stable condition. At this time we are keeping her in an induced coma but we have great hopes that we can successfully repair her injuries and that she will live...."

"...No, I am sorry Mr. Taverner, I cannot allow any visitation at this time. You would not be able to communicate with her anyway. I would be prepared to let you look into the room she is in, through the window from the outside, but that is as far as I can allow... for your own daughter's safety."

The confirmation of his daughter being in such a bad state distressed Taverner. He felt weak. If she should die then he may as well die now, too, not having long to live anyway. But before that event he would do all in his power to prevent Brendon Frobisher worming his way into the wealth that he had made. His one and only wish now, before his tumour killed him, would be to see and speak to his daughter again, know that she was alive and recovering, before he left this earth.

Even in his distraught state, he would not show his anguish to the two men inside his home. "I want you both to leave my home now... both of ye. You do not return into this house while ever my daughter is in hospital, Frobisher... is that clear? I forbid you. If my daughter does not pull through you will not have anything else to do with this estate or my family. Go now... You may send for your belongings tomorrow but if my daughter does not return here, then neither does you."

The two men looked at each other and then turned heel towards the door. Frobisher stopped and turned around. "But I have nowhere to live, Sir Charles." He lamented.

"That isnae my concern. Now go and leave me in peace." He roared his response.

"I can find you a bed in my house for the time being, old chap." McKlintock told his friend as they left the room.

Taverner rang for his butler, Angus, to ensure the men left his property. Once he was alone he poured himself a scotch, but even before it reached his lips he began to sob to himself. He had accepted his own fate long ago, but if Marie died, especially before he did, he would not be able to bare it.

Taverner had lost his wife to cancer when Marie was but a six year old and he had raised her by himself ever since. He loved her more than anything in the world.

Chapter Four: Honeymooners

Alan and Barbara cruised along the roads through the open Scottish countryside admiring the breathtaking views as they headed towards their next destination. A week into their honeymoon already they had been staying at a hotel in Dumbarton from where they'd had a day in Glasgow and had visited Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

Their next route had been to cut over to Perth where they would go north along the A9 heading to a hotel in Inverness where they planned to base themselves for visiting Loch Ness. Barbara didn't expect to see the monster but as it was so steeped in the legend and a popular tourist destination, she had told Alan they just had to visit.

It was when Alan had reached the junction of the A9 and the A889 at Dalwhinnie that Barbara had asked Alan to pull up as she wanted to take photographs of distant mountains.

“They are so beautiful.” She had told her husband.

“Yes, that largest one that you can see is Ben Nevis, the largest mountain in Britain.” Alan replied.

“Ben Nevis!” Barbara immediately exclaimed. “Why had I not thought of Ben Nevis when I had been planning out where I wanted to go?” She kind of asked with a disappointed look. Alan just shrugged his shoulders; he had allowed Barbara to make all of the tourist decisions.

“Alan... this road junction...if we took it couldn't we drive over to see Ben Nevis now?” She asked, excitement showing in her voice.

“Well... we are supposed to be in our hotel in Inverness in three hours honey, just in time for evening meals, remember?” Alan exclaimed.

“Oh but darling... Ben Nevis! There will be a restaurant of sorts there, I'll bet, if we Google it, I mean, it's a tourist attraction. We could eat there then get to the hotel later tonight.”

Alan looked worried. He didn't like driving on country roads in the dark and especially in a car which wasn't performing very well and the brakes not being too good. “It is already well into the day darling, we should make a trip like that, setting off first thing.”

“Alan...sweetheart, I would love you even more than I do.... Please, pretty please?” Barbara begged.

Alan looked at her, sighed and then glanced at his map. “The A86... A82 gets us down to Fort William which is basically the foot of the mountains but it

doesn't show any roads off there to the Ben Nevis. I doubt we can drive to it, it will be too mountainous." Alan suggested, hoping it would deter his wife.

Barbara took out her phone. She had a signal and so Googled 'Ben Nevis'.

"It says here that from the A82 at Fort William we can exit to the Glen Nevis valley and to the visitors centre." She declared with a triumphant smile.

Alan had taken his own cell phone out, also tapping in Ben Nevis, "It also states that the flat summit, combined with fog, can easily take you in the wrong direction." He warned.

Barbara pouted. "You just don't want to go. We have plenty of time if we made the effort, and it's still a clear sunny day."

Alan was unable to deny this woman that he loved so much, anything. He wasn't very happy about it but he restarted the car and steered left. "Very well honey, seeing as you want to visit the mountain so much... but remember, if anything goes wrong, this was your idea." He said with a sigh.

Brendon Frobisher had been unsure of how to take the phone call that he had received from Angus MacTavish, the butler at the Taverner mansion. MacTavish had phoned to say that Sir Charles Taverner was now confined to his bedroom after suffering a stroke, probably brought on by anxiety regarding his daughter.

MacTavish and the rest of the staff were not the best of supporters of Taverner and his strict ways with them but they had always got on well with Brendon. MacTavish had continued by telling Frobisher that he could now return 'home' if he

wanted as Taverner would not be aware of his return and the domestic staff had all agreed that they would keep his presence secret.

MacTavish and the other employees were also concerned about their own positions and future in the home. They knew of the story about Marie and even if she was still alive, perhaps she would still die? They were, of course, also well aware that Taverner had not long to live, even without the stroke that had now bed ridden him. Without any of the Taverner's, or Frobisher at the home... what would become of them? There was not much work around, certainly not for a large home like they worked in.

If Frobisher returned, there was a chance that they could retain their jobs and their living quarters even if both Taverner's died.

And so it was, two days after moving in with Logan McKlinton, that Brendon was putting his belongings into his car and driving back to the Taverner estate.

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"I want to be completely honest with you; indeed, I need to be completely honest with you." Frobisher addressed the sixteen staff of the Taverner household, "Marie Taverner is dead. She was killed in that road traffic accident. I am sorry that I have to break this news to you as I know how much you all loved and respected her."

The news was met with grief and plenty of tears from the female staff, and even some of the males, they really had all loved and admired Marie, who had been so kind to them and such a sweet, loving soul.

"I have not broken the news to Sir Charles, though I have informed him about Marie being involved in an accident," Continued Brendon, "I have told him she

is still alive, though in intensive care. I did this to protect myself and my livelihood... and also yours. We all know what Sir Charles is like... you all know he cast me out of this house even without the confirmation of Marie's death. ...And don't think for a moment he will consider any of you or your future when his final days are upon him."

"But Sir, surely, th' Master will go tae his grave anyways, believin' his daughter is deid if he has nae set eyes upon 'er," Isla, the ladies maid, suggested amidst her sobs... she had been the personal dresser of Marie and the one closest to her amongst all of the staff, "...an' as she is now gain from the world, he isnae gonnae be seeing her ever again."

Frobisher sat for a moment before speaking to the middle aged maid. "That is where we have a plan, Isla... a deception, if I may put it. It may not sit well with some of you ... but before you judge the idea you should consider the consequences. I am planning to find someone, a girl of around Marie's age and build, to pose as her to Sir Charles... so that he really does believe she is alive."

"With respect, Mr Frobisher, Sur... that can ne'er wark. The Master may be ill, he may be dyin', but he has neither lost his sight nur his mind. He would know. Ye cannae ne'er get a girl who is going to look the exact same as Miss Marie did." Ramsay, the estate's gardener expressed.

"I understand such a thing would be most difficult, especially in the short time we have on our side." Frobisher explained, "That is where my friend Logan McKlintock comes in. He believes if we can get a girl matching the same height and build as Marie, with the use of cosmetic surgery, we can make her look almost identical to Marie... enough, certainly, to a dying man who would wish for nothing more than to believe his daughter was still alive."

“But such a deception would need the support of everyone here to act their way through it. Yes I know it is dishonourable, even macabre, but if we don’t, we all lose our homes and our livelihoods. And I promise you all, here and now... If we do this, if we pull it off, your jobs will be safe and you will be richly rewarded from the Taverner estate.”

Chapter Five: A place for the night.

Alan silently cursed his new wife’s suggestion of going to see Ben Nevis.

Oh, they had caught a good sight of it; before the fog rolled in off Loch Eli, and the fog was getting thicker, so thick that even the mountain had become lost.

“Well whoever wrote that warning on Google had their facts right. This is becoming folly darling. I mean, even if we reach the foot of the mountain you aren’t going to get any photos of yourself with it showing behind you.” Alan told Barbara in frustration.

Barbara inwardly knew that her husband was right on this occasion. “Well, I think we just hit a bad day for it, I’ll bet most days aren’t this bad. So you win, at least we got closer to it... but promise me honey, we can come back this way on our return?” She asked with a soft caress of Alan’s arm.

“It would be out of the way of the route I had planned for our return... but, if it makes you happy, then okay, I promise.”

Alan was glad to turn the car around and try and find his route back the way they had come. It wasn’t until they saw a sign by a river stating it was the

River Lochy, that he knew he had slightly misjudged the roads.

He still had a good idea of the direction they should be travelling however and he had always had a good sense of direction. It was still very foggy and the time was pressing on when they passed through a town called Torlundy.

“Hey, there are a few B&B’s around here honey and we just passed a sign for a guest house. If you don’t want to drive right over to Inverness then we could stay here tonight.” Barbara suggested.

“No, that would just be additional expense; we are already booked in and paid for our stay at the hotel in Inverness, plus, we have a full itinerary for things to do tomorrow, it would set us back if we were starting tomorrow from here.” Alan replied. Both he and Barbara had only ordinary jobs that paid only the minimal amount so neither had money to spare.

In truth he was getting weary of driving, not least with the car seeming to be struggling more. He was tired and would have welcomed a hot meal and to just relax, but he knew what Barbara had her heart set on seeing and he didn’t want her disappointed.

The thickness of the fog dissipated, only to be replaced by the gloom of the evening. Out in the wilds of Scotland there was not much light beyond those along the roads.

The extra driving was telling on Glen’s car too and Alan started to become concerned.

“I am wishing I had taken your suggestion of staying at that place back there,” He confessed, “I don’t think this heap is going to make it right over to Inverness... I can hardly feel the brakes and the steering is really tightening up.”

“Told you.” Barbara responded with a smug smile, “Always listen to the woman... we are rarely wrong. But, so what do we do now? What are your plans?”

“What ever the next nearest town that has lodgings is, I think we should stop there, and get a mechanic out first thing in the morning. I know it is going to disrupt things but if we don’t, we may not have any further honeymooning.” He warned.

Glen’s car seemingly had other plans however and, well before they reached any other town it began stalling.

“This is hopeless. We are in the middle of nowhere, on a country road with no fucking sign posts anywhere. I can’t even phone the A.A., as I haven’t a clue where we are and there is no signal. It’s getting colder and darker but this piece of shit that Glen loaned me is going to just die on us if we go much further.”

“Please don’t use such profanity honey. I know you are upset and anxious, I am too... but surely there must be some place around here.”

The car trundled on for a further mile and a half before, in the distance, Alan thought he could make out the dark shape of a building and some lights.

“There’s a place right over there. I’m not sure if it’s a farmhouse or whatever, but if we could use their phone, call out some late breakdown service... I’m sure they would allow us to pull in and help us.”

“What if they are devout Scots with a hating for us Sassenachs.” Barbara suggested jokingly.

“Then they will behead us with their claymores and stick them up on pike’s. Alan joked back.

They had to travel further along the road beyond the building before they found a road that seemed to run to it and, at the end of the narrow road, as the

building started to loom large, there was a large metal gate which had a crest upon it. The gate was locked and there was a voice box by the gatepost.

“Hell, this seems to be some big country estate and a mansion. Let’s hope the lord of the manor is a kindly soul.” Alan said, turning to Barbara before rolling down his window and pressing the intercom button.

It took some minutes before there was an answer by a man who sounded rather startled to be getting a call at this hour. Alan quickly told him what the problem was and asked if they could help him.

“Ah’ll gae an’ see the master and ask him, I cannae be letting you in withoot appropriate authorisation.” The man on the other end stated.

The box crackled then went silent. Barbara lit a cigarette whilst they waited, Alan was a non-smoker. After several more minutes the gate started to swing open and Alan drove the car through them and towards the front of the large and impressive looking building, stopping in front of a large Oakwood front door.

The door opened and a man, Alan would guess to be in his early to middle thirties, opened the door and came out to them. The man was tall and smartly dressed and had a good build and broad shoulders, dark curly hair and side burns.

“Good evening. I am Brendon Frobisher. My butler tells me you are having a spot of car trouble? Do please come in, you look perished. I will get Angus to make you a hot drink and maybe something to eat?” he said, offering his hand to shake Alan’s.

Alan was impressed by the man’s hospitality. It seemed it was their first stroke of luck all day.

Barbara stepped out of the car and looked up at the dark, looming building before her. "This place looks eerie and foreboding, Alan, like it is right out of some Hammer horror movie." She whispered as she took Alan's hand and held it.

"Don't let your mind play tricks on you, it's only because we are not used to standing in front of such a place as this, and in that it is now dark and the darkness of the building against the twilight blue of the night sky gives it a more creepy appearance. I'm just grateful that we found it and the lord of the manor seems a friendly chap."

Alan led Barbara in through the door as he followed Mr. Frobisher. On entering they both gazed around at the size of the foyer which had exquisite and very costly looking furniture, statues and trimming, a plush carpet and ornate walls. It was like stepping into a palace.

Mr. Frobisher invited them both to be seated on a two-seater couch with richly embroidered cushions as a maid came in carrying a tray with a teapot, cream, sweeteners and three cups and saucers.

Frobisher listened with interest as Alan informed him that they were in Scotland on their honeymoon, that they had lost their bearings in the fog after visiting Ben Nevis and that they should have been staying in a hotel in Inverness this evening, except that the car was giving out on them."

"Oh my, this is simply dreadful for you; and on your honeymoon too, as if it wouldn't be bad enough any other time. We are rather isolated out here... as you will have seen. There is a garage some twenty miles from here but the mechanic would have retired for the day and does not do emergency call outs. You could call the A.A. or R.A.C. but again, so far out, it would be some time.

“...Listen; please be my guests for the night. I will have a maid make up a bed for you and tomorrow, while you are eating a hearty breakfast, I will make all of the necessary arrangements to have your car made road worthy again.”

Alan was again taken back by the generosity. That’s really good of you, but we couldn’t impose upon you like th....”

“Nonsense dear chap.” Frobisher cut Alan off with a wave of his hand, “It’s your honeymoon for heaven’s sake. Leave everything to me and just relax. If you give me the number of the hotel you were to be staying in I will phone them and let them know you have been detained elsewhere. I’m pretty sure I can also get the money you paid for tonight’s stay refunded from your bill, I am rather influential.” He stated with a laugh.

There seemed nothing more to be said. Alan really did not like imposing himself like this, Barbara was almost delighted to be staying in such a posh looking house, both were secretly grateful for the generosity and kindness and that there would be no more driving along dark roads in an untrustworthy car that evening.

The bedroom they were given was luxurious. The queen sized bed had the softest mattress Barbara had ever felt and a thick warm looking duvet with a silken embroidered cover looked most inviting. They were both offered sleepwear by the maid who had brought their drinks, which they accepted, but they turned down any late night snacks. They were both, Alan in particular, exhausted from the day.

By the late evening they were both in bed and Alan was fast asleep. Barbara needed the bathroom rather urgently and although they did have a shower and



wash basin in their room, there was no toilet. It was something that their host had neglected to tell them; where to find the toilets in the home.

Barbara decided to try locate the toilet herself, or find someone to ask, her need was desperate.

Slipping out from under the duvet Barbara padded, in bear feet, over the thick pile carpet of the room and opened the door as quietly as she could. There were dimly lit night lights over the upper corridors and balcony, enough for her to find her way without stumbling.

She was concerned about walking into someone's bedroom and there were no doors to be seen that had 'toilet' marked upon the door, but some way down the corridor she could hear ushered voices talking. She would knock on that door and ask.

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"It couldn't be more perfect, I feel as though my prayers have been answered, it was meant to be." The voice sounded like the man who had offered them a bed for the night.

"I don't know... there could still be risks."

"What risks? They are from London. They are up here on honeymoon. Okay, that much would be common knowledge amongst their family and friends, but tonight they are supposed to be in Inverness. They travelled off of a planned route ...a route their family were aware of and expected them to take. They are miles from where they are supposed to be."

As Barbara listened it seemed obvious that Mr. Frobisher and whoever it was he was talking to, was talking about her and Alan. With a beating heart and trying to soften her breathing or not make any noise, Barbara continued listening.

“And you say she is, as much as you can judge, the same height and build as Marie?”

“Yes, Yes... she is perfect. And, she has landed right on my doorstep. Her hair is much longer than Marie’s and it is dark rather than red... but that is hardly a barrier.”

“What of the man?”

“Obviously we would need to get rid of him, if we were to do this thing we could not allow him to live.”

“Murder! In my profession I save lives, not take them. This doesn’t sit well with me and, on his honeymoon...”

“My dear Logan, I understand your feelings in this... it is a terrible deed, but one that must be done. You need play no part in it nor need to be aware of anything concerning it, I will take care of the man personally... your task is the woman.”

Barbara had heard enough. She was frightened, scared to her very bones... these people wished to harm her, and kill her husband. Her legs felt weak yet she managed to turn around and walk as quietly but as quickly as she could back to the bedroom they had been given.

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“Baby, settle down. You must have had a terrible dream.” Alan tried telling his panicking wife. He had been shaken from sleep from a somewhat hysterical Barbara and he had not quite come to his senses.

“It was not a dream, Alan. I was wide awake... standing up, out of the bedroom. I heard everything they said. They plan to kill us... or at least you.”

“Please honey, settle down. Honestly, that kind of thing just doesn’t happen. What are the chances of arriving at and being invited to stay in a place where the people are mad axe murderers, or something? You were unnerved by the place when we got here and it obviously got into your sub conscious and manifested itself into a bad dream.”

“Why won’t you listen to me? You idiot! This is very real... and I’m terrified. Alan, we have to get out of this place... we have to leave right now.”

So sincere was his wife’s words, whether she was dreaming or not, Alan could clearly see the state she was in and knew he could not pacify her. No matter what, he had to go with his wife’s wishes, reluctant as he was, and get them out of the house. He felt he needed to let the owner know of their departure, thank him and make some apology... but Barbara would not hear of it. They had to leave, secretly, as fast as they could.

The pair quickly dressed into their own clothes then left the bedroom and stole down the stairs. A grandfather clock by the main door showed it was eleven forty-five. They both hoped that all of the staff was retired for the night.

They made it to the front door, but, of course, it was locked and bolted for the night. Barbara noticed a large metal key on a window ledge by the door and Alan quickly tried it... it was the key. The two bolts were quickly but quietly unbolted and Alan almost stopped breathing entirely as he opened the door and the cold of the night rushed in. Mercifully there was no door alarm.

There was no talk between the two as Alan opened their car door, slipped inside behind the wheel and reached over to release the lock on the passenger side, it was only when they were both safely inside of the car that they felt they could breath easily.

Alan put his key in the ignition. Of course there would be noise as he turned on the car engine; he only hoped the occupants were at the rear of the large building. With baited breath he turned his head to look at his anxious wife and then turned on and revved up the engine, turned on the car headlights and they were ready for the off.

“Okay darling, let’s get out of this place... it was nice whilst it lasted.” He turned to look at the building. “Thanks for your hospitality.” He said quietly as he set the car in motion and they made their way up the long drive... only to be confronted with the large iron gates at the end.

“Shit... SHIT!!” Alan exclaimed as he pondered on what to do now. “I don’t suppose there is any use in calling them and politely asking them to open up for us?”

Barbara didn’t share Alan’s light humour, she was frightened, more afraid than she had ever been in her life before, and Alan sensed it.

“What are we going to do Alan...? Oh God! We are trapped in this evil place. Maybe there is another road and exit around the back?”

“Maybe there is but this high wall seems to surround most of the grounds on this side and I will expect the rear goes into some sprawling estate. Buckle up your seat belt, honey.”

As Barbara did as requested, Alan looked at his wife intensely. “Just please tell me again, all that you heard.” He asked in earnest.

“Alan, there is no time for this. We may have alerted them, they may come after us.” Barbara pleaded.

“Honey, I am going to smash the car through these gates. I want to make totally sure before causing

heaven knows how much damage, that we are justified. I mean, if it was a dream... if you had just heard things wrongly... we will be smashing the gates down of someone who only offered us shelter for the night!"

"They said something about using me for some purpose, they said I was a perfect match and said something about someone called Marie... they said they would dispose of you Alan... they plan to kill you."

Something in the way Barbara spoke, and not least the mention of him being killed, suddenly made Alan's blood run cold.

Without heeding his own advice of fastening his safety belt, Alan pressed down on the brake, revved the car and then shot it forward. Both he and Barbara's arms came protectively over their faces as they hit the gate with a mighty crash. The car wind-screen cracked but stayed intact, the front of the car was crumpled and one light smashed. The Iron gates gave way and swung open a little. A loud alarm started to ring out; renting the silence of the night and an orange light on top of the gate posts started flashing.

Alan moved the car forward and changed gears. If the car had been chugging a little before, the impact upon the gates had certainly done it no good, but Alan was able to pick up his speed to fifty miles an hour as they hit the main, narrow road outside the grounds that they had turned off earlier that evening.

Barbara was now feeling safer, even though they were moving fast along a road that was shrouded in darkness. Every so often she looked behind, fearful someone may be giving chase.

The road they were on started to climb upwards as it began cutting through hills; a wooden barrier fence ran along the edge of the road on the passenger side,

behind the fence was a continuously deepening slope.

“Alan... Alan, I can see headlights behind us... there is a car coming.” Barbara suddenly exclaimed in panic.

Alan looked through his rear view mirror but saw nothing, the road, though, was going around several corners.

“Are you sure?” He asked.

“Damn it yes, Alan... Yes. When are you going to start believing what I say?”

“Sorry darling, I’m just feeling nervous as hell... that’s all. It could just be anyone’s car using this road same as we are.” He added to try and calm his wife.

“At this time of night? Out here in nowhere land? And it seemed to be travelling pretty fast. Not everyone is trying to escape from some mental lunatic. Who else would want to travel at speed along a narrow hillside road, in pitch black?”

Barbara had a point. The road had become a little straighter and Alan looked into his mirror again at the corner they had just come around. He saw the beam of two headlights before seeing a car coming around the same bend.

Now it was Alan’s turn to panic and he put the car into top gear as he took turns in watching the road ahead and looking into the mirror. There was definitely a car further down the road, but it was catching up on them, fast.

“There they are.” Frobisher had said to McKlintock, who was driving their car as they went in

chase of the honeymooning couple and as he had spotted the tail lights in the distance.

“Smashing down my gates has just made it much easier on my conscience to dispose of that Englishman, can’t we go any faster?”

“We are gaining on them; I am not prepared to put my own life in danger.” McKlintock replied with a huff.

“How are we going to stop them? I suppose I could shoot out the tires if we get close enough.”

McKlintock looked at his friend with a shake of his head. “I think, with the real purpose of this chase, it would be better to try keeping the girl alive, don’t you? Shoot out the tires and you’ll end up killing them both. You really ought to stop watching all those spy movies you watch.”

“So how then?” Frobisher quizzed.

“I’ll attempt over-taking them and forcing them to stop, failing that, you said they were having problems with the car. It would be a matter of time before a powerful car like this Bentley rode that worthless piece of iron, down to a stop.”

Alan was driving as fast as he dared. He was having even bigger problems with the steering; something must have got damaged when he hit the gate. He was going to try his utmost to escape his pursuers but inside he felt it futile, not in this car. His only real hope now was that Barbara had been dreaming and the only reason they were being chased was that the man who had welcomed them into his home, was pissed off by the damage done to his gates.

Again he took his eyes off the road to see how close the pursuing car now was.

“Alan... ALAN! Watch out for that bend!” Alan’s eyes darted back to the road as a sharp bend was rushing towards them. He tried steering around it but couldn’t turn fast enough... he slammed on his brakes... but they too had now failed.

Everything seemed to slow down from there on in, Glen’s car hitting the fence, a crash and splintering on wood, a weird feeling of nothing being below the car wheels any longer, the thud as the car landed back on all four wheels and began rolling down the steep hillside. His wife Barbara, screaming loudly.

Alan never saw the small rock that the front right side wheel hit; it was enough of an impact to tilt the driver side of the car so that it now rolled on the two wheels on the left before turning over. Alan was shaken and tossed about as the car rolled down the hill on its side. At some point his door flew open and without being harnessed by his safety belt, Alan fell out from the car and hit the stony grassy slope with a thud.

He had just enough time to turn and watch the car continue rolling several more times before coming to a halt at the bottom.

Alan was cut and bleeding, his whole body ached, but his only thought now was for Barbara. Lifting himself he started scrambling and slipping down the slope towards the car, unaware that above him, the chasing car had now come to a stop.

Alan’s leg hurt and he could barely put his weight on it, it was broken and he ended up prostrate and pulling himself forward along the ground.

The smell of petrol hit his senses as he neared the car and he manoeuvred himself to the badly dented driver’s side door, which was hanging open.

Inside he saw Barbara, slumped forward, her forehead gushing blood. But it was her eyes... open eyes

but not seeing. Alan tried to rouse her, but she was not going to be roused... she was dead. Barbara had broken her neck.

In terrible grief, Alan's eyes watered and he started to sob uncontrollably. He had just lost the love of his life, only a week into their marriage. He held her lifeless hand and looked into her face with stinging eyes. He would have stayed there, stayed there forever maybe.

It was the sound of several small rocks and stones rolling down outside the car which brought him to his senses. He could see a gleam of light through the rear window of the car coming from far up the slope... his pursuers were scrambling down the hill towards them, their torchlight was cutting through the darkness of the hillside.

Of course, they could be coming down to help..., to rescue him. But then, if they had planned to kill him before, for whatever reason, now they had even more reason. His wife was dead, and, in affect, their chasing them was what had led to her death. They were hardly going to let him, a witness to that fact, live.

Alan let himself fall back out of the car and pulled himself as far away from it as he could, he positioned himself behind a gorse bush and lay as motionless as he could, hoping not to be discovered.

He heard the sound of two men, scrambling down the hill, getting ever closer, their torch lights flickering and the beams waving around as they continued down. Then all was silent for a long moment. Stones stopped rolling and crashing to a halt.

"She's dead! Shit! SHIT! She's dead Logan. That's it... my opportunity has come and gone. Damn it!" came an angry voice.

"Where's the man?" The other voice asked.

“What? I don’t know... he must have been thrown out somewhere.”

“We must find him; he has to be around here somewhere. I’ll look around; you phone your estate...you need to get your handymen out here by first light. That fence needs repairing; we have to cover any evidence that there has been an accident here. And we need to move this car.”

Alan hardly dared to breathe as he heard the second man moving around, his torch light searching the hillside like floodlights searching the sky for enemy aircraft during the war. Time seemed to have no meaning, it seemed like an eternity.

He could hear the voice of the household owner talking fast on the phone to someone and he heard the footfall of the other person moving around and slipping on the stones, seemingly getting nearer. Alan was frightened, cowering behind the bush, when torchlight suddenly dazzled him; he lifted his head slightly to look into the beam. Behind the bright light he could just make out the appearance of a man with a van dyke beard and his hair brushed tightly back over the top of his head. He was dressed in a tailored suit and vest.

“Ah! Here you are.” The man said as he came up to him and crouched down by his side. Suddenly Alan felt a cloth being pushed into his face and held firmly. The cloth had a strong stringent smell to it that nipped his nose, making it hard to inhale, and he felt his head feeling woozy as the word ‘chloroform’ entered his mind. Alan struggled to free himself away from the cloth but he was fighting a losing battle and he was losing his senses. Suddenly his struggles were stilled and he lay there, unconscious.

Chapter 6: An unexpected turn of plans

“So? What are your big ideas? You said nothing along the ride back but we’ve brought this man back into my home.” Frobisher stated as he looked at the prostrate figure of Alan who was lying on the carpet, having been pulled in by Angus the butler and Broadie the homes odd jobs man. “And what is the idea of covering up the accident instead of reporting it to the police? It isn’t as though the girl is any use to me now.”

“Well, I thought you wanted a replacement for Marie, forgive me if I am wrong.”

“Well... Yes, but she is dead, Logan. As good as you are in surgery you cannot resurrect the dead.”

McKlintock merely cast his eyes down towards where Alan lay. “Yes, she is... but he isn’t.”

Frobisher stood and stared at his friend, mouth slightly agape, his brow furrowing. “What? He is hardly the same sex as Marie, Logan. We needed a girl, a closely matched girl... not a fucking man!”

“Calm yourself dear boy and think rationally. What I needed was someone with a very close height and build as those of Marie, please do not underestimate the advances of cosmetic surgery. This man is very close to Marie in both.” He explained.

“Maybe so, he also has a manly face and something seems to be missing in the bigger picture here, I wonder what that could be... oh, yes...Tits and a cunt! The man looks nothing like Marie; you would never fool the old man.”

McKlintock was silent for a moment other than a sigh, and then spoke again. “Like I said, you have no realization or faith in my profession. Did the woman look like Marie? No..., would any girl we got? Our idea was for me to give cosmetic surgery to make a person

look like another. You say this man lacks breasts... so we give him some... breast implants are one of the most requested things in cosmetic surgery.”

“And we were supposed to try and brainwash whoever we had into believing she really was Marie... Do you think he will believe he is really a she, never mind Marie, when he has a cock hanging between his legs. The idea is completely ridiculous man.”

“So then we also get rid of the cock. Have you really never heard of sex realignment surgery? I have a friend who works eighty per cent of his time in carrying out sex changes.” Logan countered.

“You really are serious aren’t you?” Frobisher asked his friend in astonishment.

“Yes, I am. If you want me to do what you requested, although it would have been far easier working on a genetic female, what I needed is what I told you I needed... a person, any person, with about the same size and shape as Marie. If anything, the woman was maybe an inch too short... possibly just enough to be noticed, the man is almost identical in height, and he is slim.”

If we cover up the broken fence and transport the car, and body of the woman, over to Inverness, we can recreate an accident scene over there, make it appear she was killed there... the man missing and later to be presumed dead. All the police enquiries will be over in that region, the region the two of them were supposed to be in. There’ll be nothing in the newspapers or news to implicate or link us in any way. It’s perfect.”

Frobisher sat down, scratching at his chin as he thought. “Hell, you could be right. But a man... can you really transform a man into a convincing woman... and make him believe he is? He asked his friend.

I can answer your first part with a definitely... but we would have to start working on the subject almost straight away. The second part of your question..., that would depend on how clever and convincing we could be, everyone playing a part. The mind can be distorted. Subliminal messages could be used, perhaps hypnotherapy, but beyond anything, convincing play acting by everyone involved.”

It was already late into the night and McKlintock could do nothing until the morning when he could contact work colleagues to start proceedings, he needed to assemble a dedicated team.

Frobisher had to do the other arrangements. He worked through the night with his staff to repair the broken fence before sunlight when there could be other road users in the area. Luckily, being out in the wilds, very few cars passed that way.

They also needed to get a tractor, lifting machinery and a transporter to move the car and take it over to Inverness. The car itself could no longer be driven so it had to be lifted onto a transporter. The team had to break a fence close to Inverness and push the car down the hill with Barbara’s body still inside. Everything was done under the cover of darkness or twilight.

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First thing the following morning, Alan’s sedated body was moved over to the St Andrew’s hospital where Logan McKlintock had his practice and taken into his private theatre where he there often practiced his skills in private.

The first thing he needed to do was to assess the damages already done to Alan’s body. He had a fracture of the left femur and a dislocated left ankle. There was swelling and bruising to his right arm and

several head gashes to repair. He was then measured in detail and all of his vital readings were taken.

Mid morning a tired McKlintock sat to a meeting of close friends and fellow surgeons to explain the circumstances, hopefully gain their help and to discuss the situation and what should be done as a first procedure.

“Whilst I think what we are discussing is reprehensible, Logan, it has to be said that the NHS is in dire need of funding due to government cut backs. The kind of money you are putting on the table for any of us who may carry this seemingly deplorable act out, could help funding new research work immensely. On that basis I am prepared to come in and offer my skills and advice on this matter.” Finley Baird told the meeting.

“Thank you Finley, I am grateful to you for that and your expertise will be a great asset to me.” Logan told him.

Raymond Brodie, a long time friend of Logan McKlintock was next to voice an opinion. “For my own part, gentlemen, I have carried out, as many of you here, know, many sex realignment cases. We are learning and growing all of the time in this field and whilst there is almost inexhaustible new cases for us to work on, we also need test subjects before working on patients. Yes, it seems immoral, but this thing does give an opening for me to put into practice some new techniques that we have.

Several of the men looked upon Brodie for more information, their professional interest being piqued. “Can you give us any examples, Mr. Brodie of the kind of new techniques that you are talking about?” One asked, crossing a leg at the knee as he settled back in his chair.

“Well, yes. For example we are currently working on modifying our research of growing vaginas in labo-

ratories, these are created by using cells from a female and, you will know, we had success following our first case in this kind of surgery right back in 2008. We can use stem cells mixed with fats from a patient's body to grow additional tissue mass which we can then use to enlarge a woman's breasts without the use of artificial materials." He told the collection of men.

Are you saying you can use a laboratory grown vagina on the man we are talking about working on?" Another surgeon asked.

"No, I am not; certainly not in this case, I would use the far better tested surgical method. No, what I am saying is that the money Logan is announcing would be made available to us would indeed go a long way into better developing our experiments in the other field."

Callum Fairbairn joined in the discussion. "It has already been stated here that this whole thing is improper and immoral. I am in two minds whether to join in with this whole scheme or not. Only if I believe the person being used in this way would come to no more harm than to have his gender changed, would I consider it."

"Callum, I understand that you find this thing totally unethical, I have the same feelings about it, believe me..., indeed maybe if it was not for the fact that blackmail was also being used against me, as I have previously stated, then I too would be most hesitant. But trust me in this, no harm will come to the young man, indeed, the prospects are entirely rosy for him... he will profit from being the beneficiary to a huge estate... living in luxury for the rest of his life... we all here know how many billions Sir Charles Taverner is worth." He stated sincerely.

"Hell, if I thought I would be the benefactor and you could transform a fifty eight year old goat like me into a young bonnie woman, I would put mahself for-

ward.” Jested Douglas Conway, raising laughter around the room.

“Seriously though, Callum, your skills as a world renowned plastic surgeon really would be most appreciated in this. If we are to succeed then we have to create a face that is extremely like that of Marie Taverner.” Logan then stated to the middle aged surgeon who had travelled up from London.

“I am not saying no. However, If I did say no then have no fear, your doings would be totally safe as I would not expose you to any authorities or the medical examinations board. But I do need to think about being a part of this and I need to listen more in depth on your plans forward.” Fairbairn stated.

There followed, lengthy discussions on what could be practically done, not just in transforming Alan Rutledge’s body but also into making him believe that he was someone else, someone of a different sex. Mind conditioning and the use of subliminal messages were all brought forward.

They agreed that they needed to work on the areas most complicated and those that would take longest to heal, first because of the time factor. Surgery on different areas of the body could be carried out at the same time. The main surgery was, of course, going to be the removal of Alan’s genitalia and the creation of a vagina. Also giving Alan implants using the latest methods for total authenticity and making the breasts the exact size and shape of Marie’s, this would first require the need of breast suction pads to try give enough loose skin in order to insert saline breast sacs.

There would be a need to permanently remove Alan’s beard growth and it would take time for the burning from the laser to heal, also for removal of body hair, particularly from the chest, legs and arms. Luckily Alan was not a very hirsute man; in fact and rather luckily his bodily hair growth was sparse.

They would need to change the colour of the retina in Alan's eyes to match that of Marie's, shave his Adam's apple and tighten the chords in his voice box to make him sound more feminine... though they may also need to use the excuse of damage to his neck from the accident as a reason for sound imperfections. Head hair was another issue, indeed the more they discussed what needed to be done the more they discovered there was to do in pulling off this major deception. Would it even be possible?

It was planned to start proceedings that very evening, there was no time to waste as time was a critical factor. They had to allow for healing and for mind changing to have Alan accept who they said he was whilst faced with the fact that Sir Charles Taverner could pass away before they were ready... then all of their hard work would have been for nothing. They also needed to fool Sir Charles Taverner himself.

Chapter Seven: The transformation of Alan Rutledge

It was mid morning when Logan's car drove down the drive of Sedgewick Halls, the ancestral home of Sir Charles Taverner, the following day. An agitated Brendon Frobisher rushed down to the front door to greet the arrival; he was more than keen to hear news of how things were going.

“So, tell me... is he still alive? And was the first operation successful?” He asked fast and excitedly.

Logan hadn't even fully stepped out from his car. “Well, my dear Brendon, we are now fully committed to this; no turning back..., our young Englishman no longer has a penis.”

“So... it was successful? Brendon had to ask for confirmation.

“Yes, it has been very successful so far. We carried out a five and a half hour operation using a technique called full thickness skin grafts. We use penile skin and scrotum skin to create the labia minora and labia majora. There is a long way to go and much to do still, as you know... but he, or I should say she, has a fully functioning vagina. We have decided we will put her into an induced comma for the duration of her recovery, once we have done all the major surgery, this should speed up the healing process, so long as she is fed all the necessary fluids and air into her lungs.”

Logan’s professional explanation was totally lost on Brendon who just screwed up his face at the thought of it all. “Poor bastard, I almost feel sorry for him. Can you imagine waking up and not having your dick and balls anymore?”

Logan chose to ignore his friend’s callousness. “It will be rather more than that which you describe; in fact, some of the team had been planning on doing the breast augmentation later this evening. However before we can actually put breast implants into the new Marie we need to use a breast suction pump for a few days in order to stretch and pull the skin around the breast so we have loose flesh to work with... seeing as he is not a genetic female with natural breast tissue and growth.

“...And the Vaginaplasty was a lengthy affair as it took time and skill to save and attach the nerve endings to allow good erogenous sensitivity... stimuli of the clitoris.”

“Stimulation of the clitoris, why are you wasting time doing things like that? All we needed was for the guy to look like a woman down there... he isn’t going to know anything about how it feels to have his clitoris stimulated.” Frobisher asked.

“You are such a cold heartless soul, I often wonder what I saw in you to want to be such close friends. This is a real person we are dealing with and I am a

professional. You may have no interest in the man once you have succeeded in your deception but this person we are transforming into Marie will still have a life to live. Also, she is still of great medical interest to me as my subject, and I will want her back once you are done. I need to keep observation on her progress, see if she regresses from the mental conditioning as this is somewhat a first in this field, you know.”

“But, wouldn’t it be best to just do away with him once the will is written and the old bastard of a father is dead? Keeping him alive will mean he believes the house is his and that he has control of it.”

“ ‘He’... will be a she and you should respect that matter. And after all we are forcing to be done on her then she deserves to inherit the home.”

“But he... She... will just be in the way. No point in having ...it around at all.”

“And what then? You plan to murder her? Don’t forget, she will be your wife, if all of this works, and she is going to be the exact replica of the woman that you loved.”

“What you mean is some random dude from England who has been made to look like her.” Frobisher scoffed

“...a former dude who will be every bit a woman, react like a woman and if we are successful, actually believe she is and always has been a woman... and you have a big part to play in that. I think you need to change your attitude to the situation, there is a much needed job that you have to do, my team of surgeons and myself are doing all of the very hard and skilled work for you whilst it will be you that has so much more to gain.”

Frobisher scowled. “What do you mean? What job are you talking about?”

“Convincing the former man that he is Marie, making ‘her’ trust you, making ‘her’ feel safe and giving her love and understanding. It is all a vital part of the mental conditioning that we need to carry out.”

Frobisher pulled a face in disgust. “Give him love? Are you kidding me? I’m not doing anything like that with another man.”

“It won’t be another man, you oaf, it will be a woman.” Logan spat back in temper.

“Well I’ll still know he used to be a he. I’m a red blooded Scot, Logan, not a drop of faggot blood in me. The thought of treating him as if he was a woman... if you know what I mean, makes my skin crawl.”

“Well you had better get used to making your skin crawl then, like I said, whilst we are working all hours in creating the new Marie for your deception you have the much simpler task. The first thing you really need to do is forget the ‘he’ and start thinking and referring to her as ‘She’ you are totally going to give the game away if you refer to someone who already believes they are male, as ‘him’ all of the time.

“..And you really are going to need to play the loving boyfriend for whatever duration of time is required. You need this person to believe they are Marie and you are the one who loves and cares for her... if she doesn’t feel that then how the hell do you expect to convince her she is a woman called Marie? And..., even if you did somehow manage to get her to believe he is Marie Taverner, do you really think she will go against her father’s wishes and consent to marry you, a man who is showing her no love at all? A man who is looking upon her as if she was some kind of freak?”

Brendon knew that what Logan was telling him was the truth but he was far from sure he could be loving to someone he knew had been a man. Time would tell, however.



Four days had passed since Alan had been brought into the hospital and kept sedated. Logan was spending twice as much time as usual at his place of work, much to the annoyance of his wife who was seeing less and less of her husband.

Logan wasn't putting the extra time in to help his friend, he was doing it because, now he was committed... he had done none consensual surgery on a person, illegally changed the sex of someone... he had to ensure everything went perfectly or he could be in a great deal of trouble. And then there was the professional interest, too. He had done work on lots of transsexuals... males and females who wanted to be the opposite sex, he had never worked with one that didn't and someone who was going to need their mind altered to believe not only were they male to female transgender, but had always been the other sex.

Today there would be a new element to Adam's transformation; they would be giving him breasts. The breast pump, over the last few days, had managed to produce enough loose skin as to be able to insert saline breast forms... it was still going to pull the skin which, in normal circumstances would be painful, but as Alan was constantly kept sedated, the pain should have subsided by the time they brought him around to consciousness.

And there was to be a further procedure as the team sought to make Alan as much like Marie as possible. Marie had auburn hair and his hair colour would be changed to the exact match of hers. But natural red heads also, usually, had freckles, more noticeable during hot weather.

Ray Broadie had suggested the idea and had produced a way of causing slight damage to the melanocytes, which form the melanin in the skin; the pigmentation that produces freckles. The

Melanocytes sit just under the skin and by exposing the epidermis to the sun's heat rays, the melanocytes would become damaged and would develop in Alan's skin and come out in light freckling as Marie had; becoming even heavier by the rays of the sun.

Douglass Conway and Finley Baird would both be helping with the other day's surgery. Before starting with their work they checked on the vaginal stent that had been inserted into Alan to prevent the newly created vaginal walls from closing.

An audio tape had been made that was full of messages that would be played, almost constantly, through head phones. A volunteer nurse had agreed to read all of the messages and be recorded, it was equally important for the sedated mind of Alan to hear a woman's voice talking ...and in a strong local Scottish accent.

Logan looked at the large earphones that were already clamped to the side of Alan's head and knew there would be subliminal thoughts pounding away at his unconscious brain telling him he was a girl called Marie and giving lots of information about her life and people who she knew, all the information supplied by Brendon.

Alan was also hooked up to a line that was slowly feeding a mix of strong estrogens and anti-androgens that would begin to reshape Alan's body to a more female contour.

"I must say, your friend Broadie has done exceptional work on the vagina. Obviously it is as yet difficult to fully appreciate the results due to the bruising and swelling, but from SRS patients I have seen at this stage before, it is one of the best." Baird acknowledged as they then paid attention to the surgery that had already been carried out.

"Yes, Raymond is one of the worlds finest in this field. He has used recto sigmoid vaginoplasty which

makes the work harder and a little more dangerous to the patient, but I had full trust in his skills.”

“So what are the differences to the more usual way?” Conway inquired.

“I am no expert in this, but Raymond did explain that he would be utilizing a piece of the recto sigmoid colon instead of skin grafts using inverted penile tissue. The technique, as I understand, allows for the creation of a deep and lubricated vagina. As I mentioned, I am not fully supportive of a person being forcefully gender changed but, as we are doing this, then I intend this poor person to be given the best possible surgery that we can so that she may enjoy a full and healthy sex life.”

“Well, my friend, everything seems to be looking fine down there and as we are keeping him sedated, there should be none of the usual pain to suffer once he is brought back into the world.” Conway added.

“And we took casts of Marie’s breasts before she was taken away for burial. The casts will act as moulds so that we have the exact shape and size.” Baird explained.

Conway, who had done many breast augmentation surgeries to women, and a few transsexuals, nodded in agreement.

“When we start we will be making an incision along the border of the aureloa and the pectoralis major muscles in order to create a pocket and feed the sac under the breast muscle and begin filling the sac with saline. We will stop filling as soon as we have the correct size and shape of the former Marie. The position and shape will change, however, over the first few weeks, so we will need to keep a corrective eye on it until the breasts are fully set. The breasts will be held with tape and we will be fitting a surgical brassiere onto the patient... the cups of the bra again,

have been made to perfectly fit the size and shape of the breasts.”

“I take it the breasts will be fully formed and the incisions healed by time we take her off sedation and induced coma?”

“Of course. The swelling will have gone down, there should be no visible scarring... there may still be a few bruises.”

“That’s perfectly fine, gentlemen. Shall we begin?”

Just under an hour later Alan’s second surgical procedure to turn him into a female had been completed. All along he had been oblivious to the changes to his body; all along his mind was listening to the soft Scottish female voice telling him he was Marie Taverner, the daughter of Sir Charles, aged 24 and had a boyfriend with whom she intended on marrying called Brendon Frobisher.

There was lots of additional information, such as her Mother, where they had lived when young, all of her friends, her employment... in fact as much information as could be thought of, all playing continuously, in a loop.

Logan had intended to drive home to his wife after the surgery but felt exhausted. Instead he just rang her and booked himself in at the bed and breakfast he had been staying at recently. Caitlin was not very happy at all about how little she was seeing of her husband of late.

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With the two main operations now complete to turn Alan into a woman and the healing from the operations underway, other procedures began.

Alan's body was constantly monitored to ensure everything was working and healing, that heart rate, blood pressure and breathing were all good and that the drips he was lined up to were slowly loading female hormones into his body whilst blocking the production of testosterone.

The following day electrolysis was begun on Alan's arms to permanently remove the sparse hair he had on them, this was continued onto his legs the following day. As with his chest and arms, Alan had only a thin covering of hair on his legs which could soon be burned off.

While his body hair was being removed another operation was underway, removing body fats from various areas of his body, his stomach and thighs particularly and the fatty deposits then repositioned around his hips and bottom, special moulds were created to keep the fatty tissue in place whilst it set.

To look at Alan at this time he really did look the victim of a serious car crash, swathed in bandages around his groin and chest and bruising everywhere. But Alan's team were only eight days in and there was still a great deal to do.

Most of the surgeons working with Logan were now really into what they were doing as this was proving to be the most complete operation to transform a male into a female, ever carried out..., and in the shortest length of time possible. The team were intrigued and dedicated into seeing how well it would all work out.

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Back at Sedgewick Halls, the following morning, Frobisher was gathering the entire staff of the home together. Taverner was still feeling very poorly and was still confined to his room, which gave Frobisher the freedom he needed.

He was expecting Logan McKlintock to visit at any time and wanted to keep the staff briefed.

“My surgeon friend and some of his colleagues are working all out at the hospital to try and create an exact carbon copy of Marie.” He informed the staff, “but I must warn you all... we could not get a woman to take the place of her.” He announced.

That announcement was met with blank expressions. “How do ye mean? either ye has someone to take the place of Marie or ye havnae.” Ramsay expressed everyone else’s thoughts.

“We have someone to replace Marie, Jamie... but not a woman..., we have a man.”

The latest comment was met with a mix of gasps, sighs and shocked utterances.

“Well that be it then... it cannae work, mon... I always thought it pie in the sky even using a proper lassie, but a man! We may as well pack our bags and be oot lookin’ for new employment.”

“I was as sceptical as you, Ramsay old boy, but I am assured that what we are doing will be a total success. My friend Logan will be here any minute to give an update, they are spending a huge amount of money in carrying out this operation, trust me, they would not be wasting so much money if they did not have every confidence.

“...but it is going to need all of you to play a part too. When we have the person back, you must convince him... excuse me, Her, that she is Marie... she will probably not believe it, but if we all stick to the same tale, what else can he believe? He will have come out of an induced coma, ...that is where we try to fool him into believing his life as a man was all some weird dream.”

Some of the staff shook their heads in total disbelief that this could happen, others just thought it. Had the grief of losing Marie affected Frobisher's brain?

Just about then there was the sound of a car pulling up in the drive followed by the closing of a car door and a knock on the front door. Angus the butler went to answer it.

For twenty minutes Logan addressed the staff, informing them, and Frobisher on parts he did not yet know, on how things were proceeding at St Andrew's hospital. He confirmed that a man had been used but lying, stated that it was the victim of another car crash who's body was badly damaged, including in him losing his manhood anyway.

"Today we are removing the vaginal stent that is placed into the newly created vagina to prevent it from closing together and removing the packaging. Our new Marie has a very realistic and functioning vagina... it will take a number of weeks for all the swelling to go down and the bruising to heal but I am most satisfied with the job we have done.

"... and she has breast, the exact size and shape of the former Marie. We are working on removing all trace of body hair and changing her body shape from that of a male to that of a female, we are even going to create the tiny mole that Marie had on her upper lip."

Whilst some of the female staff was fascinated by what was being told to them, some of the men were feeling rather squeamish and a little uneasy on how easily it was being described to change a man so much into a woman.

"Ah dinnae ken how ye can do what ye do but I'll gie ye my respect." Daniel Murdoch, the head of the kitchen staff told him.

“Thank you. Now whilst all the surgical processes are being carried out we are also attempting to change our subjects mind by installing subliminal messages. Hopefully these will go some way into helping her believe she is and always was, firstly ...a female, and secondly, Marie Taverner.”

It was Brendon Frobisher who wanted to question Logan on the current topic rather than any of the staff.

“Why not just hypnotise him into believing he is Marie, I heard you mention that was a possibility earlier.” He asked.

“There are several reasons why not, Brendon, the first being that not everyone is susceptible to hypnotic suggestion and we have no way of knowing if our subject is one of those or not. Also, when I mentioned that fact to you we were in the belief that our subject was also going to be genetic female... additionally, we now have to try and convince a genetic male that he was born female... it would be far better in this case to trick the mind into accepting what isn't, is. Further, some people under hypnotic influence have been known to just snap out of it at some stage... that would hardly bode well for any of us, would it?”

Frobisher just shrugged his broad shoulders.

“Now, I am going to take my leave and go home, I have not been there for some days and I think my wife will be getting ready with the rolling pin.” He half joked, “There will be some continuing work on laser hair removal but mostly we are giving the body a chance to rest from what has been done... we can over burden the healing process. On the 1st May, three days time, our next surgical operation will be on changing the voice... I shall tell you more on that at the time Brendon, but we are hopeful of changing a male voice to a female one and we have a specialist

surgeon flying in from Zurich for that. I will see you then.”

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Chapter Eight – More modifications to Alan Rutledge

After some rest at home whilst nurses kept an eye on Alan, keeping him clean and stabilised, Logan tried to fix things with his wife. It was on the first day of May when Logan returned to the hospital to meet with the specialist who had flown in from Zurich to carry out the voice modifications.

Whilst Logan awaited the man’s arrival he looked over the healing body of Alan. With all the packaging out of the newly created vagina it now just needed the continued dilation, which was being given three times a day to stop the inner walls healing over and closing.

Much of the initial swelling from the sex change operation, carried out thirteen days ago, was now going down and Logan could see all of the positive signs that he had hoped for.

The skin on the arms, legs and torso looked very red and sore from the electrolysis, which was now complete. Electrolysis work had already been carried out on Alan’s chin so that it had an healing period before cosmetic surgery was carried out to reshape the chin to look like Marie’s, this was going to involve shaving the bone.

It was one o’clock in the afternoon when Bastien Fehrmann arrived at St Andrew’s hospital, after travelling up from Glasgow airport. Most of the team working on Alan’s transformation had come in to meet him.

They all sat down taking coffee and snacks whilst Bastion, who had no idea he would be working on someone who had not consented to a change of sex, talked about what he could do.

“I will start proceedings by performing a cosmetic thyroid cartilage reduction, gentlemen., which I am sure most if not all of you will know is a tracheal shaving and which will render the Adam’s apple undetectable.

“There are several methods that can be used to feminize the male voice, CTA is one, this is Crico-Thyroid Approximation. Then there is LAVA; Laser assisted voice adjustment. I am open to carrying out either of these techniques as you would wish.” Fehrmann informed them.

“What would the first one involve... the CTA?” Raymond Broadie questioned.

“Ah, now let me start by explaining a few of the things. The characteristic pitch or fundamental frequency ... F₀ of the male voice, ranges from about 100 to 150 Hz; and for the female voice, F₀ ranges from 170 to 220 Hz. By reducing the voice box, these procedures can increase the pitch of the voice. There is another distinctive characteristic of the voice which is resonance. The timbre or resonance of the male voice is most usually deeper than females; this is due to the greater length of the male upper airway. Currently there is no procedure to help modify the resonant character of the voice, but, by altering the fundamental frequency, this is the more important factor.

“CTA is the commonest and perhaps the safest technique. In this procedure, the Adam’s Apple is pushed against the cricoids cartilage to which it is then stitched. This puts pressure on the vocal cords, tightening them and raising their pitch.” He explained.

“And the Laser assisted voice adjustment...?” Logan asked.

“Yes, Laser assisted voice adjustment is another used option. It is an endoscopic surgery which is irreversible and still considered experimental; however, it has shown some success in raising the frequency of the male-to-female transsexual’s voice by as much as 100 Hz. The procedure involves reducing the thickness of the vocal chords with a carbon dioxide laser. Reduction in the vocal chord mass, and because the vocal chords stiffen as they heal, it causes them to vibrate faster once healed, creating a higher pitch.”

“And it’s success rate?” Logan continued questioning.

“As I say it is experimental but we did make an experimental case study where thirty one patients and thirty one genetic women were used. A panel of blind folded listeners heard pre-recorded tapes of all the voices and only half of the post Lava patients were identified as genetic males. This was followed-up after 23 weeks and it revealed pitch increases averaging 26 Hz. Self-evaluations revealed increases in voice femininity, congruity with self-image, and satisfaction from all patients.”

“It would seem to me that the LAVA method could be the best one for us to use then.” Finley Baird suggested.

“There is one slight drawback; gentlemen... the initial tests showed decreased vocal quality, loudness, and vocal range in the patients. Complete voice rest is mandatory for two weeks after the procedure. There will be initial pain or discomfort from the procedure. Patients have described symptoms such as a sore throat sensation and difficulty swallowing. The patient’s voice will often seem quite soft, tight or effortful to use. It will likely get worse before it gets better. Would any of this be a problem to your patient?”

“Not at all,” Logan reassured, “The patient is going to be recovering in an induced coma for some time, because of other surgical procedures and damage caused in an accident.”

Fehrmann had never come across a case where someone was placed in an induced coma after surgery, he raised an eyebrow and was a little uneasy about it but didn't voice any opinion; he was here just to perform voice feminisation and a tracheal shave.

With the team of surgeons in agreement of proceeding with the laser assisted voice adjustment, work began later that afternoon.

There followed a number of other surgical procedures over the following month, none of it would have been described as ethical so shortly after previous surgeries, but time was against the surgeons due to Sir Charles Taverner's health.

Taverner himself was improving and left the confines of his bedroom but stayed indoors, attempting to control his business deals from home. During this time Frobisher had to make a quick withdrawal from the home and moved back in with Logan, much to Caitlin's annoyance, but it was always the case that Taverner's life expectancy was going to be extremely short.

Three days after the successful operations on Alan's throat and reduction of the vocal chords, Rhinoplasty was carried out to shorten, slightly widen and turn up the end of Alan's nose. Logan performed that surgery himself.

Two weeks recovery was allowed before anything further was done so that swelling around the nose could reduce and not interfere with breathing. It was during that two week period that dilating the vagina was ceased, the new vagina now more or less healed, swelling subsided and bruising diminishing. The

bruising around Alan's breasts were also now fading and the scars healing nicely.

And then it was back to more surgery. On the 32nd day of Alan being in hospital he had his lower ribs removed to give a more feminine frame. His body was already decreasing in weight and mass due to hospitalisation and being drip fed and this magnified the increase his body now had in breast, buttock and hip size.

With everything coming together Logan was again spending extended time at the hospital. It was no longer a case of being blackmailed by Frobisher into carrying out the work, Logan was now fully absorbed into what he now saw as 'his creation'.

The rib removal was followed by the surgery to re-shape Adam's chin four days later and a brow lift three days after that. All the while the other, more major surgery was healing nicely. The skin was void of any masculine hair and various creams and ointments were nourishing it and giving it a softer, smoother texture.

It was the last day of May, forty two days after Alan's unconscious body had been taken into hospital, that the final, relatively small procedure to Alan's body, was undertaken... the injection of collagen into the lips to make them fuller.

Almost everything that could be done had been done. There were minor other small things that needed doing such as having each ear lobe pierced twice as Marie's had been. Alan's finger nails, which had continued to grow throughout, were trimmed and manicured into feminine, long ovals.

Alan's hair was bleached and then dyed the same coppery auburn as Marie's and extensions that were the exact colour match were fused to Alan's own hair, giving him a just below the shoulder mane.



Throughout, the subliminal tapes with their Scottish accent had been played into Alan's sleeping form. But it was nearing a time when this would have to be stepped up.

Home life for Logan was going downhill. Caitlin was unhappy at Frobisher's extended stay. He wasn't the best company, seemingly always on edge and antsy. He and her husband often argued or had talks away from her as if there was some big secret between them that Logan was not sharing with her, if she asked him directly, it was met with a silence or that he hadn't time to discuss things.

Finally she'd had enough and told Logan in no uncertain terms, either Frobisher left the house... or she did.

Maybe it was a stroke of luck, but at the same time as her ultimatum, Sir Charles Taverner's health deteriorated again.

There was now concern that, after all the time, cost and effort carried out on Alan Rutledge, that the father of Marie may pass away even before he clapped eyes on this substitute daughter.

Frobisher decided it was time to bring Alan out of his coma and present him to the old man. Logan almost agreed but he wanted just one more week for things to heal and even then, he warned, they needed whatever time was necessary in order to get Alan to believe he really was Marie.

"But we have no more time to play with." Frobisher protested, "The old goat is going to die on us... he was diagnosed to only have about three months... and that is up."

"So, you think it will be successful just to take someone who is protesting that he is someone else, a man rather than a woman, to Taverner, and have him really just accept that it is his daughter."

“Yes... if that guy now looks like her... we can tell Taverner that she has brain damage, she can't remember a thing.”

“Yes, that is feasible, I guess... but Taverner has this strong dislike for you. Even if he accepts it is his daughter and she has brain damage, then he will know she is incapable of looking after herself, let alone the home, business and estate. He would know you will manipulate the situation to take full control of everything yourself, he would never allow that to happen.”

“Then... What? What am I supposed to do?” Frobisher blasted in temper.

“Hope and pray that we can get our patient to believe she is Marie Taverner before Sir Charles Taverner passes away. That is your one chance. If we do a knee jerk reaction and show the new Marie to Taverner before we have convinced her, all will be irretrievably lost, anyway.

The one thing that Frobisher couldn't do was lay idle and possibly lose everything. He decided to play one last throw of the dice. With Sir Charles Taverner bed bound once again he intended to try move back into Sedgewick Halls, especially seeing he had received his marching order from McKlintock in order to save his own marriage.

That evening he drove back up to the estate and asked Angus to show him to Taverner's room. Angus was far from sure it was a wise decision but he led the man up the stairs.

Taverner scowled when he saw Frobisher enter his bedroom. “What do you want? Have ye come hoping to see my last breath? You are wasting your time if you think you can worm your way back into ma home. I have already seen my solicitor and directed him to prevent you from acquiring any part of ma property.” He blasted.

“You have me wrong Sir Charles and I am deeply hurt by your remarks. I came to see how you were and, hopefully, be the bringer of some excellent news.”

“And what news would that be?” Taverner spat.

“It’s about Marie. As you know she has been undergoing a series of operations... successful ones. So successful that they are now going to bring her out of a coma she has been in for these last few months.”

“Aye.., really? Ye expect me to believe that, ye dunderheid! Just time to believe, but too weak to see with ma own eyes... is that it? You’re hoping I will relax on you, believing my Marie is fit and well, but then I die before anything is proven. I dinnae want you in Marie’s life anyway, and the only way I would ever grant it was if it was her last wish to her dying father from her own mouth.. I could deny her nothing. But, she is likely already dead or I would have seen or heard from her by now. Go... get out of here and leave me in peace to pass on.”

Frobisher stood his ground. “I know we have never seen eye to eye sir, I know you have a great dislike for me even though I have never wronged you. But believe me; my greatest wish is for you to see your daughter once again before the end. Please, for Marie, hang on in there Sir Charles... I will prove my words to you. I will bring your daughter to you. I will leave you in peace, as you bid, but I will return, with Marie.”

Brendon turned and left the old man in the bedroom, hoping he was buying time, hoping he was giving Sir Charles Taverner the strength to fight on for a while longer in the belief he was telling the truth.

Meanwhile he was not intending going far. He was returning to the bedroom he used to share with Marie before she died.

Chapter Nine – 'Marie' is awakened.

Logan McKlintock stood over the body that had once been Alan Rutledge. He had a lot of confidence, both in himself and his fellow surgeons that they would recreate Marie's likeness, yet he had always believed, inwardly, that the team were never going to be wholly successful.

Logan looked at the face before him, it seemed almost impossible and yet, with the bruising of the rhinoplasty now beginning to fade along with all the other surgical procedures, he could actually see Marie Taverner looking back at him.

As for the body, it was almost perfect. Alan had lost a lot of weight over the past fifty eight days that he had laid in hospital; the stemming of naturally produced testosterone and the estrogen that was being pumped into his body was having a very good effect, together with the very convincing vagina, the 38 C-cup breasts, the hips that had been shaped by fatty tissue from other parts of the body and the smooth hairless skin... it was amazing!

Logan had always had the biggest crush on Marie himself and had been secretly jealous of his friend for having won her affections..., she had died and he had felt the pain and the emptiness... more, he believed, than his friend Brendon. Now he was gazing at a breathing replica of her and he felt tears of joy and pride for what he had created.

Alan had been brought out of the induced coma that morning and was now kept under heavy sedation. There was still much to do with the new Marie's mind. He had heard many success stories regarding subliminal messaging, and also some failures. He needed to try and ensure that Alan really believed he was Marie.

The messaging had continued pounding Alan's unconscious brain, even though it was deep in the

recesses of his own mind. His hearing was still working and sending those messages into the subconscious.

There had to be more though... the sense of touch and feel as well as the hearing and, as such, he had bid for Brendon to come to the hospital later that day... it seemed shameful, but he had one or two ideas to help convince Alan to whom he was.

The smell of perfume, a perfume that Marie always wore, was invited to Alan's senses, sprayed onto cotton wool and positioned under Alan's nose.

Clothing was put on his body. The senses would still work and be aware of; he would feel sensations and store the information in his brain. Clothes that he would otherwise not be familiar with were put on him, a bra fastened around his chest and cupping his new breasts. Panties were drawn up his legs and positioned smoothly around his groin and waist. Nylon stockings were also worked up his smooth hairless legs.

They would be put on and taken off many times before Logan attempted to bring him out of his long sleep. Alan's ears, which had been pierced twice, had small earrings threaded through the now healed holes. Alan's mind would remember the feeling of the earrings being put in.

His mind would also remember the taste and the slightly sticky feel as lipstick was drawn over his now slightly larger and thicker lips.

There were a few more minor tasks to be completed too, such as the changing of Alan's eyes from gray to green by injections and laser.

Now that Alan was out of the coma and under sedation there was another trick that Logan wanted to try. Still in a heavily sedated state, Alan was sat up in bed and his eyes opened... focused towards a screen.



Videos were then played of Marie which Brendon had brought over from Sedewick Halls. It had clips of Marie when she was a young girl, playing in the home... with friends and with her father.

The videos progressed through the years of Marie growing up; it also had film of her and Brendon together. And again, more of her and her father as both got older. It had pictures of her friends, both male and female, where she worked, of her going shopping with friends and of socialising in the local town. Marie and her friends were always recording things that they did.

These images flickered through Alan's brain even though he wasn't consciously taking them in. They would be shown twice a day from now until it was ready to bring Alan back into the real world.

When Brendon arrived at the hospital later that evening he was stunned to see, for the first time, that which Angus had created.

"I can't believe this.... The face, take away the bruising and slight scarring, it's the face of Marie... how the fuckin' hell did you manage this? And the body... it's the body of a woman... I'd never believe that this had once been a man in a million years!" He gasped.

"I told you we could do it, but you have such little faith in me." Logan murmured, looking down and inspecting his nails, pride swelling in his chest.

"Now there are a few things that I need for you to do Brendon, it may seem a strange request but I believe it could prove vital at some stage in the mind conditioning."

Logan began to tell Brendon what he required of him.

“Are ye joking, Logan? Yer aff yer heid if yer think I’ll be doing that.”

“Of course I will give you total privacy. But they are sensations and feelings that Marie would be familiar with.” Logan explained.

It took an awful lot of explaining, and encouraging. After twenty minutes Logan left his friend with the sedated form of the new Marie. Brendon was hesitant but finally summed up the courage to place his lips onto the former man’s. Firstly it was soft and then it was stronger as Brendon crushed his lips to the other’s and inserted his tongue.

Throughout Brendon could not get rid of the image in his heads of Alan, nor the fact that this person he was kissing was a genetic male.

He thought the other request by Logan would be even more difficult, it was certainly more bizarre, but it turned out easier than expected. Brendon opened his flies and after some difficulty, managed to achieve a semi erection, which he positioned to ‘Marie’s’ lips. With a little more care he managed to open the mouth and insert his penis inside. ...he felt shamed and was glad when it was over.

“I never want to go through that again, I felt like a complete pansy, Logan.” He protested as he met with his friend once again.

“Oh, well that’s not very good then... as I am wanting you to repeat that process each day for the next three days. It is to be on the forth day that I want our new Marie to be taken to Sedgewick Halls where I will let her revive. Logan was not to know, on that day, it would have been exactly seventy days since Alan had married his childhood sweetheart, Barbara.

“You mean I have to go through all of that again?” Brendon protested.

“Is it really that difficult? You stated yourself that she is an exact replica of Marie.” Logan questioned.

“Aye, I know that... but to me she is still him. You don’t seem to have the same problem as I have, you never really met him, I sat talking to him for a long time... you haven’t even referred to him by his true name.., not once.”

“I am not sure that I actually know it, nor do I need to. In fact, it is wholly better for me to only know her as Marie, for that is who she now is. And please... stop referring to her as ‘he’ and ‘him’. We have had this discussion before.” Logan ranted to his friend, “You may as well get some practice in as you need to be doing it for real when we wake her.”

“And what if he... she, for God’s sake... doesn’t respond either? What if he knows who he is and we cannae persuade him otherwise?”

“Then we would have a huge problem on our hands... so the more we do to ensure that doesn’t happen, the better.” Logan stated firmly.

The following three days were almost a repeat of that day... The video showing, the placing of female clothing on Alan’s body, including high heeled shoes... it was just a shame, believed Logan, that they could not manage to provide the feel and knowledge of actually walking in high heels.

Lipstick was followed by foundation and eye cosmetics such as shadow and mascara. Alan’s eye brows were tweezered to narrow arches just as Marie’s had been. His long finger nails again were shaped and filed into long feminine ovals.

...And Brendon reluctantly played his part. He was grateful that there was no response from Alan when he had his cock in her mouth.

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Then the time had finally arrived. Both Logan and Brendon were feeling anxious. Logan had briefed his friend over and over on how to play things.

Almost two months after being taken into St Andrew's hospital, the former Alan Rutledge was laid in the bed of Marie Taverner, wearing one of her favourite cotton and lace nightdresses. He had been taken off medication and they were now waiting for him to wake from his sedation, naturally.

Also in the room was Isla, Marie's maid in waiting, Angus the butler, Raymond Cutler the family solicitor who had been brought into the deception... He had long since had a grievance with Sir Charles Taverner over another matter and he knew he would receive not a penny from the old miser in his will.

And finally there was Aiden Carson, the aging family doctor. Angus had let it slip about Marie being dead during one of his visits to tend to Sir Charles, Carson was not a very honest man and was greedy for money, it was easy to bring him into the plot too, and Logan believed he could be very vital in his role of family doctor.

Everyone was gathered in the room. Angus had made several pots of tea during the lengthy wait. They had watched the sleeping form of Alan for the longest time but, it had been one of the brief moments when nobody had been observing, when Alan's eyes flickered.

In his mind Alan had been reliving the crash just prior to regaining his consciousness. It was all a jumble; mixed up... he wasn't sure why he was driving

fast, or just where he was. Besides him was Barbara, screaming, as the car launched into blackness, landed heavily, bumped, turned and rolled.

He woke with a loud gasp which alerted everyone in the room. His eyes opened and he was looking at a room he had never seen before. He made out faces that he didn't know; all looking at him... the moment was terrifying.

"Where am I? Why am I here?" He questioned then stopped, startled, placing his hand to his throat... what was wrong with his voice? It didn't sound right!

"Darling... you are awake at last." A man's voice spoke. Alan made out a man approaching him, a man that looked vaguely familiar. Why was a man calling him darling?

"Who are you? Why am I h...," He stopped talking and coughed, trying to correct his voice. It sounded shrill.

"The man came to the bedside where he was laying and clasped his hand. Alan wanted to pull away. But he was totally confused. He had no idea what was happening.

"It's me... Brendon. Don't you remember me? You have been in a terrible car crash."

That name rang a bell somewhere in his mind. "Yes, I know I have. What is wrong with my damned voice? Why am I in this room?"

A second man, bearded with dark hair, came along besides the first man and put a hand to the first man's shoulder.

"Brendon, dear chap. She is very confused. She needs time to come around." He said to the first man.

“She! Why are you referring to me as ‘She?’” Alan demanded to know, he was starting to believe he was still hallucinating in some bizarre nightmare.

The first man had a quizzical look on his face. “Why are you asking that darling? It is, of course, because you are a she... a woman.”

“No I am not, I am a man, and my name is Alan Rutledge.

Rather than respond to Alan again, Brendon turned to Logan. “Why is she saying such things, Logan? What is wrong with her?”

“I am not sure. I will need to do tests. Probably it is being caused by post coma stress.”

“What are you talking about? I am a man I tell you. Are you blind?”

Brendon looked back at Alan; he pulled a smile that seemed concerned and caring rather than mocking.

“Honey... look at yourself..., I mean, do you look like a man?”

For the first time, Alan glanced down at his body. The first thing to impact on him was that he was wearing a woman’s nightdress... these people were trying to fool him for some reason... He saw the tenting of the nightdress on his chest, the shape of a woman’s breasts and instinctively he brought his hands up to them, cupping them... he could feel them... they were a part of his body.

“What... what on earth have you done to me?” He shrieked in horror.

“Nothing honey, you are a woman. Why do you think you are a man? I don’t understand. Why, you

are the most beautiful woman in Scotland, the woman I love.”

Alan could not grasp what he was hearing. He was terrified... all of these things he was being told. They were not true, he knew they weren't. But he had a woman's breasts! How? Then his mind latched onto Scotland. He... they, had been driving in Scotland. The wedding..., the honeymoon.

“Where is Barbara? Where is my wife? What have you done with her?”

Brendon very nearly blurted out that she had died in the crash but stopped and corrected himself. “Barbara? Who is Barbara? Logan please, explain to me what is happening to my fiancé?”

“I think, while she has been comatose, she has been in very deep dreams. Maybe dreaming of being someone else, or even of a past life, I cannot be sure at this stage. She is obviously very confused... we need to be very understand and patient with her.”

Alan was annoyed with all of this stupid talk of him being a woman and of being confused, but at the same time he was feeling fear and panic, the likes he had never known before.

Logan then looked at Alan and came up to the bedside, concern on his face. “You have been in a very terrible crash my dear, you were badly injured and we even had to place you in an induced coma while we operated to repair your body. You have not been conscious for over two months.” He said soothingly.

“Two months? That's impossible! You have done something to me... you have changed my voice and put these... these things on my chest. Why? Why are you doing this? Where is Barbara? Please tell me she is safe and well.”

“There is no Barbara, Marie; you have created her in your mind. You were driving alone. Don’t exhaust yourself by trying to take things in too quickly, you have been very poorly and need rest.”

“You will get better Marie; we will make sure of it.” Alan turned to where the woman’s voice was coming from. A middle aged woman in a long black dress was standing close by looking at her.

“Stop calling me Marie... I am Alan, Alan Rutledge... and who are you? I have never set eyes on you in my life before.” Alan responded firmly.

The lady brought a white lace handkerchief she was holding up to her eyes and feigned crying. “She doesnae remember me Brendon... Ah’ve looked after her since she was a wee bairn and she doesnae know me.”

“Give it time, Isla; it will all come back to her. She will remember you and Brendon... this house, Sedgewick Halls... all of the staff.”

Alan felt like he was trapped in the most terrible nightmare. Only the tall dark haired man looked familiar to him. He knew he was Alan Rutledge, he could remember everything about his life. And yet... the man’s face was known to him, also his name of Brendon. He felt, somewhere in his mind, he had heard of Sedgewick Halls, too... why would he know such things?

He was so desperately trying to take everything in and understand what was going on that his head was pounding. He was a man... he could remember all of his past life as a man... but he could feel real women’s breasts under the woman’s nightdress that he wore.

“Bring me a mirror. I want to see my face.” He demanded. If this was some terrible hoax, they could

give a person breasts for whatever reason... but he knew his own face, they couldn't change that.

The woman in black went off briefly to bring a hand mirror, returned and handed it to him. Alan put the mirror in front of his face ready to look at his reflexion... but there, looking back at him, was the face of a young woman.

He dropped the mirror in shock. "This is horrible? Just what have you done to me, and why?" He screamed in his high feminine voice.

He suddenly became still as a terrifying thought came to his mind... either he could prove he was a man... or, or, the alternative, he couldn't even bear to think about. It took all of his willpower to push his hands down under the duvet, taking them straight to his groin.

"It's gone! It's gone! You've taken my cock away." He was now in a hysterical state, sobbing uncontrollably.

"I am sorry Brendon, I have to calm her." The man with the beard stated as he brought up a needle from somewhere as if ready for such an event. "I need to sedate her, she is not yet ready."

Alan saw the man bring the needle to his arm as he gasped in shock and tried to fend it away. "No... no don't do that..."

The needle sank into his arm and it seemed only mere seconds before he was fading away into a black space again.

Chapter Ten – Lies or Truths?

“Well, that went down really well. The man knows who and what he is. What a complete fucking waste of time.” Brendon complained.

“Let’s not jump to any conclusions yet. I was never sure about the subliminal messaging, with some it works fine, with others, not so good. But it is all stored in the mind never-the-less and we need to continue with mind conditioning ...changing reality.” Logan responded as he put away the syringe he had prepared in case things didn’t go to order.

“So you are saying we just keep telling him he is Marie?”

“Yes, everyone here. We all continue to play the part. It will cause confusion which is enhanced by real fact... fact that she has a woman’s body, fact that she has a woman’s voice, fact that her face is different to the one she thought she had and fact that in her mind she knows she was in a car crash and she is being told she was.”

Everyone began to leave the bedroom and go down to the lounge, except the doctor, who stayed upstairs to look in on Sir Charles.

“What in blazes is going on Carson? All this noise I am hearing?” Taverner asked.

“The staff are excited Sir Charles. Your daughter is responding well to her treatment and is fully awake at the hospital.” Carson replied.

Taverner tried sitting himself up at the news. “What? You mean she really is alive and I will be able to see her soon?”

“Quite soon Sir, apparently she is suffering a memory loss after being comatose for so long... I hear

it is a temporary thing, but she would not know you yet... she doesn't recognise anyone."

Aiden Carson was acting out as instructed by Brendon. It was just as important that Charles Taverner remained alive as it was for Alan to believe he was Marie. While Taverner believed his daughter was alive and well, he would fight hard for his own life... it was something for him to live for.

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It was a few hours later when Alan began to come around again. This time it was different, the initial shock of being in a strange house with strange people had already occurred. The greater shock of seeing a face he did not know and having a woman's body had also now been absorbed by him. It was still traumatic but now he was aware of it all.

Upon awakening Alan wasn't sure where reality began. Was he still Alan Rutledge and had just had some bizarre dream about being changed into a woman... or was it even possible that he was a woman who had been having very explicit dreams of being a man?

As he fully woke he immediately knew that at least his being a woman wasn't a dream.

Still wearing the woman's nightdress, he checked and reconfirmed that he had breasts and, as he inspected lower, that there was no male genitalia between his legs. ...that was as far as he dared to probe.

He made small inspections... such as his hands which had nicely manicured, elliptical nails. He felt his hair, much longer than it should be and, pulling it forward with his fingers, it was red.

Somewhere in his mind he had a vision of this auburn haired young woman... the face looked like the

face he had glimpsed in the mirror. But this just seemed so wrong. He had no clear memories of being female, whilst he could think back over a lifetime of being male... right back to being a young child.

“I am Alan Rutledge... I must be! I do not know this house or these people; I don’t feel like a woman, I feel like a man.” He thought to himself. “I can remember my home in London, Mum and Dad... my brother. Barbara, the woman I married just a few days ago... how can all of this have happened?”

“Are ye okay Miss? I heard ye stirrin’.” A voice sounded by the door. Alan turned to see a balding gray haired man looking at him.

“Who are you?” Alan asked in that same strange feminine voice that he couldn’t get rid of.

“It grieves me greatly Miss that ye are unable to remember things. I am Angus, the butler. I have known ye since ye was a wee bairn, held ye in ma arms when ye cried.”

“But I am not who you think I am. I don’t know what is happening but it terrifies me. My name is Alan Rutledge, I am a man, Angus... I was married a few days ago and we were honeymooning in Scotland... we came to this house because we were having trouble with the car...” Alan paused and thought. Angus’s voice... “Didn’t you answer the gate...? I know your voice.”

“Aye, of course ye know mah voice Miss, as I say, I have known you all your life.”

Angus actually had tears rolling down his face. He felt sad for this man who was being deceived so much, and, because of how much he looked like Marie, saddened again by her loss of life..., but he used the tears to his advantage as tears of concern.

“Oh how can ye call yourself a man when ye are such a bonnie lassie? Yes, you were having trouble with your car... ye can remember that bit... You crashed and you were in such a terrible state. It seems, over these last couple o’ months, your thoughts have all got jumbled up. Master McKlintock spent months in getting you fixed and right. You still have some scars but he has done a marvellous job wi’ ye.”

“It hasn’t been a few months; I was only married last week for Christ sake. That proves that things are wrong.”

“Begging your pardon Mistress, but when was it ye thought ye got hitched? What day?”

“It was on the 11th of April.” Alan replied with confidence.

“If I may beg your leave for a wee while?” Angus requested before turning and leaving the bedroom. He returned shortly afterwards carrying a newspaper which he handed to Alan.

“Tis today’s newspaper, Ma’am.” He said.

Alan looked at the newspaper that he had been handed, it was the Glasgow Evening Times. A further short search shocked him. The date read 19th of June.

“But this is impossible.” Alan wept, his emotions getting the better of him, emotions that were now enhanced by the female hormones in his system.

“Ye’ve been in a coma for a long while, like mister McKlintock told ye. I’ll go let him and the master know ye are awake.

Alan stared at the paper again in disbelief. This could not be happening. He felt as if he was in some twilight zone story.

Shortly afterwards the two men he had seen by his bedside came into the room followed by the woman in black.

“Darling, you are awake again. Please tell me you are starting to remember?” The man with the sideburns asked him.

“I remember you. You are the owner of this house and let Barbara and I stay the night... but when we were leaving you chased us in your car... you caused the crash!

A hurt look spread across Brendon’s face and he looked at the second man as if pleading for answers. “No, honey... I am Brendon. The man you love... we are planning to marry.”

Once again Alan was startled. Now this man he barely knew was telling him that they were a couple... a couple who planned to marry.

“I don’t love you. You are a man... I love my wife and I want to know where she is... how she is. Is she dead?”

“Logan, please. I can’t bear to hear my Marie talking like this anymore, you need to do something... make her better. Please.

“Go back downstairs Brendon... you too, Isla. I need to talk to Miss Taverner alone.”

Alan could feel himself losing it again; it was all too much for him to take in, tears streamed from his eyes. The man... Brendon and the lady in black both hesitantly left the room leaving just the man with the van dyke beard by the bedside.

“We will get you better, Miss Taverner... I promise.”

“I am not Miss Taverner... I am not a Miss at all. If I am who you say I am how come I have no recollection

of her at? But I do remember being me... from being born.” Alan was still trying to get a handle on having a feminine voice sounding out of his mouth.

“The mind is a strange and complex thing.” Logan began to tell her in a gentle and soothing voice, “Who knows really how it works... how things get messed up inside or why we start thinking strange things.

“You were in a bad car crash. I operated on you... me and a team of other surgeons. You still bare some scars and bruising. Shhh..., please... let me finish. I had to put you into a Coma to both stabilise you and help with a faster healing process. During that time your thoughts and memories seem to have become scrambled with dreams you must have had.”

“No... that’s not so, I...”

“Please... Think of your brain like a computer, it analyzes, memorises and stores things. A computer can become corrupt and lose memory... same as a brain, sometimes messages become distorted. The memories you have as Marie are all there and need to be reclaimed. I can only guess that, during your comatose stage, for some reason, you reinvented yourself as a man, and then built a life up of that man.”

“But there are too many memories. I can recall my entire life and family.” Alan protested.

“You mean the life you invented,” Logan explained, “Because it was what you were thinking and believing when you woke they are the memories that are paramount in your mind, over taking the real you. But you need to see the reality. Look at you... Are you a man or a woman?”

“I look like a woman... but... You must have done this!”

Logan pulled a questioning expression, “Really? And changed your face too? When you looked in the mirror you looked as if you didn’t recognise yourself.”

“Well... No, not the face I should have... though I do feel like I have seen the face before.”

Logan smiled. “Ah! That is interesting. Tell me, before seeing the face in the mirror have you ever seen that girl before?”

“No, I don’t think so... maybe she was at the house when Barbara and I arrived, I don’t know.”

“Which was what day?”

Alan paused to think. It’s hard to remember, maybe the 17th or 18th of April; we were married on the 11th and had spent a week already in Scotland.

“You were involved in the car crash on the 10th April. In this belief of yours you could not have seen Marie here because you were in a serious condition in hospital... the day before you say you were married. Have you ever been to Scotland prior to getting married?”

“No.”

“Then how come you recognise the face of Marie Taverner? The reason you do is because, it is you.”

“This is all too much... you are trying to trick me.” Alan protested. His head was throbbing again.

“I’m sorry my dear. I don’t want to pressurise you... but please just take a look at this.” Alan was handed yet another copy of the Glasgow evening times, dated 10th April. This was even more shocking and distressing to him.

In the newspaper was an article headed: Daughter of Scottish Tycoon involved in serious car crash.

There followed a full article plus two pictures, one of a crumpled up car and one of a young woman... the woman looked exactly like the face Alan had seen in the mirror.

“What is going on? What is happening to me?” Alan wept again in deep distress.

“I am sorry to be doing this to you so soon after your own recovery; you need rest in order to recover. But first... do you know this man?”

Logan held up a photograph of Charles Taverner. Alan could not deny that the face looked vaguely familiar to him, but from where he wasn't sure.

“I, I think so... who is he?”

“He is your father, Charles Taverner. Marie... your father is dying from a brain tumour. He knows you were seriously hurt in the crash. It would be his one last wish to see you again before he dies. I want to help you regain your memory before you see him; it would be distressing to him knowing that you did not know him.

Alan did recall the face from somewhere but it seemed inconceivable that this virtual stranger was his own father. Whilst he looked at the picture, just a flicker from the back of his mind seemed to play some far away memory. There was the man and there was the girl who everyone was trying to say was really him, they were together and smiling, her arm around the fathers shoulder, posing for a photograph... where did that image come from?

“I... I can't understand any of this. I know my father and this isn't him. Can you leave me alone please?” Alan was feeling mentally and physically drained.

“Yes, of course. You need rest, plenty of rest. I have some medication I need for you to take, one will help

with the injuries you sustained in getting them repaired, another you need to take as it will help with your confusion and memory loss and this last one will help you to settle and sleep.” Logan told Alan, placing the pills on a small saucer and then moving away from the bedside, he was feeling quite satisfied with how things were progressing and left Alan to his thoughts.

Logan then returned downstairs and told everyone that there should be no more contact with Alan for the rest of the evening. Upstairs, Alan was going through everything that had been said on this mixed up crazy day. Much of what had been said and shown to him made sense of possibility. There was no denying he had a woman’s body... a perfect body. But that could not disguise the fact that he did not feel as though he was a woman, the fact that he had a lifetime of memories as a man and that he could not hardly recognise anyone in the room.

‘Could this be possible? Could I really have forgotten I am a woman called Marie? Is it possible that in some comatose state I could create, in my mind, an entire lifetime of memories of being a man?’

If I am Marie then this is so awful that I have totally forgotten who I am and all of the people I have known all of my life. If I am Alan, how the hell have they done all of this to me? Changed me so much... even my face... and why? In my belief I am just an ordinary guy earning a moderate wage. In Marie’s world I am very wealthy and live in this superb house, so it cannot be for any financial gain of any kind.’

Alan continued thinking on every aspect, trying hard to recall any memory of the girl Marie... and strangely and concerningly enough, he did have visions, like flashbacks, of some of the people he had seen, on other days and in different settings.

He agitated so long and so hard that he was tiring himself out again and his head was aching. And then he realised he badly needed the bathroom.

He stumbled out of bed feeling strange with the nightdress floating around his frame and even stranger with the breasts on his chest suddenly revealing their weight, and buoyancy as they softly moved with each step.

He located the bathroom...that was the easy task; a harder one was how to relieve himself. He knew he needed to sit to pee as he didn't have a penis anymore, even though he felt he should have... a penis to hold and aim as he stood. And seeing the almost flatness of his groin and seeing a vagina between his legs as he pulled the soft cotton panties he was wearing, down to his knees, almost totally freaked him out.

No... he cannot be a woman... if he was then none of this wouldn't feel so strange and peeing would be natural, even if he had lost his memory. When he did feel the pressure, rather than letting it go, he was unintentionally holding it back from release, mentally afraid to just let it flow in case it spurted out everywhere.

But then, after a trickle forced its way out he learned how to let go and felt the full relieving stream.

There was some yellowish bruising around the area of the vagina and some light scarring, but he had been told he had damaged himself there in the crash.

Returning to the bed, Alan got in and pulled the covers over himself and continued to worry and agitate over what was the truth. He didn't trust the medication that had been given to him, it may be part of the trick... but he really needed to sleep and so he picked up the pill that the doctor had said was to help him do that, unaware that it was really a Progesterone and anti-androgen mix . Alan slipped the pill into



his mouth and washed it down with a glass of cordial that was on his bedside drawer. Finally sheer exhaustion fed in and he drifted into sleep... the first natural sleep he'd had in months.

Chapter Eleven – Can I really be?

Alan was disturbed by a gentle shake to his shoulder. He opened his eyes to see the woman in black hovering over him. Behind her the curtain drapes had been half pulled open to show the light of day filtering in.

“Sorry tae disturb ye Miss, but are ye feelin’ well enough tae eat breakfast? An’ ah could dae with givin’ ye a bed wash tae freshen ye up a wee bit.”

“Who are you, again?” Alan asked, directly. The woman feigned an upset look.

“Och, Miss Marie. It is me, Isla, yer maid in waitin’. Ah dae so hope ye will recover yer memory as yer nae knowin’ me is unbearable... unbearable tae all on us... and the poor master, he is beside himself wi’ worry ower you.”

“And how long have you known me, Isla?”

“Well since ye were born, Miss. Yer father, Sairrr Charles, gae me th’ task of raising ye... and ah have done, these pest twintie five years.”

“Twenty five years? Well if all of this is true then I am at least the same age as I thought I was. Tell me honestly, Isla. Would you know if I was not the real Marie? If someone was trying to pretend that I was?”

“Well, aye, course, Miss... but why would anyone want tae pretend? And aw of those strange things ye were saying yesterday... thinking ye were a cheil an’ all. Where did ‘at come from Miss? I don’t understand. Look at you Miss... such a lovely face an’ a fig-

ure ah would kill for. And ye said ye were Sassanach.
*(Englishman.)

Listen tae yerself. Such a lovely feminine voice an' yer melodic soft Scottish accent. Sassanach men dinnae have feminine voices ur Scottish accents." Isla told him, laughing a little at the ludicrousness of it all.

Without knowing it Isla had just made Alan have another startling realisation... the voice... his voice, had a Scottish accent to it that he had not picked up on at first, having been more concentrating on his voice sounding feminine.

This threw a new perspective into this already huge conundrum... If someone was actively trying to fool him into thinking he was a woman then, he knew, surgery could give him breasts and even take away his penis and replace it with a vagina... he couldn't understand why anyone would want to do that to him, but he knew it was possible. His different, female face was something else, which he couldn't understand at all... but his voice? How could they give him a Scottish accent? ...Unless he really was who they said he was.

"Sae, young Missy? Breakfast and a bed wash? Or dae ye feel up tae showering?"

Isla's question brought him out of his thoughts.

"Oh, uhm... Yes, I guess so. Thank you Isla." He said weakly. He felt very hungry indeed and, he guessed, he needed a wash... but he was not ready to stand under a shower or have a bath, not with this still alien, in his mind, female body in full view.

The breakfast Isla brought to his bed was delicious... Ham, Sausage, Mushroom, Fried Egg, Beans and sliced bread. He ate everything on the plate and downed two cups of coffee.

Getting the wash was quite humiliating. Firstly he had to let Isla take his nightdress off, fully revealing his firm and shapely breasts for the first time. In his mind, a mind that could not help telling him he was a man... a woman was seeing his body with these breasts. It was psychological, of course, but still humiliating to him.

Isla was careful, gentle and thorough, soaping him down, even lifting each breast to get underneath. In doing so, Isla saw for herself the faint scarring where they had cut to put in the breast sacs.

She also washed his legs and feet but not his groin at the moment. Alan was taking in how more slender his legs appeared, and how more smooth and hairless they were, to what he thought they should have been.

Everything seemed to point to the fact that they were telling him the truth, that he was female... that he was a girl called Marie... if only he could remember that life... and not vividly remember the life that it now seemed he had created in deep dreams.

Isla helped him into a new nightdress; pink with a flower print and soft lace at the cuffs and neck... it had a clean fresh, perfumed smell to it.

“If ye need fer me tae attend you Miss, jist ring th’ bell as usual... och, ye may not remember... the bell is on the wall by th’ reit side of yer bed.” Alan was then, once more, left to his thoughts.

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Brendon and Logan were both very interested in what Isla had reported to them, their changeling had accepted a wash down and how she described his reaction and seeming realisation to having a Scottish accent.

Logan had been far from sure that little twist would work. They were infusing lots of messages into his head, why not have the messages delivered in a Scottish accent? If it worked, great., if it didn't, nothing had been lost. But his idea was based on one of those strange abnormalities that some people who move to a new location to live, where there is a strong local accent, develop that accent themselves through hearing it constantly.

Brendon was eager to go up and see for himself if the Englishman was starting to accept the lies he had been told but Logan suggested always giving space for Alan to think things through for himself.

That time for Logan to visit came in the afternoon after he had eaten. Alan himself had, again, eaten in bed and was resting.

Knocking on the bedroom door, Brendon peered into the room.

“How are you feeling, darling? Can I come in?”

Alan turned to look at the man and then nodded his consent. If he really was Marie, although feeling nothing now, then this was the man he had been in love with and planned to marry. His not remembering must be agony for the man.

Brendon pulled up a chair by the side of the bed and then took Alan's hand in his, holding it comfortingly.

“Are you remembering anything? Anything at all, sweetheart?”

“A little,” Alan replied quietly, “I have small visions of things I am unsure about, faces that I don't know... places I do not recognise... but all with me in them... that is, me as in the face I saw in the mirror.”

Brendon smiled widely. "There, I knew it would start coming back to you. Yesterday must have been so confusing..., you had only just woken from a very long coma and your head filled with this extraordinary dream you had been having. Why you imagined yourself as a man totally baffles me."

"But it was not like any dream... it was all very real, I may be getting a few snippets of something about being Marie, but my memory is flooded with memories of my being Alan."

The smile faded from Brendon's face, replaced with one of concern. "So, in some way, you still believe your dreams could be real, after all that has been proven to you?" He responded with the sound of irritation in his voice.

"Yes. I do. Until such time as all my memories are that of Marie and those of Alan just seem like a dream, then I cannot help it."

"I cannae believe you are still believing in a lot of stupid dreams. You need to work harder at remembering... stop believing in what is quite clearly the impossible. Can ye not look at yourself... See for yourself that you are a woman, for God's sake."

Brendon's sudden outburst upset Alan. He was still highly emotional and confused; the new hormones coursing through his body were also giving him stronger female emotions.

"I am sorry, I can't help it. I am trying, really trying, to piece it all together." He sobbed weakly.

As quickly as he had lost his temper Brendon suddenly became caring and compassionate again. "I am so sorry darling; I really did not mean to snap. I just want things back to being normal for us again, I want the girl I love and wish to marry, back with me. And I am also frustrated on behalf of your father... he may never see his daughter again before he dies."

The vision that was in his head of Charles Taverner came back to Alan. If he really was Marie then that was another reason why he had to get well, be certain of who he was.

He squeezed the strong manly hand that was still holding his. "I will try, honestly I will. I just need a little more time... time to be sure in my own head. I could now do with resting some more, if you do not mind?"

It was the most stupid thing ever. He was talking to a person he was supposed to love and yet, he could not even remember his name. He didn't want to offend the man by saying he couldn't remember it and he certainly didn't wish to replace his name with loving terms of endearment, which wouldn't seem right at all.

Brendon kissed his hand and took his leave. Once he had gone Alan began to cry, it was all too much for him and no matter how much evidence to the contrary was placed in front of him; he just did not feel like Marie..., or feel like a female.

It was Isla who was next to return, in the early evening, bringing a plate of food and a cup of tea... plus more pills.

Alan felt he could trust this woman, she seemed understanding towards him and what he was going through, she had a friendly face and seemed to genuinely care... which just added to Alan's confusion, he had asked her directly if she had thought he was Marie and she had replied yes.

"If ah may Miss, efter ye have eaten... ah would like tae aid in givin' ye a shower an' washin' yer hair. The bed bath can only dae so much an' ye have always bin a one fur keepin' yerself clean... yer hair hasnae had a proper wash in months."

It was one thing that Alan could not deny, his scalp itched and he knew it would help make him feel better.

“Thank you Isla... I will take a shower and wash my hair, but if you don’t mind I would like to do it myself.”

“If ye think ye can, Miss... ye will still be very weak.”

Alan smiled kindly at her. “I will be okay, but I am not ready yet to expose this body, which still seems very alien to me, whether it’s mine or not, to anyone else.”

It took a lot of self motivation for Alan to strip from the nightdress and panties that he was wearing, revealing the feminine, slim curvy body that he felt wasn’t his. It was also uncomfortable to him when washing those female parts. He almost had a desire to explore... not for any sexual gratification but just out of curiosity, but he felt it would be wrong.

He also noticed the shiny small jewels he had in his earlobes. His fingers instinctively went up to feel them. He had never had his ears pierced; as he could remember, but he felt the posts of the earrings poking out on the other side of each ear. Just above the stones there was a further hole in each ear. His ears were pierced twice.

When it came to washing his shoulder length hair and rubbing the shampoo in with his fingers, he made a further discovery. He could feel knots or ridges all over his hair... and he realised it was not all of his own. Why did he have some kind of false hair attached to his own head of hair? It made no sense. ...But, if his hair was false, then...?

Alan didn’t see anyone again that evening; it was the following morning when Isla was bringing breakfast to the room, along with a drink and the pills.

“Isla, is erm... is that tall man... my, uh, fiancé around?”

“You mean Master Brendon? Och aye he is doon in the drawing room, shoods ah send him up?”

“Yes please... if you will. There is something that I need to ask him.”

Isla set the tray of food on top of the bedside drawers and scurried off to ask Brendon to go upstairs. As she went, Alan took two of the three pills from the saucer and placed them with the pills from yesterday into a bedside drawer, he only took the one to help him sleep.

He had almost finished eating when Brendon came into the room, a wide cheerful smile on his face. “Marie, you asked to see me. I take it you are improving this morning? Is your memory returning my love?” He asked optimistically.

“No, not really... I took a shower last night..., and washed my hair. I made a discovery... Why, if I am a real woman, have I got some kind of false hair woven into my own to try and make my hair look longer than it is? Rather than just growing it long for myself? Alan asked directly.

For a moment Brendon was taken aback and hesitated with his reply, he then came and knelt by the side of Alan’s bed and, as yesterday, lifted Alan’s hand... This time Alan tried to pull it away.

“Darling, you have always had the most beautiful main of coppery red hair, something you have always been proud of and taken great care of... in your car accident you were trapped for a time and the ruptured gas tank had caused a fire in the back... mercifully you were not burned, but your hair was quite badly singed. It was Logan’s idea to have locks woven into your hair the same colour as the hair on your

head so that you were not caused more distressed by what had happened to you when you awoke.”

Alan had expected to have caught Brendon out by his discovery but Brendon’s fast reply caught him short.

“So how badly is my hair damaged?”

“Not too badly at all, and it has been growing steadily back during the two months you have been in a coma... but we agreed with Logan, after all the trauma your body has suffered, the last thing you wanted to discover was that your crowning glory had been damaged too.” He answered softly.

“Of course, none of us expected the weird beliefs you had been developing, when you regained consciousness... I would give anything for you to be able to remember who you really are again.” He continued.

“I want to believe, Brendon, I really do... if what you and everyone else are telling me is true..., it would make things so much simpler and bearable for me, but I have so many memories of being Alan.” Alan replied as he now accepted his hand being held.

“Oh, Marie, you really must try, for your own sanity. I am struggling to understand what you are going through, how severe your memory loss is or the extent of your dreaming. I understand it must be so confusing for you...” Brendon quietly sighed with relief. Logan had gone through, with him and the staff, answers to all kinds of questions that may be raised by Alan. It seemed as if this one had pacified him.

“But... ask around, ask everyone in the town..., the whole area, if they have heard of any reports of a fatal car accident anywhere around here in the last few months, as you describe... there hasn’t been one since your own accident.” He paused as a thought came to him. “Tell you what Marie, if there had been a

report of a fatal car crash then the people who would definitely know of it would be the police... agreed?"

"But there wouldn't be a report of a fatal crash as I am here, alive. Am I not?"

"Well yes you are, but you described that in your dreams you were travelling with a woman... I would presume, seeing as she is nowhere around, that she died in that crash?"

The mention of Barbara brought sadness to Alan. If his beliefs were the correct ones, and Barbara really was not around anywhere, then, she may well have died in the car accident. Grief took him and he started to sob at the possible loss of his lovely wife.

"Don't cry darling, there is nothing to cry for... this woman, and you being a man is just a wacky dream that you had. Other than your own crash there has been no other road traffic accident around these parts for almost half a year, the roads are so quiet around here.

Brendon pulled his cell phone from his pocket and punched in some number before offering the phone to Alan. "I've called the local police station.., talk to them.., please, ask them."

Alan hesitantly took the phone from Brendon and put it to his ear. After a minute the call was answered.

"Good morning, PC. Monroe speaking, how may I help you?" came a strongly accented Scottish voice.

"Oh.., Good morning.... I'm calling to ask if you have been aware of a fatal car accident over the last two months."

"I'm aware that road traffic fatalities happen the entire time missy, anywhere in particular ye have in mind?"

“Oh, sorry... it would be around a five to ten mile radius of your station.” Alan answered without knowing where the police station was located, or even just where he was.

“No Madam, not around these parts. May I inquire who is calling and what the concern is of yours?”

Alan paused for a few seconds, caught off guard by the question of name. He had just been referred to as Madam so saying he was Alan seemed ridiculous. “It’s... its Marie ...Taverner and...”

It was strange having to refer himself to a name that he didn’t feel was his. Whilst Alan paused to think on how to reply to the second part of the question there was also a pause on the other end of the line before the policeman spoke again, this time in a much brighter voice.

“Miss Taverner? Sir Charles Taverner’s wee lassie? I have to say I am delighted to hear your voice again Miss, sorry, I hadnae recognised it at first..., after that terrible accident of your own. How are ye feeling right now? On the mend I hope?”

“Oh! Yes, I am getting there; it has been a slow road to recovery, thank you for asking.”

“Well that is good to hear Miss. We all wish you well here at the station. Regards to your father. Now, as to your question, all that there has been around these remote parts in recent past was a climber who fell and was killed on Nevis and a suicide by a depressed distillery worker over in Torlundy, but nae car accidents, other than that of your own. I heard a report of a couple from England being killed North East from here over by the Cairngorms... but that is much further afield than ye are inquiring about.”

The officer would have been more exact by saying one dead and one missing presumed dead but, nev-

ertheless, the mention of a couple from England shook Alan.

He was almost scared to ask the names in case it confirmed his worst nightmare, but then, before asking, he reasoned that he had been told that two people had been killed, and it was well out of the area where he had believed his own incident had happened. In his 'dream' case, only Barbara had died and he had survived so that only would be the one death, not two."

"Okay thank you for your information PC Monroe, I guess I am just paranoid now about any accident occurring around these parts."

"That's understandable Miss Taverner. Is there anything else I can help ye with? Make sure to drop in at the station when you are well enough, we will all be glad to see your bonnie face again." There was the sound of other men shouting greetings in the background.

"Yes I will... thank you." Alan handed the phone back to Frobisher, more confused than ever. Clasping his head with his hands, he sighed. "Oh Brendon, I just wish everything was back to normal and I could remember more clearly."

Alan tried to analyse everything. They say he had been in a coma and assume he'd had these weird dreams. Everyone in the house said they knew him, his face was not the face he believed he had and everything about his body said he was not the sex he had believed he was. The police knew of no other car crashes other than the one everyone was saying he, as Marie, had been involved in...He had a feminine voice with a Scottish accent... then there was those newspapers. And he could see no justification, no reason at all why a wealthy family would be trying to convince him he was somebody he was not, to the extreme point of changing his sex and altering his face.

“I need to get better Brendon, I need to start remembering more. Please understand and bear with me... I think..., I think I am getting there... believing you.”

“You will my darling, you will. And I shall be right there with you, helping you all of the way.” Frobisher promised with a squeeze to Alan’s hand.

“That man, the one from the hospital. Will he be coming back? I would very much like to talk with him.” Alan asked.

“Who, Logan? He will be back later today. He has been keeping regular contact as he is also concerned about you.” Frobisher replied.

It was much later in the afternoon before Logan did arrive at the home. The family doctor, Dr. Carson, was also there and he had checked on Alan and given him his medication, including the hormone cocktail, before going to check on Charles. Charles was still in no way aware that a bogus Marie was living right under his roof.

“How are you feeling today?” Logan asked as he drew up a chair by the bedside.

“A little better and the soreness ah have been feeling are easing a bit.” Alan replied.

“That’s good? And how are you feeling about yourself? Have you had any strange dreams since we woke you? Or are you gaining more memory of your own self?”

Alan cast his eyes down. All of the memories of mah life as a man are still so vivid. Ah do have times when ah recall images of Marie with people ah do not know... It is scary. Ah also see ...mahself? With the man you showed me in the photo who you said was mah father.”

Logan smiled. "That is excellent news..., you see. No matter how small, you have retained and regained some memory. If you were this fictitious person... this man you thought you were, you would have no such memories of Marie."

That did seem quite true, how could he have memories if he wasn't that person? But then..., still so many memories of Alan.

"Will mah memory ever come back? It seems so vague whilst the other memories are so vivid."

"I can only hope so. But I will admit, this is all new territory for me." Logan responded.

"This man... Charles... who you say is mah father. I only have fuzzy pictures of him in mah mind and yet Brian Rutledge... mah father .., mah other father that is, I can remember everything about him... and Glen, mah brother, who lent me his car to come up to Scotland."

"This really is a unique situation... most interesting. Dreams, when we recall them, are usually blurred and formless, snippets of many dreams rolled into one and then, in most cases, totally forgotten about on waking... but the clarity of the dreams you had whilst in your coma... and all retained... I am puzzled by it. Maybe because you lost total memory of whom you are allowed those dreams to manifest and take over, truly remarkable. Logan replied looking directly into Alan's eyes.

"...But, even if you do not get total memory back, you should start from here anew, making fresh memories whilst we can all fill you in on the gaps in your life. Certain things can return and maybe from them, others will be recalled..."

"When will ah see this man? Mah father? It may help a lot if I see him in the flesh rather than in a photograph."

“Not yet, my dear. Your father is very ill. We want you mentally stable and able to accept yourself before we reintroduce you to him, for his own good. It is why we are so eager to get you to remember, as there is not much time for him. Maybe, if you felt ready enough and fit enough, a walk around the grounds with either Brendon or one of the house staff, may help stimulate your memory.” Logan suggested.

“Ah suppose I can try, I do want to be able to remember as mah head is so confused, it hurts.”

“I’ll ask for some headache tablets be brought up to you my dear. For now, try and rest.”

Throughout the conversation with Logan Alan hardly realised his Scottish accent was becoming more acute.

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