



*Reluctant Press presents:*

# Don't Get Mad...



**Nick Lorange**

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AN 'ADULT TV' E-BOOK

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# Don't get mad...

**By Nick Lorange**

Vincenzo Saliari shook his head. He stretched, and suddenly his alarms kicked in. He wasn't in his bed with the silk sheets. He felt confused drugged. Too much party last night, maybe. He remembered a cute number with red hair and, she had said, a sister.

No one was with him in bed, so she'd gotten up. His hands told him that it was twin-sized. She must have been hot. He hadn't taken a girl in a twin bed since he was fifteen. He opened his eyes. The blank institutional green walls loomed over him.

He sat up and looked around. The room was built large enough that the bed he was laying in was separated from every wall, standing alone in the room. Beside it were a plastic carafe and a soft plastic cup, both

on a lightweight fiberglass tray. He was thirsty. He grabbed the carafe and poured the water in his mouth, letting the liquid run down his face.

"It's time," Drea said. Her twin sister Deirdre nodded, tapping on the door. Doctor Solomon came in, looking at the monitor. The victim of this entire operation was absently wiping his chest in the room. He looked at Deirdre, who was dressed as a nurse.

"Notify the others. And be sure to have your finger ready, Andrea."

Drea nodded, and flipped up the cover on the red button. She had joked about the dead man switch. "What setting, Doc?"

"Five minutes."

Vincenzo stood. He was barefoot, wearing some kind of soft hospital shirt. His hair felt shaggy, like it hadn't been cut just last week. His sense of balance was off and he couldn't figure out why. There was a click at the door, and a doctor entered. Vincenzo had seen him before. Well, actually he had seen a picture before. Something Solomon. Brother of one of someone killed when he took out one of his targets.

"Good morning. Am I addressing Vincent or Vanessa?" Solomon asked.

"What?" He was shocked. His gruff tenor was softer somehow.

"Who are you?"

"Vinnie Saliari. Who the fuck do you think I am?"

Instead of answering, Solomon opened the clipboard, and made a note. "And what is the last thing you remember?"

“What’s going on here, Doc?”

“Please, answer the question.”

“I was in a bar in New York. Guido’s. I had picked up some girl and was going to take her back to my place.” He looked confused. “Then nothing.”

“And the date?”

“February seventeenth.”

Solomon sighed, making yet another note. “All right, Mr. Saliari, here is what happened. On the eighteenth of February, you went to a plastic surgeon, identified yourself as Vanessa Saliari, and asked for full sexual reassignment. He began working on you, implanting silicone breast implants, and trimming your face, your Adam’s apple, and vocal cords. About a month into the procedures, you suddenly started screaming that you were Vincent, not Vanessa, and attacked the doctor and two nurses, killing two before you were subdued.

“You were judged criminally insane and sent here.”

“What are you...” Vinnie pulled out the robe. He suddenly looked down, and stared. Two firm pert breasts thrust from his chest. “What the fuck!” He started forward.

In the control room, Drea punched the button. Vinnie dropped like a pole-axed steer.

Solomon looked at the body before him, then looked up. Shandon had planted the bugs in the room, and even to Solomon, they were invisible. “How long did you drop him?”

“The button is set for five. Just like you said,” a hidden speaker replied.

“Good.” Solomon stepped into the hall. A moment later, two hefty orderlies came in. They picked up the body and strapped it down on the bed with leather straps and restraints.

Solomon brought in a chair, and waited. Deirdre stood at his side with the tray.

Vinnie came violently awake. He tried to move, but the restraints and straps pinned him. Solomon came over beside the bed, looking down with professional worry. “Are you back now, Vinnie?”

“Let me go, you twisted fuck! I want out of here, and I want out now!”

“You have been committed by a court of law, Vinnie. Removing the straps will not free you; a court has to do it. If they do, you would then go to a prison to serve life without parole.” He snapped his fingers, and Deirdre came over, holding the tray. Solomon picked up the syringe and bottle, and expertly filled it.

“I have decided to proceed with a new drug called Janusin. It was designed to allow the two parts of a schizophrenic mind to communicate. To allow me to call Vanessa out at will.” He squirted some of the sterilized water, then bent to inject it.

“No, you...”

In the control room, Drea punched the button.

Solomon finished injecting the placebo into the limp body. “Hit him again when he starts to come out of it. Is the tape ready?”

“All set, Doctor.”

Deirdre hurried out, and returned with a tape recorder. The orderlies came back, and another chair was brought. Impersonally, they stripped him and began

dressing the body in hose and garter belt, a camisole and panties. They draped the body across the chair, then strapped him down. Once done, they left. Deirdre took her station beside the chair, and Solomon stepped from the room. He lit a cigarette and waited.

Vinnie snapped upright, and Deirdre bent over, all professional concern.

“Are you feeling all right, dear?”

“What the fuck keeps happening?”

“I really can’t explain in layman’s terms. Your other personality seems to be able to turn *your* personality on and off when she needs to. I’ll be right back with the doctor.”

She stepped into the hall; Solomon handed her a smoke from his pack and lit it. They stood in companionable silence until she crushed the cigarette out, then they stepped into the room.

During the interim, Vinnie had been trying to slip his hands out of the straps. But as the old joke says, ‘Just because I’m crazy, it doesn’t make me stupid’. The straps were designed so that only another person could release them. He noticed the table with a tape recorder on it, and was thinking that maybe he could grab it and fashion a knife of some kind when Solomon and Deirdre returned.

The doctor turned on the tape player, and sat. “Well, you came out of it very quickly.” Solomon made yet another goddamned note. “Vanessa told me that you refused to talk with us if she was present.”

“Why am I dressed like this?”

“That is what Vanessa wanted to wear. I felt that to protect you from injury, I would allow her what she wanted.”

“I don’t know what the fuck you’re trying to do, Doc, but if you don’t let me go, I’m going to kill every fucking person in this place!” He struggled against the straps.

Solomon put away the pen with a sigh. “Vinnie, do you want me to have you put in a straitjacket? Locked in a padded room? If that failed to calm you down, would you want drugs until you need diapers?”

The man shook his head violently.

“Then remember I am trying to help you. I do not like drugs, they don’t remove the problem, they only suppress it.” He looked at the clipboard again. “Perhaps we can get through to you by running back the tape. Deirdre, get the other recorder, please.”

The nurse went out, and returned a few moments later with another cassette recorder. She put it down, and set it to record. Then turned to leave the room.

“August 15. Doctor Yitzhak Solomon, interviewing patient Vincenzo Saliari.” He went on to describe the symptoms that suggested a second personality disorder. “Second personality, Vanessa, stated that Vinnie refused to come out and talk, refusing to acknowledge her presence at all. I am now going to run back the original tape, and play it. While doing so, a second recorder is being used to tape both Vanessa’s comments, and Vinnie’s reaction to them.” He started the recorder.

It started with Solomon stating the date, identifying himself and the patient, then saying, “Is Vinnie there with you?”

There was a throaty chuckle in Vinnie's voice. "No, doctor, I am here by myself. Vinnie doesn't want to play."

"But the Janusin was supposed to bring you both out simultaneously."

"Not if he doesn't want to. People can ignore what they don't want to believe. You know that. He doesn't want to believe in me." The voice laughed again. "He doesn't believe in Santa Claus either."

"Well..."

"Not to worry, Doctor. I won't try to take over again when this wears off. You can play the tape, and I will make him listen." There was a sigh. "Are these straps necessary?"

"Not with you."

"But Vinnie might decide to pay attention. Fair enough. But I'm uncomfortable. Nurse, be a dear and get my things, please."

"Vanessa, if he wakes up wearing that..."

"I am through caring what he thinks, Doctor. Unlike him, I am asking. Please."

"I can't allow you to hurt his mental well-being, Vanessa."

There was a petulant sigh. "Doctor, I know everything Vinnie knows about hurting people. If you don't allow me to dress properly, I will eventually have to show you what I know using his body as a canvas. Vinnie will have to learn to pee sitting down when I'm done, but I already do. Besides, if you strap me into a straitjacket and he wakes up in the rubber room, what will that do to his mental health?" She laughed again. This laugh was deep and evil.

"All right." The voice grew louder as if Solomon had leaned over the machine. "Vanessa is going to dress. This tape will resume when she is done." A click, then another. "Please, sit down, Vanessa."

"Why thank you, Doctor. May I have a cigarette?"

"Here." There was the click of a lighter, the deep draw of the smoke. "Thank you, sugar. Nurse, could you strap down all but my arm? I want to enjoy this." There was clicking of the straps being tightened. "Better."

"Since Vinnie won't talk, perhaps you can explain what is happening?"

"Of course I will."

"How long have you been around?"

"Since Vinnie was a boy. Ever since he killed the neighbor's dog just because he wanted to."

Vinnie stared at the recorder, his clothing and the straps forgotten. He'd never told anyone about that! The litany went on. The candy he had stolen at ten, the bully he'd jumped and beaten up with a baseball bat one night because he was bigger than Vinnie.

"Then he began killing people. He has been killing people for money for ten years now." Vanessa was going on in a conversational tone. "He gets off on it, Doctor. He told Willie the Blade it was better than sex sometimes. But I will be damned if I am going to sit in a jail cell for the rest of my life because *he* wants another thrill."

Vinnie moaned. He had been alone! There was no way he could have been heard. Now she was going down the list, everyone he had taken out in the last two years.

"I finally decided I had to escape last year," the voice went on relentlessly.

"Why?"

"Because he murdered a woman. Sandra Albright. Not because he had to, not because he was told to. Because he needed an apartment to shoot from, and it was her apartment. She came home unexpectedly. Vinnie had a ski mask on; she couldn't see his face. He tied her up, and amused himself with her."

"Amused himself?"

"Raped her, Doctor. Shoved himself up her ass, in her mouth, used her in every way he could. As he did it, he told her he was just going to kill a man with a rifle, then he'd be gone. The poor bitch believed him." The voice was ragged, as if on the edge of tears. "He used her, abused her, then strangled her and set fire to the apartment. The police linked it to the shooting only by chance.

"He boasted about the rape, laughing at the woman's trusting eyes! It was then that I decided I had to get out of this in the only way I could think of. I am going to take over his life. I am going to come out like a butterfly, and fly away."

"But Vinnie is here."

"Do you think I care?" The voice was almost a scream. "He uses people, and I used him. I used the money in the bank to start the procedure. When he tried to stop me, I stopped him from hurting the doctor too badly. I am as much a killer as he is. Vinnie is just my first 'hit'."

"Vanessa..."

“Doctor, I can feel him trying to get back out. I have something to say to Vinnie before I go under again. Nurse, finish strapping me down.

“Vinnie, you think you’re so fucking smart.” The voice dripped vitriol. “You think you can get over on everybody. But I am here, inside you. You can’t go back from what I’ve already done. The tits will be there unless you get them cut off. The face has been changed to *my* face. I called Don Pietro and told him off before the surgery on my vocal cords, and he’s put a contract out on you. The only way to escape is for me to continue. If you resist long enough, the boys will find you and kill you. I intend to live, and if that means you die, so be it.” There was a moan.

Solomon shut off the first recorder. Vinnie was staring at him with terror in his eyes. “Do you understand our problem here, Vinnie?”

Vinnie nodded. The mob would allow all sorts of eccentricities, but being really crazy wasn’t on the list. If she had really called the Don, there was a contract on him for sure. “What can I do?”

*Nothing.* Vinnie started, trying to turn. His own altered voice had spoken as if the bitch was standing behind him.

“We can try to work with both of you...”

“Did you hear that, Doc?”

Solomon looked up. “Hear what?”

As Solomon spoke the voice said, *You can hear me, Vinnie?*

Vinnie squeezed his eyes shut. “I can hear her voice in my head.”

*Great! Oh, this is rich!*

Solomon stared at him, then made a note. "Janusin was supposed to bring her to the surface simultaneously with you. I thought it would have worn off by now. I will have to talk to the pharmaceutical company about possible side effects." He put the pen in his pocket and left. A moment later, two large orderlies came in to unstrap Vinnie from the chair. He didn't resist.

The bitch was real.

In the control room, Drea and Deirdre were ecstatic. The first step had been taken.

## II ONE YEAR EARLIER

Andrea and Deirdre Albright looked at the estate as they were coming up the driveway. It was a Victorian mansion large enough for a prep school on a huge plot of land north of Philadelphia, with a wrought iron fence encircling it. The taxi stopped, and an elderly man in a butler's uniform opened the door.

"Madams Albright?" he asked. His voice was upper crust British.

They climbed out of the cab, stretching. It had been a long flight from De Moines, and a confusing one. A week earlier, they had received a letter;

'Harlan Winters requests your presence at a meeting of mutual interest.

'Enclosed are tickets for a flight to Philadelphia. You may stay at his residence. If you do not wish to, funds have been included for lodging, meals, transport, etc.'

In the messenger delivered envelope were the tickets and five thousand dollars in hundred-dollar bills. The young women had looked around their \$600 a month apartment, and decided that this had to be important.

The butler signaled, and three younger men in livery came out and began bringing the bags in.

“Will you be staying with us, ladies?”

“Yeah, we will,” Andrea, the more outspoken of the twins, said.

“Very well.” The butler looked at the men. “The blue suite, Armand.” One of the men nodded, and they began tramping up the stairs. The old man turned back to them. “I am Hubert, the majordomo. Mister Winters is detained in the city, but will be back shortly. Please make yourselves comfortable. If there is anything you wish, please ring.” As he spoke, another car, this one a Porsche, was coming up the drive. “Please excuse me, one of the other guests appears to be arriving.”

As they went in, they heard, “Doctor Chin, I believe?”

The estate was exciting to the women. It had been built by Winter’s grandfather 20 years before the Civil War, replacing a larger stone monstrosity according to Hubert. Hubert found them and told them that dinner was to be served at 6, and that they were to dress. Andrea and Deirdre spent the time before dinner exploring. It was larger inside than out, thanks to the two cellars. Ten suites with two bedrooms, each with their own bath. Two dining halls, one for intimate dinners of less than fifty; the other doubled as a grand ballroom when the furniture was cleared. A kitchen that needed

guide dogs to get through and a walk-in freezer with maybe a ton of assorted meats.

There were other guests, one older woman, and five men. None of them had arrived together. The young women met them during their explorations, and wondered what they might all have in common. Formal dresses had been provided, and the women were ready when one of the younger servants arrived to escort them.

The table was large enough for everyone to sit around, and only the head of the table was empty. The conversation was almost non-existent, though the girls tried. There was no subject all of them had in common. Talking baseball had only brought Doctor Yitzhak Solomon into the conversation. The man named Chin, who looked Japanese, started talking the esoteric shorthand of medicine, and that drew Solomon back from the conversation.

As they were served after dinner liqueurs, the door at the far end of the room opened, and Hubert pushed in a man in a wheel chair. The man looked ancient. The wheelchair was moved to the head of the table, and Hubert expertly locked the brakes, stepping back. As if they were illusions, the others servants vanished.

“Ladies, Gentlemen, I am Harlan Winters.” The old man looked to each of them. “You do not know each other as of yet, but if you will allow me, I will make the introductions.

“Upon my left going down the table we have Martin Van Pelt. Beside him are Andrea and Deirdre Albright, and at the foot of the table, Doctor Yitzhak Solomon. On my right, starting at the foot of the table is Doctor Chin, Miss Juliana Compton, Henry Fellows,

and lastly, Donald Brown." He breathed deeply and looked into his lap.

"I am a wealthy man. I am worth something in the neighborhood of four and a half billion dollars."

"A comfortable neighborhood," Fellows commented.

Winter didn't seem to mind the interruption. "Yes, a very comfortable neighborhood. But there are things even I cannot buy. My brother was murdered last year. Shot down like a dog in the streets. The police have nothing. Or at least nothing they can use." He looked up; fury glowed in his eyes.

"I hired detectives. They found out what I wanted to know. I know who killed him, and why." He smiled. "Even though I now know who killed him, I am unsatisfied with merely doing death to him. Killing him would be a momentary pleasure. I want him to suffer for a long time. For the rest of his natural life if at all possible.

"The detectives, at my request, began researching the man's background. You all have something in common with me. Someone in your family was also murdered. By the same man." The statement brought stunned silence.

"If you will allow, I will explain. Mr. Van Pelt is a construction boss for a large firm. Another firm bid on a project, but Van Pelt's company won it last year. Construction had begun, and Van Pelt's younger brother was in charge of the crew. A section of wall collapsed, killing him. There were accusations of falsified records and the police totally ignored evidence of a bomb that caused the section to fall. The contract was pulled and

given to the other company." The rugged man looked away, his huge hands clenching on the tablecloth.

"The Albright women had an older sister, Sandra. About four months ago, her apartment caught fire, and she was killed. The police linked it to the shooting of a protected witness who was about to testify at the local courthouse. The woman had been raped and bound before the fire started. She was alive and feeling up to the moment she died." Andrea moaned, and her sister hugged her. Both were crying.

"Doctor Solomon is a psychologist. His sister was in a six-passenger commuter aircraft that exploded in midair two years ago. On the plane were a mobster and his bodyguards. He killed her merely because she was there." Solomon picked up his glass, and chugged the brandy. He was ashen.

"Doctor Chin survived the attack on him. His real name is Hiro Matsuke. He worked for the Federal Government in the witness relocation program. His skill as a plastic surgeon has allowed many to escape retribution for their testimony over the years. He had a brother named Onaki who also worked in the same office. A gunman who obviously didn't know which brother worked for the government killed Onaki eighteen months ago. The government relocated Matsuke under the name Chin." The Asian looked wooden.

"Mrs. Compton has a Ph.D. in acoustics. She was married to Harry Compton, the investigative reporter in Washington DC. Harry had begun a series of articles about organized crime, and had stated in his last article that he would reveal the name of several senators and congressmen accepting money from the Italian and Mexican mobs. He was murdered in a manner suggest-

ing that the Columbians had killed him almost four years ago." The woman was crying.

"Mr. Fellows used to work in real estate. His company was starting to encroach on an area in California where the local mobs had interests. His office was burned to the ground by an arsonist last year. His wife and two children were in the building. The doors had been jammed so that they couldn't escape." Any good mood Fellows might have had had been destroyed by the calm recitation.

"And Mr. Brown. A member of the Central Intelligence Agency for nineteen years. A field agent and later control for operations in the Eastern Bloc. His brother was in a restaurant when a man machine-gunned a table full of Mob bigwigs. One of the bullets struck him in the neck, killing him instantly in July of last year."

Winters looked at the people at the table. Each mirrored his fury. Of all of them, only Brown didn't react.

"So we all lost someone." Brown said. "Give me the name, and he's dead in an hour." Like Winters, his voice was flat.

"I said I don't want a quick end, and I meant it." Winters looked at his wasted body. "I am worth a lot of money. What would any of you do for a part of it?"

"How big a part?" Van Pelt asked.

"I have no heirs, and my lawyers are in the midst of liquidating all of my holding and converting them into stocks and bonds. I will divide my estate nine ways. One share goes to Hubert." He motioned toward the silent butler, "who will use it to finally retire. I will give one share to each of you in return for your help. If you cannot or will not help me, you may have a stipend of

one hundred thousand dollars a year for the rest of your lives if you promise not to reveal my plans to anyone. Even if you went to the police, there would be no proof that any of this happened. The money is contingent on your silence. I have experts to hide where my money is going and why. At least I can thank the IRS for something."

He shrugged. "Even more important, if you reveal what is being done to anyone, it will eventually get back to someone who will tell the target, or his masters. They will either kill him, or hide him. Either way, he will escape justice."

"What do you want?" Chin asked. "How much pain is your vengeance worth?"

"How many barrels will thy vengeance yield thee, even if thou gettest it, Captain Ahab? It will not fetch thee much in our Nantucket market'," Winters quoted. At the confused looks he received, he added, "Moby Dick. You're missing the point, Doctor Chin. That isn't the right question. It is how much pain can we inflict and keep him alive? How long can we make him suffer?" Winters glared. "If he dies a hundred years from now, it would be too soon for me!"

Everyone looked at each other. They had just been offered a choice. A tenth of a million a year to keep quiet, or half a billion in one lump sum if they could find the method and help.

Winters signaled, and Hubert stepped up, releasing the brakes. "You have the rest of the week to think about it. If you must leave, I will understand. If you have any requests for information or equipment, please let Hubert know."

Of the group, only Fellows opted out. He wanted revenge, but at the same time, didn't have the conscience to continue.

It had been less than a week before they got together again. Doctor Solomon had been studying a file Brown had delivered during that time. It was the psychological profile of Vincenzo Saliari. He had also spent many hours closeted with Doctor Chin.

Tonight he tapped his water glass, and stood.

"Mr. Winters, you want to get even with Vinnie. How far are you willing to go?"

Winters looked up, and the same fury that had been in his eyes the week before had been unbanked. "Find a way, and I will do it."

Solomon nodded and tapped the folder he had brought with him to the table. "With all of your help, I think I have the worst thing you can do to such a person. Something almost completely irrevocable, harming not only his body, but his mind as well."

The others leaned forward intently. "Continue, Doctor," Winters replied.

"First a little background. Vincent Saliari is an overly aggressive male, who releases his aggressions by killing people. The fact that he happened to find a niche in society to pursue that merely shows that he is also intelligent. He feels comfortable with the rules of Organized Crime and is comforted by the mores of that group. He knows that most of the dangers you might face in jail or prison are nonexistent for a mobster.

"He doesn't have to worry about casual brutality, because the Mob has men inside the prison who assure that their members are not so treated. Even guards are wary of injuring them unless forced to. He doesn't

have to worry about what are called the Sisters, men who take sexual pleasure in raping new inmates. By the same token, the prison societies such as the Aryan Brotherhood, the Warrior Society, Mexican Mafia, Bloods and Crips, leave them completely alone. They can gain revenge on one person only by placing all of their members in jeopardy.

“So he kills people outside the walls, and inside he is a respected member of their society, safe from any harm. I have found a method that I believe will remove all of those protections from him. That will remove his ability to kill at will, remove the protection of the mob family, and assure that casual brutality will enter his life.” He looked around. Every eye was on him.

“I propose that we take Vinnie Saliari and make him a woman.” If he had suggested they change him into a troll, they wouldn’t have been more surprised.

“How do we do that?” Brown asked sarcastically. “Create a time machine?”

“It is not that esoteric really. I asked Doctor Chin’s advice. If you will?”

Chin stood. “One of the procedures, or rather set of procedures, I learned in Medical school was sexual re-assignment. Most of them you have heard about. Tummy tucks, face jobs, nose jobs, breast implants, liposuction. All are used by women. However there is a group of patients defined as transsexuals. Men who believe they should have been women, or vice versa.

“While there are also those that get part of the procedure done as stage performers, female impersonators, etc, there are others that come in for actual reassignment. These women are in every way indistinguishable from any woman who walks past you on the

street unless they actually disrobe. Only the fact that a doctor looked at what nature gave them and labeled them male or female made them anything else.

“Doctor Solomon asked me what would be necessary to change a man to a woman, and I listed it for him.” He picked up a sheet of paper. “A nose job, a face job.” He motioned toward his face. “To alter the contours of the bones in the face to something more feminine, such as reducing the cheekbone prominence, and reducing the brow ridge, at the same time raising the brow.

“Chin restructuring, scalp advancement and hair implantation to assure that it remains there. Reduction of the thyroid cartilage, which causes the prominent male ‘Adam’s apple’ to go away. There is also a new procedure where the vocal cords are trimmed with a laser. This causes the pitch of a male voice to go up. The technology exists to convert a male bass to a female soprano. As long as the person isn’t trying for a coloratura voice, it can work well.

“Breast augmentation to increase the new woman’s natural shaping. Contouring of the trunk to more feminine lines. Finally, electrolysis and hormone therapy. While hormones can be used without a castration, removing the testicles also removes the testosterone production, making everything else easier.” He set down the paper.

“How long will this take? Winters asked.

“Assuming we planned and did all of the procedures at the same time, less than two weeks. Because of some possible complications, it would be better to stagger the procedures to allow for healing. Doing, say, nose, chin and cheeks along with the breast implants and castration, waiting about two weeks, doing the

electrolysis, abdomen and thyroid restructure with vocal cord reduction along with the brow and scalp, then allow healing again. We could have him completely feminine in looks in less than three months."

"We couldn't hold him that long." Winters complained.

"Oh yes, we could. If we can find a way to convince him that he is doing all of this to himself." Doctor Solomon looked around the room. "With all of your help, we can do this."

### III TODAY

"He's up and moving," Juliana reported. Doctor Chin walked over, watching the screen. There wasn't anywhere on the property where Vinnie couldn't be watched. As for Vanessa, Don had told them the transceiver implant would receive if Vinnie was on the moon.

Juliana was the mother of at least part of Vanessa. She leaned forward, and spoke in the microphone.

Vinnie stepped to the door, looking both ways. One of the orderlies sat at one end of the hall, reading a magazine; the other end was empty. He moved quietly that way, and looked around the corner.

*Where do you think you're going, Vinnie?* the Bitch's voice asked.

"I'm getting the fuck out of here," he snapped. He didn't consider that it would look crazy to have a conversation with himself.

*Do you really think you can run away from your own mind?* The Bitch laughed. *Run, little man. When I get tired of it, I'll take over. When I do, I am going to do what I want to do. I like one of the other patients a lot. Maybe I'll suck his dick. I enjoy the taste of come. The smoothness, the slick feel of it in my mouth. You'll learn to enjoy it as much as I do.* The laughter pealed in his ears, and he found himself on his knees screaming.

"SHUT UP!"

"Are you all right?"

Vinnie looked around. The orderly had stood, and was walking toward him. He tried to stand, but fell on his ass. He scabbled away. "Get the fuck away from me!"

*Ah, I see you want to suck a dick.*

In the control room, Juliana hit the button. On the screen, Vinnie collapsed. The orderly clucked his tongue, then picked the limp body up. He carried it back to the room, laying it on the bed. As he went back to his post, Andrea in her own nurse's uniform walked in.

"What was all the screaming?"

"The new patient. Started screaming for someone to shut up then went out like a light."

"I'll look in on him."

"Sure."

She walked down, then closed the door. "How long do I have, Juliana?"

"He just bit it. You have about four minutes."

"Not long enough. Give him another five."

“All right.” Juliana tapped the button one more time.

In the room, Andrea reached under her skirt, and pulled out a turkey-basting syringe. She opened Vinnie’s lax mouth and sprayed the contents into his mouth. She worked his jaw as Solomon had shown her and he swallowed instinctively. Then she put away the syringe. She pulled out a dildo about the size of the average man and lubricated it. Then she flipped him over.

Working swiftly, she shoved it up his ass, hard. She then pulled it back and forth hard, sawing it inside him for almost three minutes. Then she slid it back into concealment.

She stepped out, and went to the Orderly. “Report to Doctor Solomon. I think the patient might need further sedation. Have Van Pelt come back and take your place. I’ll wait here.”

The Orderly left, and a few moments later, Van Pelt came in. He went with her and they strapped Vinnie face down, hands bound to the headboard, feet to the foot of the bed. Andrea flipped the hospital robe open, and squeezed the slack breasts hard. “Juliana?”

“Make it quick. Less than a minute.”

Van Pelt dropped his pants. He jumped up on the bed.

Vinnie snapped awake as a voice shouted “Mark!”

“She asked me to...”

“I don’t care what ‘she’ asked you to do. Get out of here, pack your stuff, and leave.”

“Yes ma’am.”

Behind him, he could hear a man zipping his pants, and leaving. His ass hurt, and there was an odd taste in his mouth. The nurse that had been helping the doctor was cursing. He felt the strap on one foot come free.

“What is happening, Nurse?” Solomon entered the room.

“I found Mark fucking one of the patients, Doctor.”

Suddenly the feeling in his ass made sense. The taste in his mouth. He began spitting desperately.

The other leg came free. The nurse moved up to start on the hands. “It’s unprofessional, Doctor, but I really can’t blame him. Having someone who looks like that pawing at your crotch every time you’re around would drive a saint to sex.”

“Be that as it may, Mark will leave the clinic immediately.” The last hand came free and Vinnie rolled off the bed. He scrambled into a corner, looking up with terrified eyes. Solomon bent down, far enough back that Vinnie couldn’t grab him. “Are you all right?”

Vinnie screamed.

Juliana hit the button and Vinnie collapsed. Andrea helped Solomon put the limp form back in the bed.

“We’ll have to replace Mark.”

“I know. I will check the registry.” Solomon made a note, and left. He stopped in the control room and scanned the list. Mark Gordon, an efficient orderly, would leave with an excellent recommendation and be replaced. Martin Van Pelt snickered.

“When do you think he’ll put together that I’m still here?”

Solomon shook his head. "From now on, you'll be yourself when you're on the ward. He might recognize your voice, but he didn't see who abused him." The doctor sent the email calling up the next orderly on the list. "Things will continue as we have planned."

Vinnie didn't like it, but he was getting used to just suddenly being here again. He was laying on the bed, the taste of semen in his mouth, and his ass burning.

*Did you enjoy that as much as I did?*

"Why are you doing this?" Vinnie wanted to shout it, but in the high-pitched voice he now had, it sounded whiny.

*I thought I made myself clear, dear Vinnie. This ends when I've come out. When a man can fuck me in my cunt, not up your ass.*

"I don't want to be a woman!"

*Did I ask you? A pity about Mark. He was so sweet in my mouth. Maybe his replacement will be better.*

Vinnie held his head and moaned.

*And you had better stop talking about why I am doing this. You should be saying why are you doing this. After all, it is your body.*

"Just leave me alone!"

*I can't do that. We can't get this body cut in half like King Solomon. We're together, forever either in life as a woman, in a psycho ward, or dead. Now get that pretty ass up, and go to dinner.*

"I don't want to eat!"

*Either you get up and eat, or I will take over, take you to dinner, and have another dick in your mouth for dessert.*

“All right, damn it!” Vinnie stood, and stormed out. The new orderly was sitting at the end, and he stood. “Where’s the dining room?”

“Right down there, ma’am.” He smiled at Vinnie.

“I’m not a woman!”

*Watch it, sugar. I like his style. He may be your main course.*

Vinnie got a hold of himself. He’d seen sadists work, and knew that the Bitch would do what she threatened.

*Now apologize.*

“I’m, I’m sorry.” Vinnie said.

“I understand. Split personalities can be a real pain. A nice-looking woman like you shouldn’t have to put up with it.”

“Nice?”

*That’s right. You’ve never seen your face, have you Vinnie? Or rather, our face. Ask the nice man for a mirror.*

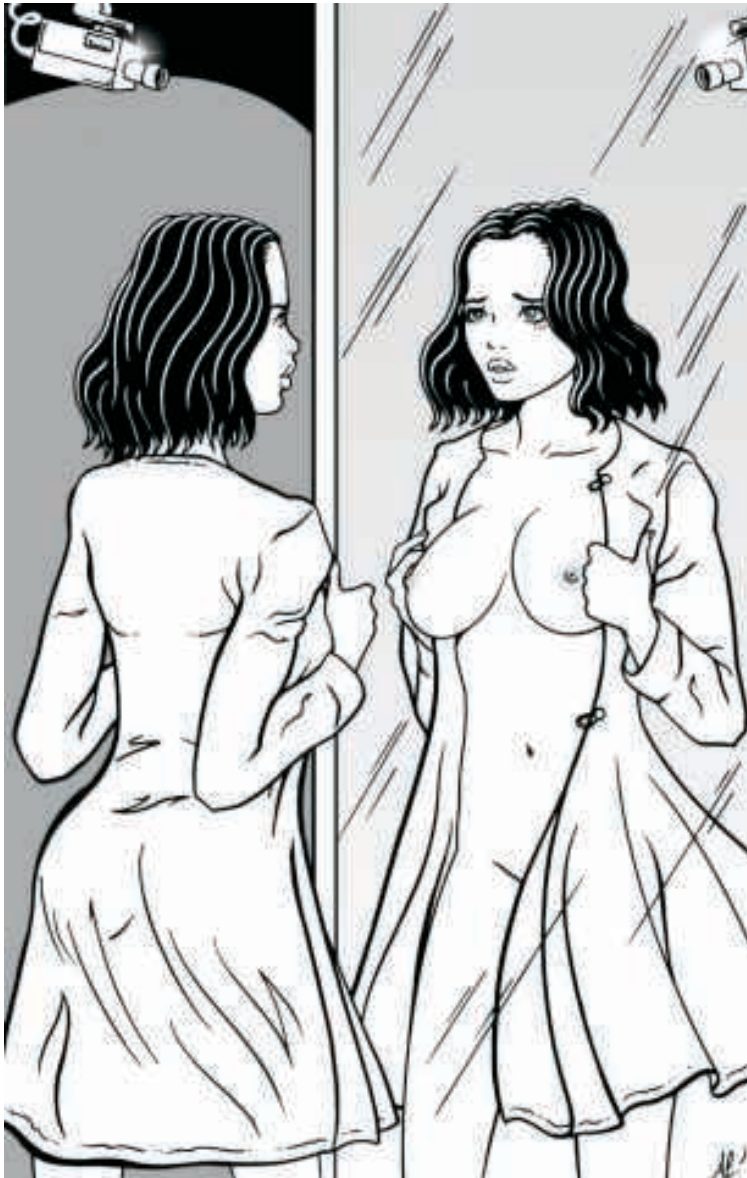
“Is there a mirror around here?”

“In the nurse’s station. But you can’t get close to it. You’re on suicide watch.”

*Think like a girl, sugar. Wheedle him a little.*

“Could you take me? Please?” The last word was like barbed wire.

The Orderly hesitated. “Wait a minute.” He got on the phone, and called. After a moment, he nodded. “All right, Doctor.” He hung up. “There’s a steel mirror in the men’s room. It’s bolted to the wall so you can’t get it off. He said as long as no one’s in there, you can look in it.”



Vinnie started to walk away, but the relentless voice stopped him. *Thank the nice man.*

“Uh, thank you.”

“You’re more than welcome.”

Vinnie knocked on the door to the bathroom, then went in. The steel sheet reflected back his worst nightmare. His eyes were large and doe-like, the kind he’d always liked to see when a girl looked at him while sucking his cock. The lips were fuller than he was used to, and the nose thinned. His Adam’s apple was gone, and the tits in the mirror were full and desirable.

He’d love it, if it weren’t his reflection.

In the control room, a full audience watched as Vinnie saw himself for the first time. It was almost like watching a solo scene porno movie. A hand came up, touching the cheek as if he didn’t believe it. The head turned from side to side, viewing the entire face, and the sweep of the neck. Hesitantly, the hand dropped, touching the front of the hospital robe. Juliana leaned forward toward the mike. “Open it up, Vinnie. They are the best tits money could buy.”

His hands opened the buttons, and pulled the robe aside. The breasts had large aureola, and the nipples were stiff. His hand gently slid in and he closed his eyes, as if doing so would stop him from feeling it. The breasts didn’t feel like silicone. They felt natural, as if he’d always had them. Chin smiled, and gave the others a thumb up.

“Now stop feeling yourself up, girl. Time for dinner.”

Vinnie buttoned up the robe, and left. His shoulders were sloped, defeated.

“I think that deserves some champagne,” Van Pelt said.

## IV 1 YEAR EARLIER

"You're insane!" Brown said.

"Actually I am deadly serious." Solomon said. "Consider. We wish him to suffer. I can tell you from my own experience that emotional and psychological pain is as real as the physical. People hurt each other every day in that way, without considering. Now tell me," he leaned forward, "With someone that knows the human mind as well as anyone on the planet, how much pain can I inflict?"

"But will that do?" Andrea asked. She was still angry. If it had been up to her, they would have had Saliari here with flensing knives poised.

"When I suggested making our dear friend a woman, I meant in every way." Solomon said. "Not only in form, but in mind as well. When we are done with him, he will believe he has made this choice of his own free will, and embrace it. He will willingly ask for sexual reassignment. Then we disappear and leave him to live out his life, half-man, half-woman, knowing that we've done it to him."

They stared at him in amazement. He had them in his hands. "In psychology, there are minds that are rigid and others that are flexible. A rigid mind is hard to change, but when changed, reforms in a different rigid form. Almost always an opposite of what they were. Victims change to become persecutors. Murderers become victims. We see them; we know the signs of them, and how to deal with them.

“If he were my patient, I could literally make him a pacifist unwilling to kill anyone. A change as fundamental as Saul of Tarsus becoming the apostle Paul. Instead of shattering his mind, I would pick at it like a diamond cutter, turning the six worthless carats of his masculine mind into a four-carat woman that we can have as virgin or slut as we choose. It would take longer, but it would work.

“His mind is rigid beyond the normal term. He is a killer, and a man. Not just a man but what would be called an Alpha male. The leader of the pack in his trade. He only bows to the Mob bosses because they feed victims to his killer side. His treatment of women shows this. He glories in being in control. In having a person’s life in his hands until the final instant.” He snapped his fingers, the snap sounding like a pistol shot. Everyone flinched.

“What if we shattered this personality? He comes back, but the mind changes; under the proper conditions, he become the opposite. If we were to leave him his sexual identity, he would become a priest, a martyr. Without that identity to hold onto, he becomes what he can see in the mirror. We are going to give him a face to see, a personality to match. Doctor Chin, if you would?”

Chin stood, setting a laptop on the table. “If you will all come over here?”

“Not yet, Doctor. Hubert, show him the special equipment in the library.”

“Yes sir.”

“If you will all accompany me?” Winters steered his motorized wheelchair through the door. The library was huge; hundreds of books on two levels greeted

them. Hubert took the doctor to a console at a podium and showed him where to mate his laptop to the main computer. As the doctor did that, the butler opened a wall to reveal a huge plasma TV screen equipped to show slides or, as in this case, projections from the unit also hooked into the computer.

A projection of Vinnie Saliari appeared. The body was a nude computer-generated representation. "I must thank Mr. Brown for this."

"Thank the behavioral science department of the Agency," Brown said. "We have files on a lot of men like Vinnie."

"As you will. First we implant breast forms. I intend to use the newest technology here. The standard silicon and water forms are rigid, and remain so for years. That is why women with new boob jobs have stiff-standing breasts. However they have just developed a pre-softened covering that can give realistic look and feel in less than three months. We also are going to implant a modified version of these on the hips, giving him a full feminine set of hips. Last, we make a layer of the same material in the abdomen. This will be the effect."

On the screen, breasts ballooned outward. The hips widened. As the picture turned, they could see the slightly rounded stomach of a young woman.

"Now we also castrate him. This is primarily to assure that testosterone is no longer being manufactured. I haven't found a way yet to introduce hormones without either pills or injections. Next we work on the face."

The screen zoomed until only the face and neck could be seen. Chin modified the picture, and long

feminine styled hair framed the face. But it was still a man. "I have decided to trim the jaw, the Adam's apple, and the vocal cords at the same time. This will cause the following changes." The jaw slimmed down, becoming softer. The Adam's apple disappeared.

"After he has had time to heal, I then alter the brow, nose and scalp." The face slimmed more, the nose becoming a cuter version of the original, the hair dropping three centimeters, the brow ridge disappearing.

"Behold our new person. Vinnie as a woman."

"Not Vinnie. He needs a woman's name," Juliana said. "How about Vanessa?"

"Agreed." Winters lifted a glass. "Ladies, Gentlemen. I give you Vanessa!"

"I hate to break the mood, but we still have to get him and keep him." Solomon said. "And get enough information to make him sure that Vanessa is him."

"I can handle both of those." Brown left the room, returning with a briefcase. "At the Agency, we sometimes have to... question people secretly. Most of whom wouldn't speak with us. So we developed this to take them down." He lifted out a vial.

"This is TKDN, or as we in the trade call it, Take-down. It causes the voluntary nerves of the human body to shut down, fast, leaving the autonomic system intact. The reverse of say, curare. What that means is that if you shoot him, he falls, and is still breathing but out like a light. You just pick him up and cart him off."

"But what dosage is safe?"

"That's the wonderful part. Takedown is derived from the natural chemicals released when you are in

deep Stage 4 sleep. These chemicals stop your body from moving. There is no lethal dosage. One micro liter, 1/50,000 of a drop, knocks him out within a second, and keeps him under for five minutes. Our standard load when we take someone down is a milliliter. A thousand times the smaller dose. Then we use a sensory deprivation tank to squeeze him dry."

Juliana suddenly sat upright. "You said if we could convince him that he is actively assisting us, Doctor Solomon. Why?"

"If he believes that we are doing all of this without his consent, he will resist. It is like a torture session. The man being tortured resists until he no longer can. Even the truth serums like Scopolamine, sodium pentathol, and sodium amytal merely make the person more talkative. A trained agent who is conscious when the drugs are administered can direct the conversation so that it skirts the issues rather than reveals. But if he believes he is part of the process of his own free will, one of the primary stumbling blocks will be removed. He will resist, just not effectively."

"Is that what he's going to look like, Doctor Chin?" Juliana asked.

"Unless I make serious mistakes, yes."

"Then we need some way to have him 'hear' Vanessa. As if she were inside his head, undermining his control." Juliana's eyes brightened. "Mr. Brown..."

"We're in this together. Call me Don."

"Don, what is the smallest transmitter receiver you can get through your connections?"

"They market them for commercial sale the size of a dime." He grinned. "But we have some in stock that are the size of a matchstick."

“Would we be able to implant it? With a large enough reservoir of this Takedown?”

Solomon pointed at the face still revolving before them. “The mastoid sinus! It’s large enough for something ten times the size of the transceiver! And the reservoir would be about the same size.”

“Right. They did a movie with that idea back in the 60s.” Brown stared at the picture. “And cameras. We have them as small as spider webs using fiber optics. If we put them in earrings, we can keep track of him and talk to him. But he’ll hear our voices.”

“Remember, I am the acoustical engineer. There are ways around that.” Juliana looked smug. We only need one more thing to make it work. It will cost, Mr. Winters, but we can have everything done in a few months.”

She looked at the picture. Chin stopped the face so that it was looking out at them. “If we can find an actress that looks close to that, a transsexual herself if at all possible, someone that needs money and is willing to do what she is told, I can not only create your Vanessa, but also make her real to him in his own mind.”

## V Today

Vinnie didn’t know or care what he ate. In his head, Vanessa was commenting on the food.

*Hmm, good. Give me some more of the salad.* He stuffed the leaves in his mouth. Bad enough he had to eat

salad, but no dressing? "Can't I have something I want?"

*What? Calzone?*

"Yeah, or Linguini."

*I may be an Italian girl, but I don't want Mama's Italian hips. If I won't watch my figure, who will?*

"Well you keep it up, maybe I eat what I want anyway!"

*Sure honey. Then I 'eat' what I want. Look to your left.*

Vinnie allowed his eyes to slide to the left, looking up a little. A very young man, almost a boy, ate silently at another table.

*Doesn't he look sweet? Think he tastes sweet too?*

Vinnie forcibly looked away.

*Keep it up, and you're going to have another dick up your ass. There's Matthew who will be on in about an hour. He's wanted to fuck me for a week.*

Vinnie refused to speak. He'd noticed that she couldn't read his thoughts. But she was always watching and listening. He'd tried one of the windows, and she had asked if he thought he could run away from himself.

Even if it was impossible, he had to get away. Maybe he could convince the doctor to give him something that broke the hold of the Janusin. Just ten minutes peace would make him feel better.

He finished his meal, pushing it aside. As he did, he picked up the napkin from his lap, lightly brushed his lips, and set it neatly folded beside the plate.

He paused, staring at it. All his life, he'd just thrown the napkin on the table. Why was he suddenly worrying about that?

*I want to be treated like a lady, Vinnie. Ladies don't throw napkins unless they are upset. Not like the whores that hang around with your kind. Now let's go in the common room. There's a movie I want to see.*

"Maybe I don't want to!"

*Am I going to have to suck a dick to convince you?*

"No! Please." He wanted to cry. This bitch was going to turn him out whether he liked it or not.

*I'll make a deal with you.*

"What?"

*If you sweet-talk the orderly into letting you have a TV in your room, and do it right, I will let you watch what you want to watch. If you don't, well, let's just say you'll grow to love the taste after a while.*

Vinnie gritted his teeth and stood. The orderly was standing by the door, leaning against the wall. He looked like a mob button man surveying the crowd. Oddly enough, that remembrance eased Vinnie's mind.

"Excuse me."

"Yes, Ma'am?"

Vinnie resisted the urge to correct him. He wasn't in the mood for more cum in his mouth. "Is it possible to have a television in my room?"

"I'll have to check, but I don't see a problem." He stood up, and went to the nurse's office. The redhead was in there, and she looked up at Vinnie. She nodded, and went back to her work, reaching for the phone.

The orderly came back. "I'll bring it."

"Thank you ever so much."

*Call him sweetheart.*

Vinnie shook his head.

*Call him a cute name or you'll be sucking him off!*

"You're such a dear," he said. The man smiled, and looked away blushing.

*Oh I love a man when he blushes!*

Vinnie walked down the hall.

"He's just asked for a television," Deirdre reported.

"I know. He thinks he's getting off easily," Andrea replied. She looked to Juliana, who gave her the thumbs up. "We've been watching. The subliminals will get a chance to really work now."

## VI 10 MONTHS EARLIER

The conspirators met in the library, where Hubert was rolling open the plasma screen TV again. Juliana stood before it, facing the others.

"What we are going to use is what is called subliminal suggestion. I will first show you a movie and after that, I will explain what has happened." She flipped a switch and the lights dimmed.

The movie was a first-run theatrical production all of them had heard of, but none had as yet seen. Of them all, only Juliana knew what was happening, but even she was not unaffected.

As the credits finished, the lights came up. She stood. "Now look around you." She said. Each had

drained the cups of whatever beverage they had asked for, and more had been supplied. "This room is air conditioned, kept at what, 70 degrees?"

"Yes, Ma'am," Hubert replied.

"A constant 70 degrees, yet all of us were thirsty. Why?" She motioned toward the screen. "Because I made you thirsty."

She put her arms behind her back. "Back in 1957, behavioral psychologists examined the way the human mind works. They discovered that the human mind has two different monitors for data input. The conscious mind, and the subconscious. When it comes to controlling what you do, the conscious mind is actually the lesser of the two.

"Where the conscious mind sees what's in front of us when we look at something and remembers only what we wish to remember, or something that catches our interest. The subconscious sees everything, and forgets nothing. They are constantly in communication, but we are unaware of this. This is why hunches are considered so odd. They are thoughts created by the subconscious that are acted upon by the conscious mind. The best analogy is that the conscious mind is the computer on your desk. The subconscious is the programmer that created the software.

"Your conscious mind sleeps, the subconscious never sleeps. Everything you have seen and heard is stored in the subconscious and only the small portion necessary to your daily lives is accessible. The subconscious understands a great deal more, far quicker, than the conscious mind. Something that is a flash for just an instant of time is not noticed by conscious mind but is recorded and acted upon by the subconscious. Over 90% of all data recorded by your mind is subliminal.

All of it is used, categorized, and recorded permanently.

“Over 2 million pieces of data are stored every day from all five senses. Your eye fixates on objects as much as 100,000 times a day, but very few were worthy of recording in the conscious mind. Have you ever noticed when looking into someone’s eyes that they seem to jump around? That is the subconscious ordering a data sweep. You don’t notice it because you are used to it by the time you can see clearly.”

She went to the screen, and flicked another switch. On a display screen, were a series of lines. “Now look.” A picture of a desert took the screen. “The sequence is specific. At 3 seconds, this picture flashed for 1/3000 of a second. It flashed every second for ten seconds then was followed by this.”

A legend flashed.

IT’S HOT

“That flashed starting at 15 seconds. At 30.”

I AM THIRSTY

“This flashed, alternating with the picture, and ‘It’s hot’ every eight to ten minutes throughout the rest of the film. That...” she pointed at the empties scattered around, “...was the result.”

She stood, looking at them. “Any questions?”

“How does this work?” Van Pelt asked.

“Think of the images. The one disadvantage the subconscious has is that it cannot tell truth from lie. A hot desolate waste. Your subconscious believes it is in the desert. Then the statements. It’s hot. Again, building anxiety. Suddenly a clue to salvation. I am thirsty.

Your subconscious orders the body to drink. The urge is satisfied. Suddenly the anxiety returns."

This is what I have created for our dear Vanessa." She motioned toward the screen. The picture changed. This time it was a series of lines. "These will repeat every second with the same 1/3000th speed. The layout is when the sequences begin, and end."

## SECONDS PICTURE OR LEGEND

01 NO CONTENT

03 VISUAL, WOMAN'S BREASTS

08 YOU WILL WATCH

15 WOMAN STROKING HER OWN BREASTS

19 YOU WILL WATCH AND REMEMBER

"As you can see," she motioned down the screen at the numbers. "The first minute is doing nothing more than getting and keeping his attention. However, starting at the second minute," she motioned.

61 WOMAN STROKING HER OWN BREASTS.  
LARGER VIEW. SHE HAS A PENIS.

62 WOMAN STROKING HER OWN BREASTS  
AND PENIS

67 I AM NOT MAN.

68 WOMAN FONDLING LIMP PENIS

71 WOMAN KNEELING BEFORE A MAN, FON-  
DLING HIS BALLS,

69 I AM WOMAN

72 WOMAN KNEELING BEFORE THE MAN,  
FONDLING HIS BALLS,

76 I AM WOMAN

80 VISUAL, ERECT PENIS WOMAN IN FORE-  
GROUND

83 WOMAN IS LIFE

86 WOMAN SUCKING PENIS

120 PENIS LAYING ON CHOPPING BOARD,  
BLOOD AROUND IT.

125 MAN IS PAIN

140 PENIS LAYING ON CHOPPING BOARD,  
BLOOD AROUND IT.

150 MAN IS PAIN

160 PENIS LAYING ON CHOPPING BOARD,  
BLOOD AROUND IT.

165 MAN IS PAIN

200 WOMAN COVERED IN BLOOD, SCREAM-  
ING

205 MAN IS DEATH

230 WOMAN COVERED IN BLOOD, SCREAM-  
ING

250 MAN IS DEATH

260 ROTTED CORPSE

262 MAN IS DEATH

263 ROTTED CORPSE

264 MAN IS DEATH

265 ROTTED CORPSE

266 MAN IS DEATH

267 ROTTED CORPSE

268 I AM WOMAN

271 WOMAN KNEELING BEFORE THE MAN,  
FONDLING HIS BALLS,

275 I AM WOMAN

279 VISUAL, ERECT PENIS

282 WOMAN IS LIFE

295 WOMAN SUCKING PENIS

300 PENIS LAYING ON CHOPPING BOARD,  
BLOOD AROUND IT.

305 MAN IS PAIN

310 PENIS LAYING ON CHOPPING BOARD,  
BLOOD AROUND IT.

312 MAN IS PAIN

313 PENIS LAYING ON CHOPPING BOARD,  
BLOOD AROUND IT.

314 MAN IS PAIN

315 WOMAN COVERED IN BLOOD, SCREAM-  
ING

319 MAN IS DEATH

320 ROTTED CORPSE

321 MAN IS DEATH

322 ROTTED CORPSE

323 MAN IS DEATH

324 ROTTED CORPSE

325 MAN IS DEATH

326 ROTTED CORPSE

The words flashed back to the pain, to the fellatio, segued into anal intercourse, into normal intercourse in a half-dozen positions. albeit when the segment was doggy style, the penis on the woman was still visible, and was being held back by the woman when in the missionary. The actors came at least three times.

Every scene which would have been pleasurable was marked with variations of the Woman Is Proper format, and all of the danger or bloody scenes were marked with the Man Is Bad format.

As you can see, we will inundate him with this. Every channel on his television has to go through the box that includes this. Even the commercials."

"And this will make him change?" Winters asked.

"Not by itself," Juliana admitted. "Subliminal suggestion will make changes when you are indifferent, but cannot break deep-seated beliefs. No amount of suggestion by itself will make you start smoking if you thought of it as a nasty habit or change your sexual orientation.

"But we won't be doing just this. We will also be attacking his own mind on two fronts. One will be a drug to make the mind more susceptible to suggestion. The other..."

She walked to the table, and opened a briefcase. "Don brought this voice pattern duplicator and we will also be using this. Observe." She sat, turned the machine on. "I spent the last three hours speaking normally into a microphone, and that is now recorded. Deirdre?" She motioned.

Deirdre sat. "What am I supposed to do?" she asked.

Everyone sat bolt upright when the words, in Juliana's voice and inflection, came from the speakers. She motioned to Doctor Chin. When he spoke, it was the same.

"With the transceiver, he will hear his own voice, altered to a female pitch, telling him what 'she' wants to do."

## VII

After spending only one night in the common room, Vinnie was happy that he had his own television. There were nine other patients, ranging from an eighteen-year-old boy to a sixty-year-old man. They were sometimes lucid, but usually he was unnerved by the vacant looks they had. While the Clinic had satellite television, giving them almost three hundred channels, the patients watched soap operas during the day and the sitcoms at night. Both bored Vinnie to tears.

In his own room, he was able to watch sports, movies, anything he desired. The clinic had about half of the pay channels so that he could even see good movies when they were on. It became his habit to watch an hour or so in the morning, unless there was something really good on. He would walk the grounds before and after lunch, then settle down with a good book until dinner. After dinner, he watched whatever was handy that he might like until 10, when they had lights out.

He wanted to watch some of the adult channels, but stopped when Vanessa started commenting. She would mention the cock of the actor in the part, and Vinnie got in the habit of changing the channel when she did.

Mark left, and was replaced by a large man with a mustache named Connors. Connors was able to tell Vinnie that the hospital was a private operation run by Solomon, which was funded by Harlan Winters.

Vinnie remembered Winters, or rather his brother. He had been the CEO of a company the Organization wanted to control. He was surprised that two people related to his targets were in his life as Vanessa, but not unduly alarmed. He was too good at what he did to worry about retribution except from within the Organization.

The clinic was in the mountains of Colorado, set in a pristine valley with nothing around for miles. There was a fence, but it wouldn't deter a determined escape. The road, he had been told, led to a town about fifteen miles away. His two escape attempts, however, led to him awakening in his room strapped down. One of them had also included a sore ass and sperm in his mouth.

He began hoping that Solomon could cure him. The nightmare his life had become had to end.

He'd considered suicide, but even that had been taken away. He'd broken the window, grabbed a piece of glass, and found himself strapped down for three days. Twice during that time, he had suddenly come back to discover that someone had been fucking him while he was out.

A month passed before he began to notice changes. His moods had been swinging like a clock pendulum. His skin looked smoother than before, and his hair had lightened perceptibly. His hips were widening, and he was astonished to discover that his breasts seemed to be growing.

Solomon was just as confused. "This is odd, Vinnie." He checked the chart. As long as Vinnie behaved, Vanessa had been allowing him to run the show. Thanks to this, the chart was almost empty of medication beyond the multivitamin capsules he took every day. "Your body seems to be going through a hormonal shift. But without an outside source of the necessary female hormones, I can't think of what might be causing it."

"Could it be the vitamins?" Vinnie asked.

"No. You get the same vitamins as the other patients. I take them too."

"Then what could be causing this?"

"I am not sure. If you don't mind, I will have Connors search your room. Perhaps Vanessa is doing something."

A few minutes later, Connors came out of the room. In his hand he had a single edge razor blade, and two clinic-sized bottles, one marked ESTROGEN the other PREMARIN.

"There's only five left in each bottle," Connors reported. "Out of five hundred if it was full."

Vinnie started at the bottle. While he was out, without him even noticing, the bitch had been feeding him drugs. "What does that do?"

Solomon held the bottles. "It is a mixture of female hormones. Usually given to women in menopause." He looked at Vinnie. "It is also used in sexual reassignment surgery to induce physical changes that make a man's body female. We don't know how long Vanessa had this bottle, or how many were in it when she stole it. We also don't know how long she had you on a hormone regimen before we caught it." He turned to the

orderly. "Get the nurse, and have her bring a syringe and blood tubes."

The nurse came, and Solomon took samples of Vinnie's blood. "We'll know later today what the concentration of hormones is in your blood, Vinnie. Maybe you should have a talk with Vanessa and see what is happening."

Vinnie went back into his room. "What have you done, you bitch?"

*So, willing to suck another dick?*

"Oh, please."

*You know how to ask.*

He sighed in pain. "What have I done to myself?"

*You stole bottles of pills, and have been taking them since you arrived.*

Five a day, every day.

Vinnie wanted to scream. "How long have you... have I been doing this?"

*Since January of last year. The effects are irreversible now, Vinnie dear. You are going to be a woman.*

He collapsed, face in his hands.

*Oh, and the razor? That was in case things didn't move fast enough. You see, you can't commit suicide, but I can.*

Vinnie began to cry.

Solomon dropped the blood onto the tray, and leaned over Brown's shoulder. The man shut off the microphone.

"Looking good. We've got him whipping around like a flea on a cat's tail." Brown chortled.

“Yes. We knew he’d notice the changes. We had to divert his attention.” Solomon looked at his watch. “Go ahead and take a break, Don. I will watch the screen and do the voice as needed.”

Brown handed off, and Solomon took his place. Vinnie was wiping his eyes, looking around frantically. “Why are you doing this to me?” he screamed.

Solomon leaned forward. “I want out, Vinnie. If you suffer while I do, so much the better. Let’s go to dinner. I’m hungry.”

“If you’d eat what I wanted-”

“Why do you think I’ve been watching my diet, my little freak? What the good doctor didn’t talk about was the fact that the metabolism changes when you’re on hormones. If I didn’t watch my diet, I would get fat. While fat girls have more cushion for the pushin’, some of the guys I like would never look at me unless I threw myself at them. You may be a mob whore killing for the bosses, but I am a lady.”

Vinnie looked around, but all he could find was a set of two inch-heeled pumps.

“Where are my shoes?”

*In your hands, sugar.*

“I am *not* going to wear high heels!”

*Vinnie, you have a choice. I know Connors likes my ass. If you don’t put on your shoes and go to the dining room, I will take over, and he’ll get as much of my ass as he wants. Do we understand each other?*

Vinnie slid on the shoes.

*You’re lucky. I like four- and five-inch heels. I’m letting you learn to walk in low heels first. If you’re a good boy, I’ll*

*let you have your jogging shoes back later so you can walk outside. Otherwise, you'll have to walk outside in these.*

Vinnie spent a few minutes getting used to the shoes. Once he was sure he could walk without injury, he left his room. While he hadn't noticed, his hips were swinging, and Connors had an excellent view of them as Vinnie went to the dining hall.

Solomon smiled. Juliana had been right.

## **VIII SEVEN MONTHS EARLIER:**

"I bought the property at Fellow's suggestion. This was a private rehab hospital back in the 50s."

"How many rooms?" Solomon asked.

"Patient wing, 16; staff wing, 32. Full commercial kitchen, garage for seven vehicles, comes with a snowplow truck to clear from here to the highway. Also has six snowmobiles."

"And the surveillance equipment?" Brown asked.

"Already installed." Winters motioned, and Hubert wheeled him in. Inside the building, the entryway looked more like a rustic ski lodge. All that was missing was the receptionist dressed like a snow bunny in a sweater. The team walked through the building, looking at the empty rooms as they passed.

At the back of the patient ward was a small elevator behind a concealed door. Winter and Hubert went up first, with the others coming up in twos and threes.

The upper or staff section was more tastefully laid out. The rooms were more burnished wood and rustic than the coldly functional rooms below. Another concealed door led onto a landing which allowed someone to bypass the second floor for the attic.

“What kind of rehab did they do here?”

“Alcohol mostly,” Hubert replied. “Though they had begun to branch into drug rehab when the old owner died in 1980. All of the patients were sent to other institutions, and the facility was closed.”

While the lower level had included the kitchen and a small operating theater, the upper had a room right out of a technophile’s dreams. A gleaming control center with consoles and a chair for the operator. Hubert removed the office chair and Winters pushed himself to the control panel. He touched the controls, and every room on the lower level was brought out in sharp relief.

“The team you sent out wired the entire place. Between five and ten cameras per room as you required, including cameras on the property as far as the fence.”

“Excellent.” Brown sat in the chair, leaning over beside Winters. “And the sensory deprivation tank?”

Winters brought up a screen. The tank was half the size of the operating theater, and had been installed in the room directly below the operating theater. “Already filled, and ready to go.”

“Then we’re ready.” Brown picked up the phone, and dialed a number. Unlike in the movies, the CIA doesn’t have masses of men trained to kidnap people off the streets, or to transport the victim to a new location. It had proven easier and less expensive for the field agents to use freelance agents called ‘resources’.

Thanks to Winters, the biggest problem, having enough money, didn't exist.

The call was to an ex-Israeli Mossad agent named Chaim. The term for what Chaim did was Handler. He set up the people needed for the job and quoted a price. When he had asked for ten million, plus the cost of the aircraft rental, the man he knew as David Brice, Brown's cover, had merely nodded.

Chaim had hired his brother Levi, who owned an aircraft rental company, and the entire budget for the operation on this end was 12.5 million. All they needed was the code word to tell them to swing into action.

At the code word, Chaim made four calls. The men and one woman he called reported ready. Levi began readying the aircraft. Two civilian pilots, both highly qualified ex-agents, prepped the aircraft.

One of the men Chaim had called on a cell phone, who went by the name of Sam, reported that Saliari was in a restaurant named Guido's, a Mob owned restaurant and bar.

Shannon, a redhead who specialized in what has been called a honey trap, caught a cab there to meet Sam as the others assembled with Chaim.

Leary, the driver, pulled into the warehouse they had rented, and shifted from his personal (rented) car to the dark van they were using for the operation. He met Vittorio, the rifleman, and Chaim. Together they packed everything remaining, leaving no clues as to their existence. Why they might be grabbing a Mob enforcer didn't matter. What did was the ten million American they were splitting on this operation.

The team drove the van across New York City. They pulled up in the alley across from Guido's and

Chaim climbed out. Sam and Shannon were in a non-descript green Chevy; he walked past, nodding to them as he did. A moment later, Shannon climbed out and went into the restaurant.

Half an hour later, she came out with a slightly drunk and overly amorous Vinnie Saliari, and motioned toward her car. Saliari nodded, and went to his own 1999 Cadillac Seville. As he approached, Leary tapped the horn. It is instinctive in modern society to look toward a loud noise such as a horn, if only to assure that you are not the one in danger. Vinnie began to turn. Guido took aim and shot him in the throat with the dart rifle as he spun. As Vinnie collapsed, the van pulled out and Chaim and Guido tossed him in the back. As the van pulled away, Shannon climbed into her car. She and Sam drove off in different directions two million dollars richer.

They drove to La Guardia, where the van passed through to the freight terminal. Guido climbed out at the gate and took a cab home. Chaim and Levi loaded the limp body already dosed with enough Takedown to keep him under for ten hours into the plane, and strapped him to an ambulance gurney before fastening the gurney down. Levi and Chaim climbed in and the plane, which already had a cleared flight plan to Golden, Colorado, started its engines. Leary drove the van back, took his own car, and left the van on the street. Less than five hours later, the police discovered the hulk, which had been professionally stripped.

At about that time, Medical Charter 107 from New York arrived in Golden. An ambulance met it, and a body on a stretcher was loaded. The plane, along with the two Resources and the pilots, returned to New York after refueling. The ambulance, which was rented,

delivered the limp body to the hospital, where Doctors Solomon and Chin took delivery. The ambulance left.

In the operating theater, the second team was ready. The leader, Vladimir, assured that Vinnie had no obvious problems. Vinnie was given an enema, enough barbiturates that he would sleep at least another hour. Then he would be placed in a wet suit and suspended in the tank. Two others, Ivan and Mikhail, slipped into their own wet suits. There were two more teams of divers ready to take their places in the skin temperature liquid. Their entire job was merely to assure that Vinnie touch nothing else in the tank. By raising a hand, a diver could be assured of a replacement.

The tank was filled with heavily salted water, making anyone floating in the water neutrally buoyant. Instead of a mouthpiece, a hood and a solid mask covered the entire face of the victim yet didn't touch it. Air heated to 92 degrees was fed in through the demand system, and the faceplate was painted matte black inside and out. Instead of gloves, heavy mitts, which couldn't close, were used. Only earphones had been added, imbedded in the hood itself. Nothing touched him but the water and the supple rubber.

Vladimir took his place in the control room, and as the Takedown wore off, he began the clock. "Date: February Eighteenth. Time: 0630 hours. Subject has awakened."

Vinnie Saliari came awake. Like most people, the line between sleep and wakefulness was blurred. He felt confused, drugged. The barbiturates slowly leached from his system, and he came to full consciousness. Too much party last night, maybe. He remembered a cute number with red hair and the mention of a

sister. He'd been going to the car, heard a horn, turned...

Then nothing. He opened his eyes, and stared into blackness. He was floating, nothing touching his body. For ten or fifteen minutes, he pondered this. The room, if he was in a room, was dark as midnight. He strained his ears, listening for the smallest noise. Even the best apartment let some noise in, and he could remember the traffic noises and the shouts of angry New Yorkers.

But here there was nothing. There wasn't even the smell of dust or moisture.

*A car must have hit me, he mused. I'm laying in a hospital bed with enough tubes to make me look like a science fiction monster.* He was terrified of being in a coma. His father had gone into a coma after an industrial accident. The once strong man withered away until they had finally buried a ninety-pound husk.

Suddenly another thought intruded.

*Maybe it isn't a coma. Maybe I'm dead.*

The panic began at that point. In the tank, Vinnie screamed. But all he heard was a distant echo.

Outside, Juliana checked the heterodyning sound machine. It took the sound, automatically created an exact out-of-phase match and transmitted it, causing the sound to be nullified.

"Time: 0642. Time elapsed: twelve minutes, fifteen seconds. Heart rate rising to 150. Beginning Phase One. Acute anxiety onset." Vladimir leaned back. "A highly intelligent man,"

"How does this work?" Andrea whispered.

"No need to whisper, He can't hear us." Doctor Solomon replied. "The human race is blessed with several

senses. In order of importance, they are sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. However senses need something to react to, and the more important that sense is to you, the worse it gets. That is why more people are afraid of being blinded than being struck deaf. Having no smells bothers people on a deep unconscious level more than not being able to feel something on a surface.

"In that tank, Vinnie is cut off from every sensory input. As his mind tries to find things to sense, he is panicking because there is nothing to sense."

"Heart rate has peaked at 178," Vladimir motioned and Chin adjusted the gas mixture, increasing the carbon dioxide intake. The primary fears here were hyperventilation that would knock him out, or tachycardia, where the heart would speed up so far that the patient would suffer an attack and die. Between the gas and the monitoring, they would keep him on the edge without letting him go over. The heart rate stabilized at 140, a little high, but not life threatening.

Vinnie was frantically looking for something to hear, but the same system that muted his screams also muted his heartbeat and breathing below conscious hearing level. There was nothing with him in the blackness. He could feel his chest rise with his breath, feel his arms move, but touched nothing.

*Am I dead?* His mind screamed. He bit down, trying to bite his tongue, but felt nothing. *Hail Mary, mother of God!* He began to pray. He said every prayer he had ever learned in church.

"Heart rate increasing. Secondary anxiety stage." Vladimir reported. Time: 0736." He smiled. "This is the longest stage."

“Excellent so far, Vladimir.” Brown said. “I am sure the Agency will want to buy the technology and hire you.” He wasn’t lying to the man. He’d reported the arrival of the Russian interrogator and had promised a report on the technique. He had just chosen his own test subject.

In the tank, Vinnie was frantically trying to think of a way to get out of wherever he was. He wasn’t sure what frightened him most. The thought that he was comatose or that he was dead and in limbo. He felt himself rising and flew through time and space. But all he found was more blackness. In that blackness was stark visions of his hits, of those he had killed. Maybe that was it?

Vinnie was reliving every thing he had ever done. If anyone had told him that he would remember killing Gerry Lescoe’s dog at eight, he would have laughed. Or the thrill of raping the Albright woman before killing Councilman Weathers. The sheer orgasmic thrill of murder.

Now that was all he had left. Over and over, he began to pray, not a rote prayer this time, but the prayer of someone who sees no way out.

“Oh God, please, forgive me,” the voice whispered. Vladimir nodded. He stood, leaving the room. Brown put on the headset, turned the volume way down, and spoke.

*Vinnie*

Vinnie almost missed the gentle soft voice.

*Vinnie, have you repented your sins?*

“Yes!” he tried to scream.

*Why don't I believe that? Here in limbo you have nothing but time to consider everything you have done, and atone for it.*

*"Please God, forgive me!"*

*Why? So you can slip into heaven on a technicality? Regardless of what the church teaches, first you have to atone for what you have done.*

*"I have. Please."*

*Before me is the book of your life, Vinnie. Everything you have ever done that was a sin. Tell me what should be here. Tell me everything. What you did, how you felt. After all, what have you here but time?*

Vinnie began speaking. The voice was gentle, but persistent. Several times it stopped speaking and he found the information it had asked for. As the voice had said, there was nothing but time here. Finally he ran down, unable to find another fact that the voice wanted.

*There are some things that can happen now, Vinnie. You can go on to where you belong, a hell that will last for eternity, or you can go back.*

*"Back?"*

*Yes Vinnie. Your suffering can begin on Earth, where you have a chance to make up for what you have done. Or it can be in the pit. Or you can remain here. It is your choice.*

*"Please, I want to live."*

*Remember that, Vinnie. This may seem a horrible dream later, but it was your choice to return, and begin the atonement on Earth. Your choice and what you deserve. Remember that.*

Vladimir returned to the lab, and adjusted the gas mixture. A sedative added to the mix knocked Vinnie out. "Exercise completed. Time: 1811 hours." Vladimir checked the EEG and leaned over the microphone. "Get him out; move him to the operating theater." He leaned back, and looked to Brown. "The process will work on anyone. No person's imagination or will is strong enough to avoid it."

"Congratulations, Professor. We have a car waiting to take you to the airport and on to Washington. My report will be in the Agency's hands by tomorrow morning. Thank you."

The divers moved Vinnie to a gurney. Doctor Solomon rolled him to the elevator, and up to the operating theater. Doctor Chin was there, his instruments ready. Brown followed and laid out the devices. The tank of Takedown, barely the size of a pencil stub. The transmitter-receiver, and the fiber optic cameras hidden as post earrings.

Solomon operated the anesthesia as Chin removed the sheet. He reached down, opened the scrotum, and gelded the man. In their place, he installed two reservoirs of female hormones, attaching them to the vesicles he had cut.

Now he began the breast implants. From the observation room, the others watched as Vinnie's transformation began.

## **IX TODAY**

While the layout for lunch was sumptuous, Vinnie wasn't allowed to eat most of it. Every time he started to get a portion of just about anything, the bitch-voice in his head would have him put it back, or halve it. He picked up the tray and turned. One of the patients, a shy young man of perhaps 18 waved.

*Someone's offering us a chair.*

"I don't care." Vinnie snapped.

*Sit with him, be polite.*

"I don't want to!"

*I do. Let's not even discuss what I want to do with him. He's young, sweet, and polite. But if you don't want to, maybe I can get closer to him later, eh? Much closer.*

Vinnie gritted his teeth and moved toward the table. The boy jumped up, suddenly self-conscious, and rushed around to pull out the chair. Vinnie stopped.

*I know wolves raised you, and you know none of the social conventions, so I will explain. It is polite to hold the chair for a lady. Sit down, allow him to push it forward, and thank him.*

Vinnie sat, unconsciously making the move fluid and feminine. The boy pushed the chair in and hurried around to sit. He mumbled, tried to start a conversation, and glared down at his food.

*Talk with the dear boy. Oh, and if you say our name is anything but Vanessa, you're going to have a cock in each end tonight.*

Vinnie scowled. "I'm Vanessa."

"Scotty," he mumbled.

"Nickname?"

"No. My mom put that on the birth certificate," the boy said. He glanced up, seeing Vinnie's cool appraisal, and looked away, blushing.

*Ah, isn't he shy? You'll have to get him to talk. Be nice.*

"That's not so bad. I know a guy named Phil who's called Philly. And one named Salvatore who we called Sally."

"Really?"

"Really."

"I just noticed you." Scotty blushed. "Have you been here long?"

Vinnie hesitated. *That's right, you don't know. We've been here about six weeks. Before that you were in California at Napa State.* Vinnie told the boy this.

"I couldn't get into Napa. Not enough money." Scotty looked away blushing furiously. "Could you not look at me like that?"

"What do you mean?"

"I've, never been with a pretty woman before."

"You think I'm pretty?" Vinnie was appalled. *Why did I ask that?*

"You're beautiful." Scotty turned back to his food.

*That was just the right touch of disbelief in your voice.* Vanessa cooed. *A girl always wants to think that guys think she's pretty.*

Vinnie resisted snapping at the voice. He shoveled the food into his mouth and listened to Scotty, who had begun talking about being schizophrenic. "They said they were going to use a drug named Janusin. But there seems to be problems with it."

“You have a split personality too?”

“Yeah. The other guy is a real asshole. He beat a woman in San Francisco because he didn’t like her.”

“That’s too bad.”

“But I like you, Baby.” Vinnie looked up. Scotty’s demeanor had changed, as had his voice. He leaned back, grinning. “Hey, doll, I’m Max.”

Vinnie leaned back. It was bad enough when he thought he was the only crazy. “Hello, Max.”

“Be nice to the kid.” The boy’s hand pointed like a gun. “Or maybe I do you like I wanted to do the bitch in Frisco.”

Vinnie leaned forward. “Me you don’t want to fuck with, Max. My other personality is a professional killer.”

“Excellent.” Doctor Solomon crowed. “His ‘other’ personality!”

Vinnie walked away, going to his room. There was a football game on, and he flounced down on the bed, and turned it on.

“What next, Doctor?” Martin Van Pelt asked. Of the group, he was the only homosexual. He enjoyed literally fucking with Vinnie.

“He wakes up tonight with you fucking him. Can you make sure he enjoys it?”

Martin laughed. “Not a problem. You have someone playing with your dick and massaging your prostate at the same time, you need to be a fucking saint to avoid getting into it.”

Vinnie enjoyed the game. A movie was on afterward, and he watched it as well. It was getting late when he finally shut it off and went to bed.

In the control room, Andrea watched. She picked up the phone, and dialed a number. "Martin, he's going to bed."

"Give him a few minutes."

Fifteen minutes passed, then Martin walked into the bedroom. Vinnie had stripped, and was laying under a single sheet, naked. "Watch carefully. If he moves, zap him."

"My finger's on the button."

Martin lifted the sheet, moving it down off the body. It was an interesting dichotomy. A woman's face, chest, and hips, with a dick. Martin reached down, delicately touching the penis. Then his head dipped and he began to suck it gently.

Vinnie moaned, shifting. Martin stopped, then began again. The dick stiffened, and he began sucking it harder. Suddenly Vinnie shouted, and started to sit up. He collapsed as the drug knocked him out again.

Martin restrained the arms with the straps. Then he did the same with the feet, attaching the restraints to the head board so that Vinnie was folded in half, leaving him spread-eagled. Finally he gagged and blindfolded the unconscious man. Only then did he lift the body and begin sucking the cock before him again. his fingers began probing the ass.

As Vinnie came awake again, he could feel a mouth sucking him. He pulled frantically but the restrains pinned him down and the gag stopped him from screaming.

Martin moved up and his dick slid gently into Vinnie's ass. He held the body, feeling the bowels trying to eject him, then began fucking with a gentle rhythm.

*Oh baby, fuck me until I scream! the Bitch's voice moaned. Enjoy it, Vinnie. I do.*

Vinnie tried to scream again as the dick slid into him. A hand caught his dick and began jacking him off in rhythm with the fucking. Get off me! he wanted to scream. The length slid deeper and he suddenly felt pleasure at the pressure on his prostate. He moaned, shaking his head in denial as the dick drove him to pleasure.

*Oh he's a big one.*

The hand was remorseless, the rhythm picking up as the dick rammed harder and faster into him. Vinnie found himself moving back against his violator, and tried to stop.

"Come." a voice whispered. "I'm going to come!" The hand drove him to the edge, and as sperm filled his ass, Vinnie screamed into the gag and came.

Vinnie cried as the body shifted off him. *Pretty soon you'll beg to be fucked,* the voice whispered. *You'll ask for it, suck him hard, then take him like the bitch you are. I'll be happy then.*

He fell into blessed oblivion.

## X THREE MONTHS EARLIER:

Winters rolled into the hospital, nodding to the bustling nurses and doctors. They had to have more than Solomon so at the psychologist's suggestion, Winters had announced the opening of a clinic specializing in split personality disorders. He funded it himself, ostensibly for tax purposes, and hired Solomon as director. Solomon had hired two doctors, both of whom were young, and three nurses. Then he hired eight orderlies, and four kitchen staff.

Then, again with Solomon doing the lion share, they had contacted hospitals with patients that were criminally insane, mostly non-violent, had split personalities, and where possible, no financial assistance to fall back on.

Solomon had culled the five or six hundred files and selected ten. These ten were all also unmarried and without families. The staff had begun to arrive yesterday and the patients would begin to arrive over the next month.

Winters went down in the elevator to the special rooms below. The elevator now required a security card to reach the basement, and where the sensory deprivation tank had been, was now a recovery room and operating theater.

The Albright women were rolling Vinnie's unconscious body to avoid bedsores. He had been catheterized and was being fed intravenously. Every day for three hours, they exercised the arms and legs to assure that atrophy did not set in. While the victim was

no longer husky with weight lifting muscle, he still had reasonable muscle tone.

The transformation was astonishing. The breasts had softened as Chin had promised, and the hip and stomach implants had been done. The hair was long and luxuriant, and had been planted down to the normal female level on the scalp. Chin refilled the reservoirs, including the vital Takedown one, and helped the women with the thankless chore.

“Almost done.” Winters looked back at Solomon. The doctor looked at the limp victim dispassionately. “All that remains is the chin the, larynx, and the voice adjustments. Those will be done tonight.”

“So, when will he be ready to awaken?”

“A month.”

“Good.” Winters looked at Vinnie again. “Doctor, are we crazy for wanting to do this?”

Solomon stood without speaking. “I am a Jew, Mr. Winters. We don’t believe in a God of love, we believe in a God of retribution. If justice could be served under law, I would have said use what we learned to have him arrested. But it wouldn’t. If I felt that God should punish him, we could have simply shot him, and been done with it.

“Are we crazy? I would say yes. Do you want to quit?”

“No.” Winters looked up at the doctor. “I just wanted a clinical opinion.”

The month passed slowly. The patients had settled in, and a couple had been earmarked as possible candidates when Vinnie decided to break his sexual fast. The staff was busy tending the patients.

A helicopter arrived one evening and Vinnie, who had been removed from the basement and shifted outside through the basement door, was wheeled in. The receiving nurse and the doctor on duty checked his file that evening. He was wheeled into his room and left. The secret rooms were now opened for use as pantry and a game room.

The next morning, Brown shut down the auto feed on the Takedown, and pointed to the button on the console. "If you hit that button, you give him a jolt."

Andrea nodded, leaning toward the screen. On it, Vinnie stretched, then suddenly sat bolt upright.

## **XI**

### **Today**

Vinnie paced the fence line, shivering in the heavy coat. Not from the cold of the crisp Colorado day, but from the predicament he was in. Vanessa had allowed him hiking boots, on condition that he changed into heels inside. The heels had grown to four and sometimes five-inch. He didn't protest because she had become more imaginative in her punishments.

He'd thrown a pair of heels across the room, and woke up with dildos in his ass and mouth. She had refused to allow him slacks, forcing him to wear skirts and dresses. When he'd tried to get men's underwear, he'd awakened to find someone fucking him again. Vanessa seemed to enjoy dressing him as much as she liked getting fucked. If he dressed as she pleased, she tended to leave him alone. His closet contained a series of outfits he would have loved if someone else was

wearing them. He'd tried reasoning with her, but there to no avail.

"I don't want to be you!"

*The feeling is mutual. I am you. Inside. Like a sculptor, I have to clear away the outside rock to let me, the art, out. You are that worthless rock.*

"Why are you doing this to me?" he wailed.

*I keep telling you, Vinnie, I want out. I want to be a full woman, getting fucked and sucking dick. You are in my way. If you want me to leave, you'll have to do what I want.*

"What?"

*Accept that I am in control. Become me. I'll let your personality run things as long as my appetites are fed. Suck enough dick, sit on enough cock, keep me satisfied, and I will leave you alone.*

The conversation obviously was going nowhere.

"Vanessa!" Vinnie looked up, and waved back idly at Scotty. While Scotty himself was actually a sweet guy (*Why did I think sweet?* Vinnie moaned), Max was a problem. While Scotty was one of those touchy-feely types touching a hand while talking, that kind of thing, Max was the grope and grab type. Vinnie had punched Max out and awakened in a straitjacket, with a sore ass and sperm in his mouth, again.

He had also met a couple of the other patients. Fred, who was boisterous and all smiles except when Herbert, his morose other half, was in charge, and David, who was shy as both as himself, and as Jennifer, his other personality.

David had been vague about what happened when Jennifer took over, but Jennifer, who dressed even more flamboyantly than Vanessa, had been effusive.

“He doesn’t understand my needs.” Jennifer had told Vinnie. “He only wants beer and a good fuck every now and then. Me, I want a home, husband, and a family.”

The plaintive cry of a woman from the body of a slim man terrified Vinnie. Is that how they see me? A woman in body complaining because the man won’t let me out?

He saw David sitting by the fence, and walked toward him. He was attractive (*Where did that come from?*) in a way, and Vinnie felt stirring in his panties. (*I will not get horny over a man!*)

“Hi, David.”

The man nodded silently. He looked through the fence, yearning to be free. Vinnie sat beside him and leaned into the man (*What the hell am I doing?*). David draped his arm around Vinnie. Instinctively, Vinnie leaned into the embrace.

“I wish I could get out of here,” David sighed.

“Why don’t you?”

“My doctor says I’m crazy,” David laughed. “If only Jennifer would stop dressing me up in drag! Until she did, I was doing fine. But all you need is to find a girl waking up with a guy in a bustier to ruin a relationship.

“You probably don’t have that problem. What are you in for, kid?”

Vinnie leaned away. “This face isn’t mine. While your other personality just wanted to dress, mine wanted the whole farm. She did this to me.”

“No shit? You’re a guy?”

Vinnie nodded.

"Prove it."

"How? Want to talk baseball?"

"Whip it out, if you got it." David replied.

Vinnie hesitated. Then stood. The skirt came up, and the shriveled remains of his manhood peeked out. David stared, then suddenly his face changed. The lines smoothed, and his eyes grew softer.

Before Vinnie could move back, David's hand came up, and took the cock firmly. "I never imagined." David husked. The voice was softer too.

"Jennifer?"

"In the flesh, Sugar." Vinnie tried to move back, but the hand held him tightly. David looked up. "What's wrong?"

"I'm not a faggot!"

"Neither am I, Sugar. Just close your eyes, picture me as I look in a dress."

Vinnie pulled away. "No!"

"What?" David's face was stricken. "I'm not good enough for you?"

"No, Jennifer, it's just, I shut my eyes and I see David, not you."

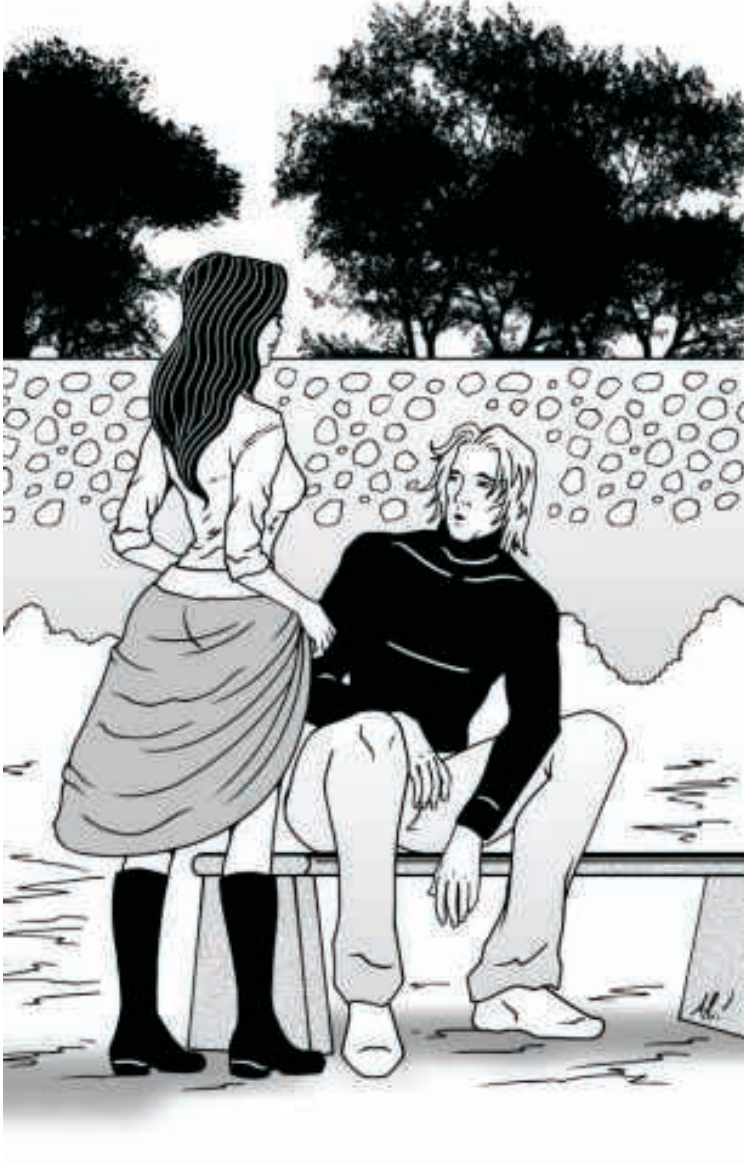
"Is there anything we can do about that?" Doctor Chin asked.

"Not unless Jennifer or Vinnie make the first move. We don't want David or Jennifer to comment that they fucked Vanessa, but while he was unconscious. He might get wise." Brown replied.

David stood, shaking his head, then trudged sadly back to the clinic.

Vinnie sat, staring out of the fence.

*That was cruel, Vinnie, Vanessa said.*



“Shut up, you bitch.”

*Why? Because your dick started getting hard, but you didn't want it to? You wanted Jennifer to suck you off.*

“Shut up!”

“Who are you talking to?” Vinnie spun, to stare at Scotty. The thumbs in the belt, the swagger told her it was Max instead.

“I like Scotty, but I don't like you, Max. Go away before I really hurt you.”

“You like him, why don't you let him fuck you?”

“I am not going to explain my problems to you, Max. Go away, or you'll get carried away.”

“No skin off my ass,” Max shrugged. “Maybe you like one of the orderlies better?” He turned and stormed off.

*What's this? How to stop friends and irritate people?*

“I've had just about enough of you!”

*Vinnie, I see we're going to have to work on your manners. Tonight at dinner, you're going to be a perfect lady.*

“Over my dead body.”

*As much as I want to live, that can still be arranged. However remember the old saying, 'A lady by day, a whore by night'? Shall we go straight to the after-dinner entertainment?*

Vinnie snarled, and walked back toward the clinic. Inside, he changed automatically to heels and began going through the closet. All of his male clothes had been shredded as if by a vindictive child, leaving him nothing to wear that wasn't feminine. He chose a tweed skirt with a roll neck sweater.

*Put on some of the Chanel. I'm in the mood to go hunting.*

"No." Vinnie walked out of the room, the heel tapping on the floor as he headed toward the common room. Dinner was not going to be for a while and Vinnie had a movie he wanted to see, so he was going for coffee.

"Hello Vanessa." Fred waved to him, smiling brightly. Like Scotty, he was slim and wiry. A beard that grew as wild as kudzu and, considering his personality, just as invasive, hid his face. Herbert with the same face was as approachable as a raspberry thicket. Vinnie waved to him, and went to the coffee machine. He was struck by the dichotomy. The patients weren't allowed hard mugs or glasses because of the possibility of attacking each other. But the coffeepot was a standard Mr. Coffee with a glass carafe.

"How is it going, Fred?" he asked. Fred was one of those guys that was naturally happy. Vinnie felt an urge to slide up beside him, but resisted it.

"As well as can be expected." Fred grinned, and went back to his crossword puzzle.

Vinnie walked down the hall and turned into his room.

Jennifer was standing there, looking woebegone. She was dressed to kill in a miniskirt and halter-top. Beneath the halter, she wore a bra filled with socks, probably.

"Jennifer..."

"Do you see David now?" Jennifer asked in a soft voice.

Vinnie was stricken by the sadness in her eyes.  
"Jennifer, it isn't that I don't like you..."

"But?" Jennifer's voice dropped even softer, barely audible.

"But, I have my own problems. Have you talked with Vanessa? My other half?"

"No. She stays in her room most of the time."

"She'd probably leap at the chance."

*You bet I would!*

"Then you don't..." Jennifer began to cry.

Vinnie took the transvestite in his arms, hugging her. "Jennifer, I have my own problems! I have a crazy bitch in my head that is trying to make me a woman, and when she's in the mood, would fuck the crack of dawn if it held still! At least you don't threaten to cut off David's dick!" He patted the woman (man's) back, until the sobbing stopped, rocking the body pressed against his. His nipples tightened and he cursed mentally. *I will not let this happen!*

Their stomach's bumped and both froze. Jennifer was purring and her hand dropped to Vinnie's skirt. "Your lips may say no, but there's a yes vote in your panties." The hand rubbed and Vinnie felt his dick growing hard.

"Jennifer, please stop."

He might as well have talked to the wall. The hand slid under the skirt and popped him out of his panties. He whimpered as the hand stroked him to hardness. Jennifer slid down and her mouth sucked him in before he could stop her.

Suddenly he saw a cleaver coming down, felt the pain of it chopping- He shoved Jennifer, and fell to his knees, screaming.

## XII

Everyone had been stunned by how well the subliminal reinforcement had been. Even Solomon and Juliana, who had both anticipated some of it, were astonished by the reaction when Vinnie's dick had been sucked. But would he admit it?

"What happened yesterday, Vinnie?"

Vinnie started, staring at Doctor Solomon. He shook his head, unconsciously hugging himself. "Nothing."

"Vinnie, when Vanessa told me about you and Jennifer, I was appalled. But I was even more appalled by her reaction to what happened. Vanessa gloried in it. Jennifer told me some of it and thinks that somehow she injured you. Now tell me what happened and what you felt."

Vinnie lit a cigarette, and stared out the window. Solomon made another note. Vinnie used to smoke cigars, but over the last months, he had started smoking cigarettes, something Vanessa did instead. "She started sucking me, and suddenly I was terrified that someone would cut it off. I actually saw it and felt it happening." He shuddered. "I lost it. I wanted to kill myself."

*But with Jennifer, you could have done it. Vanessa crooned. You could have sucked her cock, or let her fuck you.*

"Get out of my head!" If his voice hadn't been altered, it would have been a bull's roar. In the soft sweet

tones of Vanessa, it was a whining scream. Vinnie clutched his head, screaming.

*But I can't get out of your head. It's my head too.* Her voice continued. *All you can do is placate me.*

Solomon pretended to make notes. Maybe Martin should get into Vinnie again? No, try for the directed dreaming instead.

"Doctor, I want you to do something. Lobotomize me, drug me, I don't care!"

"Vinnie, if this was the 1930s, you would have already been lobotomized. If it was the 70s, we would have electroshocked you into complacency. We have come too far for such crude methods. The best I can do is give you some tranquilizers. Your condition will not be remedied by brute force. You must come to terms with Vanessa and learn to merge." He stood, closing the clipboard cover.

Deirdre came in and gave him two blue pills. While he didn't know it, except for extremely mild tranquilizers, hypnotics and some sleep aids, Vinnie was receiving only his vitamins and hormones. He popped the pills as she watched. She nodded, and left.

After a while, the world seemed to haze. *Must be stronger pills than they've given me before*, Vinnie thought. He picked up the remote. He couldn't figure out how to use it so he set it down.

"Are we ready?" Winters asked.

"Yes, sir." Juliana had sculpted this piece with exquisite care. Humans tended to be only partially physical in their attractions and sex. A good deal of the attraction is appearance, the visual, what your partner smells like, what they feel like, and what they sound like. That is why phone sex, a voice over a line which

excites you, or pornography, which is merely printed words or pictures that excite your imagination, works as a replacement or adjunct to physical sex.

Andrea leaned forward, watching the screen, adjusting the mike. "Now."

A faint click signaled that the door was locked. No chance that anyone would try to enter Vinnie's room as this happened. The television screen cleared, showing a room exactly like Vinnie's. Patricia, the transvestite they had hired and helped through her transformation, was seated sprawled in the chair as Vinnie was now.

They had found her, but Patricia hadn't been bright enough to play the part necessary, though her body and face had been close enough. So Winters had hired a special effects firm ostensibly to create a virtual secretary for him. Over seven months of body capture, digital enhancement, and computer generation had gone into this. Both Patricia and a man close enough to pass for Vinnie in body at least had gone through the process.

At one point they had used what an actor would call a mirror exercise, two people standing facing each other, each pretending that the other was a mirror reflection while at the same time the system was using motion capture. Then they mimicked every conceivable move a man might make while looking in a mirror.

Then Patricia had gone through any motions she would have made that the man might not have. When she left after five months to have her SRS done, she was a million dollars richer.

At a flip of a switch, the body could be Vinnie or Vanessa, and could morph between them with a flick of a switch. The entire system was linked to a camera

system that could make the faked picture duplicate any motion.

More had been spent on the digital data they were using than had been spent on the movie Toy Story. What Vinnie was seeing was a computer generated woman who would walk, talk, and speak to him, mimicking his own movements, but subtly different. At her nod, Andrea turned a dial, releasing scents into the air. A subtle perfume wafted about Vinnie's head.

Vinnie dreamed. He was sitting in a chair, looking at a mirror. Inside it, was the bitch. She looked up, her head cocking to the side.

Hello, Vinnie.

"What do you want?"

In the control room, Juliana signaled.

The bitch stood and walked up to stand before the mirror. She was dressed in a sheath of red that accentuated her hips. *I've already told you*, she replied. *I am going to become the woman I wish to be.* As he watched, she slipped out of the dress, letting it pool like blood around her feet. Beneath it, she was wearing just panties. *I do good work, don't I?* she asked, caressing her breasts. *Feel them, Vinnie.*

Unbidden, his hands rose, cupping the breasts beneath the hospital robe.

*No, you silly bitch. Take it off. Feel them for real.*

Vinnie pulled off the gown and his hands cupped the breasts. The feeling was odd, but not unpleasant. In fact, it felt good.

Don't you just love it? The feel of fingers plucking at your nipples? In the mirror, she fingered the nipples. *Do it, Vinnie.*

His fingers duplicated her movements, and he felt a rush of pleasure unlike anything he had ever felt before. "Oh God."

*God had little to do with this, Vinnie. He sent you back from limbo, but I chose what your punishment would be.*

Vinnie's fingers stopped their plucking of the nipples. He remembered the darkness, the voice that questioned ruthlessly. The admonition when he begged to live. *This may seem a horrible dream later but it was your choice to return, and begin the atonement on Earth. Your choice and what you deserve. Remember that.*

"Oh god, I would have chosen Hell if I had known!"

You did, baby. I am your hell on Earth. How you handle this will *determine whether you get to heaven*. She reached a hand down, touching her panties. *Here I'm a real woman. If you were a real woman, I would let you finger it, feel it. But you still have that part that keeps you from being me. Play with your nipples, baby, I enjoy that.*

His fingers began to squeeze and tweak the nipples, the pleasure running like a fuse to his crotch. His dick stiffened a little. Every day, he had noticed, it was getting harder and harder to get an erection. His hand drifted down toward it.

*No, Vinnie. You can't touch that. If you want to play with something, you can finger your ass though.*

Hesitantly, he reached back, sliding his hand down the butt crack. His finger hesitated, then slid along his asshole. In the mirror, she had returned to the chair, and her hand had also slid down her back.

"Can't," he muttered. His weight kept him from doing it.

Flip the chair around, Vinnie, she purred. *Put the back toward me.* She stood, flipping it around, then straddled it, leaning into it, her left arm bracing her up from the chair back.

He stood up, turning the chair, sitting in imitation her own position.

*Better. But we need something. Something to use to make it even better. Go to the air vent.*

He stood up, trudging across the room. The vent came off, and inside the air space was a plastic box. He opened it, looking blearily at the small vibrator.

“No.”

*Yes, Vinnie. You won't let anyone else touch you, so you have to do it yourself. The vibrator was in her hand. I'm in the mood for love, she sang softly, ironically. You would be too if you let yourself go. Her voice grew harsh, demanding. Sit down, you stupid bitch. Now!*

Vinnie found himself returning to the chair, draping himself back like he had been. The vibrator was a cold plastic lump in his hand.

*Now, you have to get it ready. You don't want it to hurt, right? She lifted it, the flat base against her hand, the rounded tip up. You have to love it, Vinnie. Like getting your dick sucked used to feel before me. You can't use that piece of pathetic flesh in your pants without pain, can you? But you can use this. Just think of it as your own dick, Vinnie. One that won't hurt you if it's sucked or shoved somewhere warm.*

She flicked her tongue at it. *You're the girl now, Vinnie. You're the girl and yourself. The big mob killer Vinnie Saliari has his dick right by your mouth. You want to be satisfied, right, Vinnie? If any woman refused, you'd fuck her mouth, remember? Well, I remember those feelings. I can*

*release them, you can't. Vinnie was a real man. You're nothing but a cunt with legs and a mouth ready to service him.*

*Fuck the bitch's mouth, Vinnie.*

He suddenly felt a hand behind his head. Part of him was trying to shove the dildo in this mouth, but he resisted. "Please, no..."

On the screen, they watched as Vinnie's right hand came up, pinning the head against the chair. The other hand brought the dildo closer, brushing the full lips. He begged to be released, but his own mind was running both sides of the conversation. The hand in front of the chair slid up, and the breathy pleas were silenced.

Vinnie kept shaking his head, but the hand in front of him slid it as deep as it could go. It was as small as what he had in his pants right now. Thinking of it as his helped somehow. His mouth was slack around it, the plastic sawing in and out of the lips, but nothing else.

You wouldn't let a bitch do that, would you, Vinnie? You'd slap her, fuck *her even if she was dry!* *Make her scream!* As it spoke, the voice deepened. It was his voice as it had been, talking in his own head.

The hand moved from behind his head, and before he even realized it, the hand was obeying its own orders and slapped him hard enough to throw him out of the chair. He hit the floor, whining in pain, his mouth throbbing. Blood ran from a split lip.

*Yeah, fuck the bitch up! Show her who's boss!*

Vinnie started to scabble across the floor away from his tormenter. But he could see a bleary view of himself striding forward. His hand came up, but in-

stead of shielding him, it curved into a fist, slamming into his mouth again.

He moaned, one hand clawing get him away, the other slapping, striking, even grabbing a tit and ramming the nails into it until blood flowed.

In the control room, everyone watched, amazed. Vinnie had tried to crawl under the bed, but his own arm had grabbed him by the hair, pulling him out from under. The head powered forward, slamming into the bedstead.

“Oh stop please, stop, Vinnie,” he whimpered. As if they were magic words, the hand stopped pummeling him. “I’ll be good, Vinnie. I promise.”

*Then suck it, bitch!* The voice was his, heavy with lust. *Suck me like you should, bitch, or by the fucking Virgin Mary I’ll cut your god damned tits off!*

The other hand scabbled across the floor, picking up the dildo. “Please, Vinnie, I’ll be good-”

*You still talking, bitch?* The evil hand pinched the right nipple so hard that blood ran from where Vinnie bit his lip. He stuffed the dildo in his mouth, sucking it as if he wanted to from the first.

*Yeah, get it ready, bitch. I’m told you haven’t got a cunt, but you have an ass. I’m going to fuck you until you scream, bitch. I’m going to fuck you until you want to come, and you’re going to beg for it!*

The evil hand came down, and agony shot through the left nipple. He gave a full-throated scream around the dildo.

*Beg for it, Bitch!*

“Please,” he whimpered, the dildo pulling from his mouth. “Please fuck me.”

*Well, there's more. What do I tell my bitches? Look at me when I'm talking to you, bitch!*

Vinnie's head hung in shame. The evil hand caught his chin, squeezing painfully as his head was jammed upward. On the screen, Vinnie was standing there, hand out, penis erect. *What do my bitches say?*

"Fuck me like the whore I am." Vinnie repeated dully.

*Louder!*

"Fuck me like the whore I am!"

*Scream it, you fucking cunt!*

"Fuck me like the whore I am!" He screamed. The orderlies would have been running frantically at the pitch of his voice if the room hadn't been sound-proofed with a white sound emitter. "Fuck me until you come! Fuck me, just please fuck me and stop hurting me!"

*Yeah. Slide it in, baby.*

His hand brought the dildo back and brushed it against the tight sphincter. "It's dry..."

*You had your chance, bitch. You could have had it wet, but you gave me lip!*

"Please, let me suck it again just a little bit more." He moved the hand with the dildo back. "Please."

*Go ahead.* The voice was grudging. The dildo came up, and he sucked it as if it were a lollypop. His other hand came up and his fingers went into his mouth, the lubrication being transferred to his ass.

Stick your fingers in. Vanessa again. *Don't just dab at it like a razor cut, slip it in or it's going to hurt.*

His index finger plunged in, sawing in and out. More. A second finger joined it, and he moaned involuntarily as they stretched him.

*Now it's coming in, bitch!*

The dildo went back down and Vinnie whined as it slid up his ass.

"Please, no..."

*I give you leave to speak, bitch?* Vinnie's voice demanded.

"No." He hung his head, the dildo sliding in and out.

*Switch it on now, Vinnie,* Vanessa purred. He fumbled for the switch, then suddenly gasped as waves of vibration massaged his prostate.

"Oh god." His hand kept sliding it in and out, the steady thrumming of the vibrator causing his dick to harden at last. "Oh...God."

*Come for me, bitch. Come while I'm fucking your fat ass!*

The feeling rose. He couldn't stop it, didn't want to stop it. He felt his orgasm surge through him, felt his penis jerk though nothing came out.

*Good baby. Now clean yourself up for lunch.*

The team looked at each other with satisfaction.

"Look out!" Drea shouted. Vinnie had thrown the chair aside, charging toward the TV. She punched the button, and he skidded in a heap less than a foot away. The out-thrust hand knocked the TV off the table.

"Have the orderly check him," Solomon ordered. "Except for that last gasp of sanity, I think that went well."

### XIII

Vinnie came awake, staring in horror at the orderly. The world was still foggy and rose colored.

"You all right?" he asked.

*Such a gentleman. Ask to suck his dick.* Vanessa said in his head. He shook it, clutching his temple.

"I won't ask to suck him," he whispered. He repeated it like a mantra or prayer. He had never paid as much attention to anything even remotely religious since he had been an altar boy. He knew the orderly could hear him, but refused to stop. He stiffened as the orderly readied the restraints.

"Please..."

"I have to, ma'am. You almost slammed your head into the TV."

"Please, don't." He caught the hand, not by the wrist, but as a woman would grab the hand of a boy she knew. Vinnie let go of the hand, reaching out, his hand touching the orderly's cheek.

"Please," he whispered. He put his soul into that plea. The orderly looked at him, then sighed. unlocking the cuff he had already used.

"All right. But I'm going to talk to the nurse and get you some meds. I'll have to take the TV too."

"Okay," he whispered, holding one of the man's hands between his. "She can't come to me if I can't see her. Ignore her when she talks, keep myself sane," he repeated over and over. His head cleared a little as the orderly came back, handing Vinnie a pair of green cap-

sules. "She said the trunks must have caused an adverse reaction. Now you take these and I'll clean up the mess. But you lay right here and don't move. Okay?"

"I promise," Vinnie said, holding the cup, taking the sip of water like it was a shot of whiskey.

The world seemed to clear up, as if it had been in a bank of fog and suddenly came into the sun again. Vinnie rested, unwilling to move, too wired to consider sleep.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Well?" Drea asked. Deirdre was at the nursing station. After this time, both of the twins could pretend to be a nurse as well as the best actor.

Solomon looked at the screen contemplatively. "We'll get him to accept makeup now. Stage Two of the hypnotic if he resists that step."

"Shall I call the others?" Drea asked.

"Why bother them during dinner?" he asked.

They watched as the patients and staff went to dinner. The food was good. Winters had few joys left, and food was the one he spent on. The kitchen staff didn't even know about the smaller kitchen below the main one that Hubert performed his magic in. The staff dietician complained, but did so primarily because she'd gained four pounds since she started working here.

Since the real processing had started, they had grown closer. Every bull session went around the table like a forest fire. It had been Juliana who suggested the motion capture but it had been the twins that suggested the self-abuse. They had loved a movie named

Fight Club in which a man actually beats himself up. Brown had suggested the scripting, and Solomon had merely tweaked it.

The primary point he had stressed was to convince Vinnie using the hypnotics and subliminals that there were two people in Vinnie's head, and the wording caused a brief left brain/right brain conflict. The right brain was analytical, the part that had played Vinnie during the scene, while the left brain controlled the imagination. That part would create the scene that the analytical part would act out. Vinnie knew a distressing amount about how to hurt someone. He had shown some of it.

Chin had suggested actually cutting the corpus collosum, the link between the halves of the brain, but that had been found to be more dangerous. Vinnie might be able to react with one side of his brain to free himself.

\*\*\*\*\*

He stared at the closet, thinking of what to wear. Instead of pants and shirts or T-shirts, there were dresses and more dresses. Blouses from white sedate ones to sheer ones. Skirts from ankle-length to micro-minis shorter than the belts that went with them. He had learned to wear something that fit him, but didn't set *her* off. The knee- to ankle-length skirts had been his choice. The darker colored blouses were his idea. The knee-high boots with four-inch heels had been his idea.

His dress style in comparison to Vanessa's was the difference between a business woman and a woman of business, if you get the distinction. Vanessa dressed like the women he had always lusted after, three steps

above hookers. Vinnie forced himself to remember the teachers from school, the bankers, the lawyers. Professional, cool, calm. He stood before the mirror. The skirt was a new one, and he liked it. Ankle-length in blue, slit up the right side to the hip, A waist-length bolero jacket, over a pale yellow blouse. He found his hand primping at the hair, and stopped himself.

\*\*\*\*\*

Using hypnosis to force someone to do something is a staple of fiction, but the reality is a lot more complex. You cannot merely hypnotize someone, hand them a gun, and say 'kill that person'. Unless they are by nature killers, the programming will run into the person's own feelings about it. Since Vinnie had been killing people for over a decade, it would have run into a block that asked, 'am I being paid?'

But there are ways around this with patience and time, both of which they had in abundance. They had the subject in a controlled environment, the subliminals were warping his mind to accept the situation, they had convinced him that part of his own mind was the culprit, and successfully spilt off that offender. If another psychologist were to examine Vinnie now, he would automatically assume an actual split personality. Vinnie still resisted by trying to walk and talk like a man, but the changes, both physical and psychological, were taking their toll. His walk was becoming the subtle sway of a woman. His movements starting to conform to those 'Vanessa' had used on the television screen. His voice was becoming softer, more hesitant, and he had become more emotional.

A lot of the emotional effects had been due to the still intensive hormone regimen, but in combination with the subliminals, it was becoming natural. At dinner, he sat by himself, but his posture was that of a depressed young woman. He had actually taken David's arm as if it were natural.

But he was resisting.

The next stage would break his resistance even more.

Since Vinnie no longer had separate television privileges, they had to transmit the subliminals directly into the feed, causing what would have been a low-level hum if he had heard it.

\*\*\*\*\*

Vinnie stayed in the common room because he had noticed that Vanessa would do more to him when there were few witnesses. The movie, a rather bland romantic drama, was poorly done and, for some reason, unsatisfying. Vinnie had taken a space on one of the couches and sat leaned to the side a little, both feet tucked up neatly without his noticing it. For once, Vanessa wasn't chiming in at every turn, though she still spoke occasionally.

*Will you look at that girl?* Vanessa commented. *The man is doing everything but bend her over, yet she's ignoring him!*

Vinnie picked up a magazine instead. He tried to get interested in the war, sports, anything. But his attention kept wandering. If he had heard the subliminals, it would have been something like this:

*I should pay more attention to the way I look.*

I should try to be more loving to my friends.

I must be willing to change.

I must be more willing to accept my lot in life.

His eyes caught on a picture. A classy-looking woman was draped over a car, lying back as if ready to take on all comers, with a self-satisfied look on her face.

"I look better than she does," Vinnie murmured. He stopped, appalled.

*Of course you do, Vinnie, Vanessa said. Or you would if you let me make you up properly more often.*

Vinnie had taken to scrubbing his face clean every morning because Vanessa would get up during the night and put makeup on him. The makeup had started like a street whore, but had been mellowing over the past few weeks.

"I don't want makeup."

*You were a good boy before. I'll make a deal with you.*

He paused, hands clenching. "I'm listening."

*You gave me grief when I made you wear a dress or skirt. But I won. You didn't want to wear heels, but I won. Now we're going to work on makeup and we both know I will win. But this time, I will give you a real chance.*

"How?"

*When you automatically began choosing skirts and dresses, I didn't bother you for almost a week. Remember?*

"Yeah."

*And except when you tried to go off the diet I set, I didn't bother you once you dressed appropriately.*

"All right, cut to the chase."

*I will give you a full day of me trying not to bother you. For that, you have to allow me to make you up the way I think you should look. Not the slut makeup that attracts your eye and that I like, but a balance. Something nice and light that looks good without making you look like you want to get fucked.*

But if you fight me on this, you will regret it.

“All right,” he sighed.

*Go to the nursing station and ask for the makeup kit.*

“Why is there a makeup kit there?”

*She chuckled. Because I handed one to the nurses when I was brought here. I checked earlier. It's still there.*

He stood, setting the magazine down, and walked to the nurse's station. He waited as the woman finished the report she was working on. “May I help you?”

“Vanessa...”

*Remember, Vinnie, I am you. One more mistake, and you will be punished.*

Vinnie gave an exasperated sigh. “I left a makeup case with you. May I have it?”

The woman looked at him searchingly. “It doesn't have a mirror. I removed it.”

“The men's bathroom right there has a steel mirror bolted to the wall. Could I please use it for this?” The words grated, but after what Vanessa had done before, he was terrified of what she might come up with this time.

“No. But if you don't mind having a man watching, I will let you use the ladies'. That has a glass mirror, and a chair.”

“Please.”

She tapped the intercom. "Martin to the nursing station."

Martin Van Pelt walked out of the dining hall, wiping his mouth with a paper napkin. "Yeah, Deirdre?"

"Vanessa wants to apply makeup. I am going to let her use the ladies restroom, but you have to watch her."

"Sure," he looked at Vinnie. "You going be a problem today?"

"No." Vinnie looked down at the intensity of the regard. He felt embarrassed for some reason.

"All right." Vinnie walked down to the ladies room, where Martin used a key on his ring to open it. He reached in, flicking on the lights. "After you."

The room was in soft pastel colors and the mirror was surmounted by a light bar like a make up table.

*Now let's get out the weapons.*

"What?" Vinnie asked.

*In the battle of the sexes, makeup is part of the arsenal. A proper makeup job will make us look stunning.*

"I don't want to be stunning," he grouched.

*I do. But if you'd rather do this the hard way...*

"No!"

*Then let's get to work.*

Slowly, he was walked through the process. As a man, he'd never considered all the effort a woman took to look beautiful. When he was done, the woman in the mirror was, as Vanessa had said, stunning. Black hair in an ebony sheet to below the shoulders, wide doe-like brown eyes. A cupid's bow mouth that caught even his

eye. The chin was small and delicate. He could see his face there, but pared and softened into this.

*Every day you do your makeup right, I will restrain myself, Vinnie. Until we reach the next step in the evolution.*

“What?”

*Remember Silence of the Lambs? The scene with Hannibal when they are talking about the killer? You are the chrysalis, I am the butterfly. When you are the butterfly, I will be you, and this horror will end for both of us.*

“For both of us,” he murmured.

*Why? Do you think I enjoy dealing with you, Vinnie? I want to be free, and living my life. Instead I am in a psych ward, living inside a homicidal bastard, who wants me to watch football! She laughed. I know the way out, you stupid son of a bitch. I could escape at any time. But I am not taking you with me.*

## XIV

The days passed. Vinnie accepted the makeup, then stockings. Vanessa refused to wear pantyhose, so every morning Vinnie had to deal with slipping the sheer hose up his legs, sliding the round garters on to hold them up. Vanessa had wanted a garter belt, but the doctor had refused. Vinnie was happy the bitch didn't get her way all the time.

He saw someone at his door. After several weeks, he could figure that it was David rather than Jennifer that stood there. It was the stance, the way the two dif-

ferent personalities carried themselves. As alike by looks as twins, yet as different as two people could be.

“Are you hungry? It’s almost dinner time,” he asked.

“Not really.”

David would usually back off at this point. But something made him step in. “You can’t stay in your room every second, Vinnie.”

“I can.” Vinnie knew he sounded childish, but didn’t care.

“Listen, Jennifer said I should try to bring you out of your shell, or this place will drive you crazy.”

Vinnie laughed, then found himself crying. He felt an arm wrap around his neck, pulling him, and found himself clutching David desperately. “Make me crazy,” Vinnie whispered. “I beat myself like my body wasn’t mine, then fucked myself with a dildo last week. Are you saying I’m sane?”

“No.” David was cheerful. “But you don’t have to go crazier.”

*That’s my job.* that evil voice said. He clutched his head, shaking it. “No, please go away!”

*Let’s take baby steps then. You have David there. You know he’s Jennifer inside. Do you like them both?*

“Yes, please don’t...”

*Kiss him. Kiss him nicely and politely and like you mean it. I don’t mean a serious lip lock, sticking your tongue half-way down his throat. But like you really like him and are not being forced. Do that, and I will not bother you for fifteen minutes. Think that you’re his sister, and it’s because he’s nice.*

Vinnie wanted to resist, but the idea that there would be even five minutes without her commenting was like a miracle.

He leaned up, his lips brushing David's cheek. The young man flinched but didn't move away. "Thank you for caring," Vinnie whispered. He lifted his head and David was right there, still looking. Suddenly his eyes changed and Jennifer leaned forward, brushing her lips upon Vinnie's.

"I'm sorry I hurt you," her voice said. The lips slipped over to Vinnie's cheek, and he was helpless to move away.

"You didn't, Jennifer. My mind did that to me. If I feel an arousal that is in anyway remotely male in aspect, that bitch in my head hurts me."

"Ah," she smiled. "Give me a few minutes." Jennifer stood and hurried from the room.

"What's she thinking of?" Vinnie asked. There was no reply. "That's right, you said you wouldn't bother me. Could you at least answer my questions?"

*I think she wants to make love to you, and you gave her the key,* Vanessa replied.

"I don't want to be here. What would I do if she comes in here and tries to give me another blow-job?" He remembered that sickening vision, could still feel the phantom pain.

*She won't. Trust me on this.*

"How the hell..." Jennifer came running in. She pulled the door closed, standing with her back against it. She was wearing another skirt with a fishnet top, her bra a slash of red below it. The transvestite stopped in front of Vinnie, hands on his shoulders.

“Women don’t have male orgasms,” she husked. She leaned forward, tentatively kissing him on the lips. He was unsure what to do, but Jennifer had already planned. Her hands came up, and Vinnie hissed as she tweaked the nipples through the blouse. “Oh, you like that?”

Vinnie nodded, making a noise of assent, unwilling to speak. Jennifer purred, her lips brushing his cheek, slipping down until she nibbled on his neck. Vinnie felt his erection stirring, and found himself falling backwards, Jennifer following.

A hand ran under the edge of Vinnie’s blouse, plucking the buttons free, sliding upward. His body spasmed as delicate fingers pinched a nipple through the bra. “Oh you are so sensitive!” Jennifer said. She lifted up, smiling impishly, then moved down. Before Vinnie understood, he felt the bra spring free and a mouth suckling at the nipple. He gasped, his hand reaching up hesitantly to touch her hair. He knew it was a wig, knew that this was a guy, but the pleasure was too strong. He felt a hand unzip that skirt, dropping it on the floor, felt panties slide down the columns of his legs.

“Oh, please,” he whispered.

“Please what?” Jennifer asked. Her hand ran down Vinnie’s flat stomach, down to his thighs. As he started to tense up, fingers ran around his cock without touching it, running with delicate care on the flesh between his legs, ignoring his organs.

“I wish I had a pussy right here.” Jennifer stopped the fingers, pushing them gently against him. “I wish you had one so I could slide my fingers into you and make you scream with pleasure.”

*I hate to interrupt, but the vibrator is under your pillow, Vinnie.*

He shook his head. He knew what she would suggest and still resisted.

Jennifer's head slid down, tongue running like a branding iron down his stomach, dipping into his navel, sliding down until it reach his pubic hair, then back up.

"Does it hurt?"

"No, it doesn't hurt."

"What about this?" he gasped, fingers closing on her shoulder as a finger delicately slid into his ass. Before he could protest, her mouth was back on his nipples, biting, licking, sucking, doing all of that in random order until he wasn't sure what was happening. The finger sank deep into him, and he whimpered. "I pity we don't have a vibrator."

"Beneath the pillow," Vinnie blurted. Jennifer leaned up, looking into his eyes, then slid across, pulling the small rounded form out.

"Oh, you're a kinky bitch, aren't you?" Jennifer asked. She sucked the dildo, then it went out of view. Vinnie flinched, wanting to shake his head, ask her to stop, anything! But then it slid into him. Jennifer had already flicked it on, vibration overloading all of his normal reactions.

"Ah!" Vinnie gasped as Jennifer gently posted the vibrator in, then out, her mouth working over the nipples relentlessly. "Please..."

"What?" Jennifer leaned back, her hand still moving that fake member. "Stop? Keep doing this? Do it harder? Deeper?" She leaned forward, and her teeth bit

into the breast, causing Vinnie's cock to jump. "Bite you instead of sucking these beauties?"

"I.. I don't know." Vinnie was too far gone to care. The session with the bitch using his own male persona to fuck him was still in his mind. "Gently, please."

"Ah. The strokes became longer, slower, loving. Vinnie felt a rush of pleasure every time it slid across his prostate. Jennifer grinned and the strokes became faster. "You can't use your dick, but you can be fucked, can't you? Nothing male about that."

Vinnie tensed, pushing her away. "Please, stop." He slid back on the bed, ripping the vibrator out, throwing it across the room hard enough to crack the casing. Then he sat against the headboard, arms wrapped around his body. Jennifer was stricken.

"It isn't you, Jennifer. It's me." He closed his eyes, tears sliding down his cheeks. "You and David seem to get along, but she..." He pointed at his head. "She wants to be in charge. I'm fighting for my life, and as much as I want to be pleased by you, this is not helping me stay alive."

*That was cruel.*

"You said you'd shut the fuck up!" he screamed.

*Granted. But in five minutes' time, you will get an earful unless you console her. It's not her fault you are a weak cunt. You could have stopped her but you let her do it. You're like every bitch you raped as a man that didn't want to go any farther.*

He hung his head. "Jennifer, please forgive me." He felt her arms around him and leaned into the embrace. "I want to live. I don't want to die and that is what it is. I have to die for her to have my body. I have to keep fighting her because if I don't, she wins."

"I'm sorry." Jennifer said. "You were enjoying it so much..."

"That's just the point!" He looked at her in horror. "I never had anything up my ass before I got here. Even the tits got bigger since I got here."

"I had noticed." Jennifer commented dryly.

"Yeah, but since the bitch got me sent here, I have been fucked at least a dozen times, and even fucked myself once!"

Jennifer hugged him. "I'm going to get the nurse for you."

"Please no..." But the girl was gone before he could stop her.

It was the redhead again. She was always so domineering. If he had been outside these walls, he would have taught her a thing or two.

"Vanessa." She walked over, taking a flashlight from her pockets, using it to check his eyes. She looked at the chart.

"I can give you something to help you relax or put you to sleep, but I think I had better wait until the doctor sees you. Can you survive until after dinner?"

"Yes," Vinnie replied huskily.

The nurse left him in his misery. He blacked out for a few minutes, then David came stiffly to take him to dinner.

\*\*\*\*\*

Deirdre watched him go off to dinner. She waited until the hall was clear, then picked up a small bag un-

der the desk. She took off her low heels and padded barefoot back to Vinnie's room. The air vent came off and she took out the now empty box. The dildo she took out of the bag was fatter, about an inch and a half around, eight inches long, with a suction cup on the base. In other words, about the size of an actual penis. The small reservoir inside the fake balls was filled with a syrupy mixture that would simulate sperm.

There was a small vibrator inside the dildo, and it could be activated only from the control desk below.

"Test," she said. The dildo purred in her hand, the tip shifting a bit as it did. "Good." She put it in the box along with a small bottle of lubricant. Then she walked back out.

\*\*\*\*\*

The change in the last months would have astonished anyone who had not watched it from the start. The woman who entered the dining hall and took her tray was prim, polite, well-dressed and soft-spoken. Her makeup was well done, subtle, highlighting the features in a gentle way that Vanessa's had never tried to reveal. Last week's 'project' had been nails, and he now had inch-long talons in a soft peach. The hair was tied back in a neat ponytail.

Vinnie had found the library; as she sat eating, she read a book. The bites of food were small, and delicate, mere dabs of food whereas he had stuffed his face before. He chewed each bite thoroughly, washing it down with milk. Vanessa was weaning him away from coffee. He had already quit smoking in self-defense because she decided that if he wanted something in his mouth, she would indulge him.

The meal over, he went into the common room. It was boring again. Finally he went to the nurse's station. "Have I been behaved enough that you will let me have a television again?"

"Wait." The nurse, a brunette who looked like a battle-ax picked up the phone, talking to someone. "The doctor said if you smash this one, you won't get privileges again."

"Thank you."

"Here, take your meds." The nurse shoved across a tray. Vinnie delicately picked out his meds, throwing them in his mouth. He sipped the offered paper cup of water.

The orderly rolled the TV into his room, and Vinnie flipped through the channels. His taste in movies had begun to change. The rough and tough blood and gore types didn't hold his interest. He still avoided Vanessa's chick flicks, and they had settled in the middle. Dramas.

If there was a main character that was a strong woman, Vanessa didn't complain so much. But even that had its drawbacks. He had watched the movie 'Stealing Lives' with Angelina Jolie before all this happened, and he, like every man who had seen it, imagined himself as the man screwing her. But last week he had seen it again, and suddenly found himself wishing it was him being fucked.

Vanessa had demanded to know why he turned it off, and he felt a petty triumph in refusing to answer her.

\*\*\*\*\*

“All right, ten minutes,” Juliana said. They had decided to bump it up a notch. Vinnie was acting more feminine every day, and wasn’t resisting as much. Possibly it was because he had given up. It might have been because he felt silence and sullen obedience were the key.

He was watching a courtroom drama, leaning back on his chair. Here in his own room, Vinnie tended to act more male. Juliana watched his eyes. She could tell when the hypnotic began to take effect because the rhythm of his blinking became slower, steadier. His mouth hung open, and she thought that if Vinnie looked at a man that way, the man would picture her sucking him off. She chuckled, and Vinnie flinched. She looked down. Damn, she had left the mike on. She flipped it off, calling up the automatically recorded transcript. At the line ALL RIGHT, TEN MINUTES it had the notation ‘internal, not sent’. She sighed. Good. It might have detracted from the session.

\*\*\*\*\*

The room started to turn hazy. He wanted to scream as he stood and staggered toward the door, but try as he might, the door would not open. “Please, no. Not again. Please.”

Vinnie, you had your chance at being pleased earlier, but you blew it, the bitch said. *Then again, maybe if you had blown it, you would still be enjoying your movie.*

*Sit down, Vinnie, face me.*

He staggered back to the chair. On the screen, he saw her, dressed as he was, sitting upright, disapproving.

*I said sit down, bitch.*

Vinnie collapsed into the chair. As much as he hated himself for it, he felt his spine straighten, the hand folding neatly on his lap, the head coming up to stare back. He was seated exactly like she was.

She leaned forward, a disapproving teacher nailing him with her glare.

*You keep fighting me, Vinnie. By now you should know you are going to lose. But I have to keep convincing you. Stand up, get undressed.*

He found himself standing, fingers plucking at the buttons.

*You don't need to watch, Vinnie. Your hands know where the buttons are. Look at me.*

He looked up. She had paused at the same button he was hung up on.

*Think of it. Picture your lover looking at you as you peel off the oh-so-proper layer to reveal the slut within.*

"I am not a slut," he muttered.

*Your choice, Vinnie. A big part of what I am becoming is you, after all. As much as you liked them, I don't want to be some street whore fucking anyone with a twenty. But it is either that or this professional woman persona you have created.*

But it is your own mind that tags you, Vinnie. You are the one who decided long ago that a slut was a woman who didn't listen.

I try, Vinnie tries, Jennifer tries. But you. Don't. Try. If I have to keep going out and getting dick for you, if I have to bring you in here and let Vinnie beat the shit out of you again, you are a slut.

"No, please."

*Remember the waitress at Giovanni's? The one that ignored you when you tried to come on to her? Remember how many stitches she needed afterward? Want to try for a new record? The voice segued into Vinnie's, masculine, angry. Hey bitch, give me a show!*

Vinnie was standing there, looking back at him, fingers drumming on his hip.

*Or do I have to teach you who is boss again?*

Vinnie's hands plucked at the buttons, opening the blouse. "No, Vinnie. Please don't hurt me." Hands caught the bottom of the blouse, pulling it from under the skirt. He stopped, the blouse hanging open, visible to the waist, but fig-leaved by the cloth.

*Lose the jacket and blouse, bitch.*

Vinnie pulled the clothing off. He instinctively folded them neatly, putting them on the foot of the bed.

*Now the skirt.*

The zipper came down, and Vinnie held the edge as he stepped out of it. The skirt, also folded, ended up on the bed.

*Now we need something sexy to wear. Vanessa picked up something the other day. Far right of the closet.*

Vinnie staggered over to the closet. On the far right were night clothes.

He had resisted and until now, everything had been pajamas, though they had gone from flannel to satin.

This was definitely not a pair of pajamas. It was a full-length nightgown, with spaghetti straps, a slit up the leg, and matching thong panties and stockings. The entire ensemble was in a virginal white.

"No, please..."

You have a choice, bitch, the evil Vinnie voice said. *You can put that on and be a lady, or I'll beat the shit out of you and fuck you like a whore.* Vinnie gasped as the evil hand came up, catching him by the back of the neck in a searing painful grip. *Well?*

"O-okay, Vinnie."

*And?* The voice was a dangerous growl.

"I'm sorry I am such a stupid bitch."

*Now get dressed.*

He stripped to the skin, sliding on the silky clothing. The stockings needed garters, and he found a pair where Vinnie told him. Again they were virginal white. There was a pair of white slippers, and he put them on without being told.

When he returned to the chair, it was Vanessa on the screen again, dressed exactly like him.

*You're going to learn to beg for it, Vinnie. Like you always wanted women to be.* She laughed, an ugly sound. *You're going to become the girl you always wanted. To entice a man into wanting you, to excite him with your look, your hands. To plead with a man to let you suck him, to fall on your back and beg for him to fuck you.*

"Please..."

*This can be Lover 101, or the faster slut course. Take your choice. My way, at least Vinnie might not slap you around. He wants to. He feels you've betrayed him.*

"I didn't! I've tried so hard..."

Not hard enough, you little faggot! Vinnie screamed at him. *You couldn't kill yourself, or get away. Instead you take it up the ass. So if you're going to be a bitch, be one!*

"No, please..."

*I'm going to count...*

"I'll be good! I'll do it!"

Vanessa was there again. *You know what to say, how to say it. But first, you need something suitable. Look in the air vent.*

"I broke it," he muttered, stumbling to fall on his knees.

*I know you did, bitch. I replaced it.*

He found it. The plastic phallus was as big as he had been when he was still a man. "Oh God, please..."

God is punishing you, bitch. Get used to it. Now back in the chair. Now! Vinnie's voice ordered. He scrambled back to the chair.

Vanessa sat there, with the plastic dick in her hand. *Attach it to the top of the television. Where it would be if a real man was in the room. When you're doing it right, you will see me. But if you do it wrong... Well, let's just say if you don't turn him on one way, Vinnie will find another way.*

Vinnie would never have believed that he could be so frightened of himself. But he remembered what he had been like. Before Vanessa had started this, back when he was a man. He walked over to the television, attaching the dildo to the upper rim of the plastic frame. If he kneeled, it would be even with his mouth...

*Put the lubricant on it.*

Vinnie opened the cap of the bottle, and there was a rush of chocolate in the air. He had always liked the smell and taste.

*Begin, baby.*

Vinnie remembered the women who had enticed him with their voices, how they spoke, what they did. He smiled, running a hand up from his hip to his tit. "Hello, lover. I'm here for you," he slid the hand over, a delicate thumb slipping into his mouth. He suckled it like a baby. "I love shoving things in my mouth. I love the taste of come, especially *your* come."

He slid forward and leopard-crawled toward the screen, eye on the dick he suddenly knew he'd be sucking.

"I want you, lover. I want you in my mouth, in my ass." His hand reached up, and his fingers traced it delicately. "I want to suck it." He closed his eyes, and the Vinnie in his head was standing there, the dildo standing out from his crotch. "Please, let me suck it." He leaned forward, kissing the tip, hands moving on it as if it could be masturbated. "Please."

*Lick it. Lick it like you mean it,* Vinnie demanded.

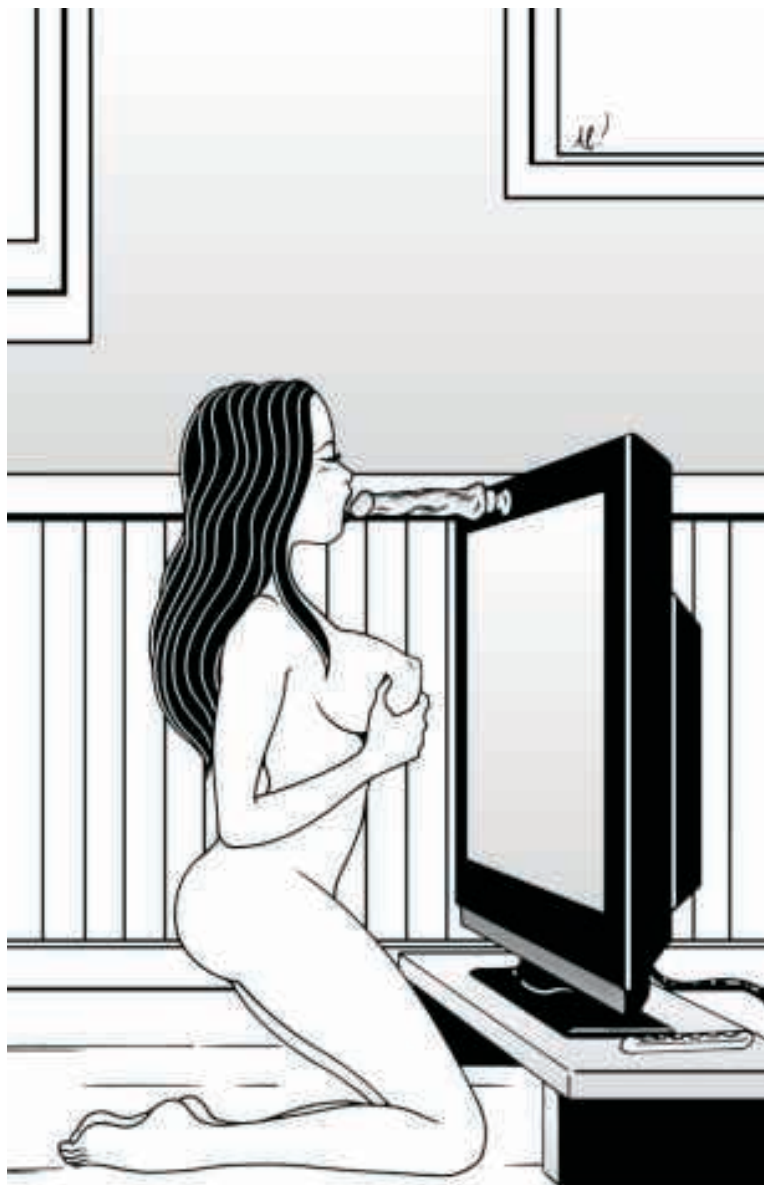
He leaned forward, lips open, tongue sliding along it from glans to root.

His hand held it gently as he wet the entire length. He kept his eyes closed, seeing Vinnie standing there. He opened his eyes, keeping that phantom lover before him. "I want to please you."

*Suck it.*

He moaned, leaning forward, taking the tip in his mouth. He licked it as he had always liked, knowing that if this was real, the man would have been gasping.

He felt a thrill of power. As a woman, he could drive a lover to his knees in pleasure. The mouth slid down it, about half disappearing into it.



Vinnie slid it as far into his mouth as he could, the smell and taste hyping his desire. He wanted to resist, but his body was no longer his own. He pulled back, spreading more of the delicious taste, sliding down to lick it from every part.

*Deep throat it.*

"I can't." Vinnie closed his eyes again. The phantom Vinnie was getting angry. "Please, I never did that before." He was frantic. In his mind, the evil Vinnie was clenching his fists, glaring down at him. Any minute he would be smashed to the ground. "Please, not this time... Next time, lover. I'll practice until I can. I promise."

*All right. This time, I'll settle for half-assed. But if I come back again and you don't take it to the root, I'll plant a knife in that ass instead of this. Speaking of which, that lube is for your ass too.*

"Vinnie..."

*This dick is going in your ass. All you get out of mouth-ing off is pain. Don't you get it yet, bitch?*

"Please, it's too big!"

*I am not repeating myself, bitch.* His hand raised in warning.

Vinnie poured a small amount of the lubricant on his index finger, then slowly lowered it. The probe pushed in and he bit back a yelp at the slight pain of the nail. It sank in, and he knelt there, tears running down his face as he finger fucked himself.

*Did I tell you to stop sucking? You have to get me ready too.*

Vinnie leaned forward, suckling the plastic again. His finger kept its rhythm. Instinctively, he added an-

other, whimpering around the organ in his mouth as they stretched him. After a few moments, there were three fingers. Vinnie felt a shiver of delight as they slid past the edge of that traitorous spot on his prostate, and gasped around the dildo.

*You had better be ready.*

“Please.” Vinnie sat up, hand still sliding on the dildo as if jacking off a man. “One more minute. Please.”

*One minute, Vinnie said grudgingly.*

Vinnie slid forward on the dildo, and his fingers began sliding deeper and more desperately. The pleasure was there, but it was still overwhelmed by the fact that again he was going to rape himself.

*Time. Unstick it, and put it on the mark on the wall.*

There was a mark that looked as if someone had stuck the dildo onto the wall before. It was a little over a foot from the ground. Right where... Vinnie looked at it in horror. Right where he'd be if someone fucked him doggie style.

A hand caught him by the back of the neck, fingers digging into nerve clusters, and Vinnie bit back a shriek of pain.

*Now.*

He attached it, then frantically lubed the member. Without being told, he turned around on his hands and knees, looking backward in horror. If he had been tied down and raped by someone as he was conscious, it would have been better. There would have been a chance of revenge or escape.

But he was the only physical person in this room, and it was his own mind that was doing this to him. He could no more get revenge than escape.

Well, what are you waiting for? the evil Vinnie asked. *Want me to put it in?*

The traitor hand shoved his body backward, lurching against the dildo.

“No!” Vinnie reached back, grasping the dildo, falling face-first into the tile of the floor. He closed his eyes in abject misery as he set the tip where it would enter, and pushed back slowly. “Oh God, it’s too big!” he moaned. But the traitor hand pushed down, forcing him back.

The tip popped through the sphincter with a rush of pain, and he knew he was bleeding. But he stayed mute. Being hurt would turn Vinnie on. Silently, he pushed backward, his ass cheeks suddenly hitting the cold, painted wall.

“Oh God,” he whispered again. Now his legs betrayed him, shoving him forward. He could almost feel the phantom hands on his hip. “Please, slowly. Let me get used to it. Please.”

His piteous cry was answered. He knelt there, shivering like a terrified horse, head down, gasping. After a moment, it didn’t feel so bad and he slid himself backwards, taking it in to the root. Slowly, lovingly, he fucked himself. When the pain faded, suddenly the pleasure of the massaged prostate returned with a vengeance. The pace became faster, and he felt an orgasm building. Not in his useless dick but in the center of his being.

“Oh, fuck me, Vinnie. I’m your whore, I’m your slut. Fill me up with your come, please,” he moaned. There was an approving chuckle from Vanessa.

The pleasure kept building and he was now actively assisting in his ravishment. “Please come in me, Vinnie. Let me feel it spray into me. Please!”

*Get off it and turn around.*

Vinnie slid forward, turning. Now his mouth was even with it. *Put it in your mouth.*

His mind rebelled. Then he slid forward, sucking the pungent taste of chocolate and shit into his mouth.

*Grab the balls and squeeze.*

His fingers caught it. The squeezed. Suddenly there was a rush of fluid and he jerked back and some of it sprayed on his face. The taste was an overwhelming chocolate fudge.

*Suck it all down. Swallow it.*

He slurped, the sweet syrupy fluid running down into his stomach. Then there was no more, and he pulled back. There were drops of the white fluid on the floor; he dabbed his fingers in it, bringing it up to his lips. Everywhere was the pungent smell of chocolate.

*Clean yourself up, bitch.*

His fingers scooped the fluid from his face, transferring it to his lips.

*From now on, whenever you smell chocolate, you will remember this. If you taste chocolate, you will feel an urge to suck another dick. Forever.* Vanessa purred. *You can’t escape it.*

In the control room, the team grinned. “Hubert, how many recipes do you know for chocolate?”

## XV

"What next?" Chin asked. "The subliminals and hypnotics have worked wonders."

"But he's still fighting it," Shandon said. "We need to break that last block."

"How about..." Diedre looked at Andrea, then leaned over, whispering.

Andrea chuckled. "You are such a bitch."

"What?" Winters asked sharply.

"Well, Diedre looked at her sister. "We're trying to convince him that doing what Vanessa tells him will get him perks, right?"

"Yes," Solomon commented. "You have no doubt noticed that when he is actively working to follow the pattern as set, we have reined in Vanessa. The doctor and Vanessa have backed off and allowed it. I did not foresee Vinnie choosing a style of dress that didn't scream 'man in drag,' but he did.

"The next time 'Vinnie' fucks him, or the time after that we're going to have Vanessa fighting with the mental construct. Fighting for him in other words. An ally and no longer the enemy."

"That's what I meant. Having us say 'we can't protect you from him' meant Vanessa was starting to work with him, not against. But remember what Juliana said the other day?"

"About what?" Shandon suddenly snapped his fingers. "I can get out any time!"

Andrea laughed. "The only question is, could we maintain control if he was wandering out loose?"

They looked at Shandon. After all, he had created the security system.

"The transmitter in his necklace only has a twenty-mile range. The receiver for the Takedown can still get a signal anywhere in the world. We could slip in something a little heftier if need be. Something that will kill him in his tracks. What did you have in mind?"

"Snowdown is only thirty miles away. What if Vanessa told him 'I'll prove it' and he wakes up an hour or two later behind the wheel of a car in town?"

"He punches the gas."

Juliana shook her head. "No. He gets a full lecture before he goes under. 'You're on parole, and I'm only letting you do this to prove I can. If you try to run, I will walk us back in, and let them know how I got away. They put us in a straitjacket and full meds, and every night Vinnie comes in here, and fucks you for the rest of your life'."

"Can you word that the way Vinnie might say it?" Winters asked.

"Not a problem."

Shandon nodded. "Besides, we can test our end-game this way."

"What?"

"I don't know about the rest of you, but once Vinnie is getting fucked and begging for it, I am out of here. Knowing he is will be my vengeance. But to do that, we have to test how readily we can break away."

Winters looked around the group So much alike, and so different. The family he had lost.

The family he had regained.

“All right. Ladies, watch for Vinnie getting antsy about trying to get out again. Gentlemen, let’s work out how to keep our fish in an invisible tank.”

\*\*\*\*\*

He had chosen the teal business suit this time with the Kelly green blouse and matching underwear. The heels were black, but as Vanessa told him over and over, black went with everything. The instant he opened his room door, Vinnie knew he was in trouble. The reason was the smell of... chocolate.

Someone had decided on a ‘death by chocolate’ breakfast today. Chocolate chip muffins and pancakes, Hot chocolate, even little tubs of chocolate syrup, if you wanted. By the coffee urn there were four bottles of flavoring, one of which was, of course, chocolate.

Vinnie found himself caught in a dilemma. He loved chocolate, but the smell took him back to his room last night, the dildo in his mouth, the order to remember it every time he smelled chocolate. The warning that if he tasted it, he’d want to suck a dick again...

He settled for black coffee and a bran muffin. David was ignoring him. Vinnie wanted to make peace with him but Jennifer and he talked and discussed things between them. Vinnie had spurned and hurt Jennifer, and she had told David, who was hurt that he’d done so. No help for it.

The smell of chocolate was causing him to be more flustered every second. If he closed his eyes, he could

see the dildo sliding into his mouth, taste the chocolate-flavored lubricant. It was worse because an arm's length away, David seemed to love chocolate even more than Vinnie ever had. His eyes fixed as David dumped the third syrup tub onto his pancakes. Each only held about an ounce, but Vinnie wanted it. Wanted to lick it up, feel the meat in his mouth.

His eyes fell on the breakfast line again. He walked over, looking at the Polish sausage links. Unwilling, he reached out and picked one end piece up that was about eight inches long. Then he took two tubs of chocolate syrup.

I'm only going to eat sausage. He told himself. It's just...

He found himself dipping the sausage, then bringing it toward his mouth. Suddenly he knew that if he did this, if he shoved that meat into his mouth, he wouldn't bite it. He would suck it, lick it, moan hoping sperm would...

He stood sharply, shaking his head. He went to the main door, slipped into his tennis shoes. A brisk walk would help.

The fence was bright in the morning sun. Vinnie walked down to the fence, reached out, and locked his hands in the chain link.

*Are you going to try to escape again? Vanessa's question was amused. They have the best security system ever invented in me.*

*"You said you had a way out."*

*I wondered if you had caught that. At times, you are dense, Vinnie.*

*"Of course I caught it. Were you telling the truth?"*

*Yes. But you will remember that I said I wasn't taking you with me.*

"But what if you're wrong? Maybe you think you have a way, and you don't. Why should I..." His head dropped. "Why should I give up, start enjoy sucking dicks if you are going to fail?"

*There was a long pause. Vinnie, that is the most logical statement you have ever made. Give me a bit to think about it. But if I prove I can get us out of here...*

"I will stop thinking of myself as Vinnie. I will suck any dick presented willingly. I will become you."

*I think you're blowing smoke up my ass, but I can see that this means a lot. Give me a few.*

Vinnie felt satisfaction, but it was only a Pyrric victory. The smell of chocolate in the air of that room had been like waving a bottle in the face of a recovering alcoholic. While he still resisted, he was falling more and more into the abyss. He didn't think he had another month before Vinnie was dead, and Vanessa escaped.

Three hours later, pleasantly tired, he trudged back up to the building. Part of him almost felt like he was home. The autumn sun slanted through the aspens, the air held a hint of coming winter, he wanted to be glad he was alive.

*I've made a decision, Vinnie.*

"Yeah. And?"

Tonight we are going clubbing. But you have to be real nice to someone.

"Why does everything revolve around sex?"

*Well, first, Vinnie could come back any night, and you have to practice. The real thing is much better than a dildo or banana. Besides you kinda like David.*

He paused. "Why do you say that?"

*Vinnie, you rarely talk to anyone but the doc and the nurse. But you've explained what's happening to David and Jennifer. Cried on his shoulder. Hell, cried on **her** shoulder.*

Where you whimper, thinking Vinnie is going to plow your ass, you let Jennifer use a dildo on you without complaint. Haven't you noticed you spend a lot of time sitting beside him? He makes you feel comfortable.

He slipped into the heels, walking through the building. "Yeah, maybe."

*That's your project. That's what will make you me, Vinnie. You're going to seduce him.*

Vinnie stopped. "But. No. I can't."

*Why?*

"Because Vinnie is a sadistic bastard who will kill me eventually. He takes but never gives." Vinnie shook his head. While he didn't know the crew members were stunned by this statement, it seemed perfectly logical to him.

"With David, it would be like it was with Jennifer. It would be two people making love, not a fight for dominance. I won't hurt David that way." He stormed into the building.

David was in the common room; when he saw Vinnie, he turned away, shunning him. Vinnie paused, then walked over to stand beside him. "Is this seat taken?" David flinched, but said nothing. "I meant, may I sit and talk with you, David?"

“Why?” He glanced up, looking like he was going to cry. “Are you going to be mean to me too?”

“No, David. I wanted to apologize, and explain.”

The boy looked away, then jerked a hand angrily at his side. Vinnie sat, knees together, laying a hand on his shoulder.

“David, I never meant to hurt Jennifer or you.”

“You did.” He snapped back. “She only wanted you to enjoy yourself.”

“I know that. If I didn’t have my own problems, I would have let her.”

Vinnie leaned forward a bit and David’s eyes shied away from her. “David, why won’t you look at me?”

“You look like my old high school teacher in those clothes.”

“Am I that old?” Vinnie was appalled by the sound of worry in his voice.

“I didn’t mean ‘old,’ if you know what I mean. She was in her later 20s, and I was sixteen. I...” He blushed. “I used to fantasize about her.”

“Ah. I think I should thank you for the compliment. But here. Let’s see if I can find something that makes you feel more comfortable.” Vinnie stood, holding out his hand. David looked at it, then stood, holding it in his own.

Vinnie walked down to his room, opening the door. He opened the closet and began going through the clothes. “How about this?” He held a sun dress against his body. “It would be cold as hell outside right now, but inside I could...” David was shaking his head mutely. “What is wrong, David.”

"It's the way you talk, the manner. The way you look at me! Even if you were wearing nothing..." He blushed, turning away. "I'd still see you that way."

As much as the remaining male side of Vinnie was horrified, part of him felt satisfaction. He could turn this boy's head and get him hard without even trying. Even the on again-off again reaction David and Jennifer were getting from him had not slowed the process.

"I'd better go."

"David." He turned back, looking at Vinnie with those puppy dog eyes. "You don't have to go."

"Yeah, I do." He turned away. "Just looking at you is giving me a woody."

Vinnie stood there, again both elated and horrified.

Lunch was quiet. Vinnie avoided the dessert area because yet again, there was chocolate. This time it was a rich devil's food cake with creamy fudge icing. David wasn't as standoffish, but he still was trying to keep his distance.

The session with the doctor went well. Vinnie discovered that by pitching his complaints about Vanessa as hindering his progress rather than helping, the doctor was willing to refuse some of her requests. He wondered if she slept at all at night, since there were two or three new complaints from her every week.

"Vanessa, I cannot allow you to pierce Vinnie's ears until this is resolved." Solomon said. "He has accepted clip-on earrings, and you should allow him some say in which ones he wears."

*Oh, All right.* Her voice was grumpy.

“Is there anything else we need to discuss? No? Then that will be all for today, Vinnie.”

“Thank you, Doctor.” Vinnie stood up. It was an hour to dinner, and he considered another walk. He turned and froze, the blood draining from his face. David was coming down the hall at a run. His pants had been soiled and he was heading for his room to change. It looked like...

He had dropped some of that cake on his lap, the fudge icing smeared into his pants at the crotch. Vinnie saw where it was, and what it was, and he was lost.

David stopped, then yelped as Vinnie took his hand, pulling him toward his room. “Vanessa, what are you-”

“Quiet.” The order was firm, but given in a voice that shook. He was shoved into Vinnie’s room, and Vinnie leaned back against the door.

All he could think about was chocolate. Chocolate and sex. It would be all right with David. He was nice, he was quiet. He cared about others. The only difference between him and Jennifer was what they wore. He was what Vinnie had always hated, and what Vanessa always craved.

Vinnie pushed the boy back until he fell on the bed, dropping to his knees, his nose buried in David’s crotch, as if he intended to snort his entire body like a line of cocaine.

“No, I don’t...”

*From now on whenever you smell chocolate, you will remember this. If you taste chocolate, you will feel an urge to suck another dick. Forever... You can’t escape it, she had said. Now Vinnie understood because with that smell*

came that urge. If it had been anyone but David, he might have resisted.

“Please.” His hands rose, tugging at the belt, becoming frantic as David lay there shocked. The belt came loose, and his talons clawed at the button, then the zipper. The pants flew across the room, and Vinnie now buried his nose in David’s underwear. The smell was fainter. He knew instinctively that it smelled nothing like chocolate but his mind was on automatic. That part of David smelled like chocolate, whether it did or not and chocolate meant dick. Part of him wanted it, could feel himself salivating over it.

The shorts hit the wall and he caught David’s penis in his hand, fingers delicately touching him. Then with a moan, he inhaled the still soft meat.

“What are you...”

Vinnie’s head lifted, her hand stroking him. “I want it. Please, let me have it. Please...” His head came back down, and it was harder this time. David was moaning as Vinnie’s head bobbed in his lap.

*Remember, you promised to practice,* Vanessa said.

“Shut up, I *am* practicing,” he said, then his mouth was full again. David wasn’t as big as that dildo, but it was round and long and fleshy. And David wouldn’t bitch slap him.

The tip hit his throat, and Vinnie bumped back away from it. He gasped, looking at the dick his body demanded, and felt the terror of what he was about to do. David saw the look and was alarmed by it.

“Vanessa...”

“David. I want all of you inside me. But I’m afraid.” He reached out. “Hold my hands. Don’t let me fight it. If you do, if you love me, you will help me.”

He caught Vinnie's hands and Vinnie looked into his eyes. Maybe there wasn't love in them, but those eyes were of a person who never hurt anyone in his life. With a moan, Vinnie lowered his head, suckling again. He made long deep strokes, sucking harder as his mouth climbed, his tongue flicking across the knob as he reached the upper end. Then with a push, the mouth slipped down, the knob popped into his throat, and Vinnie paused.

So easy... when you like the person.

The head bobbed and David felt the hands alternately clenching and loosening as the mouth sucked. "Vanessa, please. Stop."

Vinnie's head paused, he made a querulous sound.

"I love when you do that, But I want to..."

Vinnie slid all the way up, looking up. "Want to do what?"

"I want to..." David was blushing.

"What?" Vinnie stood, holding his head in her hands, lips brushing his. David gasped, then mumbled. Vinnie smiled gently. "You want to fuck me?"

"No!" David looked shocked. Vinnie stepped back, stricken. "Vanessa, fucking is what two people that don't care do! I want to... make love... to you."

Vinnie took two steps back. "Don't move. Look at me, David."

Vinnie stood away from him, looking into David's eyes as he plucked the buttons out. *Picture your lover looking at you as you peel off the-oh-so-proper layer to reveal the slut within.* Suddenly Vinnie understood. It wasn't some crazy motherfucker demanding. It was David

looking at him with wonder in his eyes that made him feel like a woman.

The blouse was free, and Vinnie held his head between his breasts, gasping at the tentative touch of David's lips. He was clumsy, Jennifer knew a hell of a lot more about playing with tits.

But Jennifer will get her chance too, Vinnie promised himself. *I will teach you both about lovemaking, as you have both taught me about loving.*

David's hand reached up and the bra came free. Vinnie cooed as the mouth closed on a nipple.

"Oh, David. Suck them for me," Vinnie husked, hands running through his hair. "Love me as I love you."

His hands ran up the smooth back and held Vinnie closer. Vinnie hugged him back, guiding his mouth. "Kiss there, suck this," he instructed and David, the willing pupil, did as he was told.

He was being loved, not fucked. The difference was like night and day.

David's hand opened the buttons and the skirt slithered to the floor. A hand ran between his legs and Vinnie tensed.

"David." He looked up. "Don't touch that part of me. All that gives me is pain. Bend me over and fuck me. Do that and I am yours." David nodded, drawing a whimper because he hadn't stopped sucking the nipple. The hand ran back and Vinnie's nails pricked his head as a finger ran into his ass.

"Oh, yes. Do it David. You and Jennifer. Both of you loved me, wanted to love me. Let me return your love."

They rolled and Vinnie found himself on the bottom, looking up into David's flushed face.

His? No, damn it, I am Vanessa now! HER hand caught him, playing with it, looking up into those trusting eyes. She guided it, felt him sink in, one glorious inch at a time. She purred in pleasure, head arched as he finally hit bottom, nails holding him in as she swiveled her bottom to make sure he was all the way in.

Her head came up, lips brushing his face. "Fuck me, David. Make me yours. Come in me, fill me with your come. Please!"

David looked into her eyes, then slid outward. She whimpered with her need, sighed as he slammed back in. They found a pattern, and Vanessa held him sobbing in pleasure as he fucked her. It was all that had been really needed. Someone that the newly formed personality could lock on to.

Right in the middle of it, David paused. Vanessa looked into those eyes, then pulled the head down. "It's all right, Jennifer. Please, David was giving me such sweet loving. Will you do the same?"

The thrusts were not as hard. Jennifer wanted to make sure her partner was enjoying herself and Vanessa approved. She held that face above her. Hips rising and falling, breath catching as the pleasure rose. "I'm ready, my love. I can feel you're ready to come. Please, Jennifer, come in me, make me your woman. Please."

Their lips met, and the kiss crushed down as Jennifer's hips spasmed. Vanessa felt the flood and her body reacted, nails digging into Jennifer's arms, gasping out her passion.

"I love you, David. I love you, Jennifer. Please, stay with me. Please."

Jennifer leaned forward. tongue licking across Vanessa's lips. "Try to get rid of us."

## XVI

Vinnie stretched luxuriantly. David at the moment was a warm presence beside him at dinner, but there was a disquieting silence. Part of his mind still railed against what Vinnie was beginning to accept. He felt surges of anger in there that frankly terrified him. He looked at David, and suddenly pictured hands reaching out, neck snapping, boots, not the heels he wore but heavy work boots crushing his head and ribs. He stood, hands to his head, shivering.

"Vanessa?"

"Stay back, David," Vinnie whispered. He knew that if David came close enough, those hands would reach out, would crush the life from him. He opened his eyes, and David was walking toward him. "Please, stay back!" Vinnie spun, running down the hall, slamming into the room, closing the door, leaning against it.

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"Doc?" Van Pelt said. He was on monitor, watching Vinnie collapsed in a heap on the floor against the door, hands against his face, looking as if he had seen a ghost.

Solomon stepped over, looking at the monitor. "Leave him alone for a moment." He picked up the

phone. "Drea, check on Vinnie in a few minutes." He felt a sudden chill. "Not alone."

\*\*\*\*\*

Vinnie was crumpled against the door, part of him trying to push backward through it and escape, part of him desperate to stay here in the womb.

*So you've given up.* Vinnie sneered at him.

"I can't escape without her. I'll pay that price," Vinnie whispered.

The right hand came up and Vinnie slammed into the door, choking.

*I won't. Maybe I'll kill that little faggot you seem to like so much.*

The left hand came up, peeling the fingers of the throttling hand. "You touch him and..."

You'll what? Kill me?

"Yes, damn you, I'll...!" Vinnie wanted to say it, 'I'll fucking kill you'. But he couldn't. The change was overwhelming. "I'll stop you!"

How? The voice was amused. *I can see it in your heart, bitch. You can't even say it. Just contemplating it is terrifying you. But you don't have a choice. Either I die or you do. You'll have to die to stop me, bitch!* The hand caught him by the hair, pulling up, Vinnie choked back a scream.

*Get up, bitch!*

"No." The hand pulled harder.

*Get up and get your little toy.*

“No!”

*I'm going to fuck you until you bleed, then I'm going to ram it down your traitorous fucking throat until you choke!*

\*\*\*\*\*

Martin was almost hypnotized by the scene. Vinnie was eeling across the floor toward the vent, the right hand pulling at the hair, the left trying to stop it. Through it all, the she-male was talking, mewling in terror, totally unable to help herself.

Like she had been the other day with the hypnotics. But none had been administered this time.

The right hand let go, ripping the vent off the wall, flinging it aside.

The two hands fought, the dildo in the right hand, held like a dagger.

The fight continued. The left held the dildo away frantically as the right tried to ram it into his mouth. Vinnie's eyes were tightly shut, head moving away.

“We had better stop this,” Solomon said. “Hit him.”

Drea opened the door, witnessing the last moments before Vinnie suddenly collapsed. The orderlies picked him up and strapped him down. One went out and returned with small security bolts and an electric drill. There was a whine as he anchored the vent back. Once he had, the orderlies left the room.

Drea walked over. She suddenly pitied this man. He was a monster, an animal, and everything they had done was a just revenge.

Still, she pitied him.

Vinnie's eyes snapped open, frantically looking around. He tried to move his arms, then his legs. But when he realized he was restrained, he relaxed.

"Thank God," he whispered.

"I'll get the doctor."

No, please, let me rest a moment. Please." Vinnie closed his eyes, tears running down into his ears. "First her, now him. I can't take it."

"Him?"

"There are two of them in there now," he whispered. "Vanessa wants me to be womanly, soft. Vinnie wants me to be a maniac. I don't know how long I can stand it." He looked at her. "Vinnie threatened David. Said he'd kill him." He shook his head. "I can't explain it, but David makes me happy. I feel... loved when he's with me. Jennifer is the sister I never had. They're a pair of kids that make me feel needed." He closed his eyes, sobbing. "I've never been needed."

Drea reached out, and Vinnie stopped her. "Not the right hand, please. He'll hurt you. If he can't get to me, he'll get to David, or you. Something that will get me trapped in a straitjacket." Drea was softening more at this. The Vinnie they had brought here wouldn't have cared beyond his own needs. She took his left hand. He squeezed it.

"Thank you, nurse. Please, get the doctor."

Solomon walked in a few minutes later. "Who am I speaking to?"

"Vinnie sighed. "That's the problem I'm having, Doc. Vanessa has been speaking to me for months now. Suddenly, there's someone new."

"Explain."

“About three weeks ago, Vanessa broke off part of herself. It’s me, Doc. The person I was is alive in here, separate from me, and I can’t... I can’t fight him. He threatened to kill David, and I couldn’t even return that threat! If he kills David... part of me will die, Doc. I’ll be Vanessa, but there won’t be anyone I care about, that I can feel safe caring about. I’ll be dead inside with no one to love. I’ll smell chocolate and want him and he’ll be gone!” He wailed.

The bound figure cried, the deep wracking sobs of someone who has no hope remaining. Solomon wrote in the file, and the nurse came in and gave him a sedative. For the first time since he had been captured, it was what he needed, not what they decided.

\*\*\*\*\*

“I don’t understand,” Winters growled. “You want to stop?”

“May I explain?” Solomon asked. Of the team, only Chin Van Pelt and Winters wanted to continue.

The old man nodded. “Talk to me.”

“When we started, we had a monster in human flesh who killed because he enjoyed it. But something happened during that last session”

“Why don’t you explain better than that?” Van Pelt commented.

Solomon took the notepad. “I copied down what was said in the last hypnotic suggestion session. Vinnie mentioned chocolate.” He slid it across. “We used chocolate to imprint the act on Vinnie. It seems to have gone deeper than we might have imagined. Yesterday

when Vinnie seduced David, did you notice what was on his pants?"

"Chocolate icing," Hubert replied. "It is very hard to get out."

"The act under hypnosis, the command to remember it every time he smells chocolate, imprinted so far down that Vinnie now has an almost overwhelming urge to feed his sexual hunger when he smells it. But we broke off the other Vinnie too well.

"We now have three personalities inside his head, two of them quite real. We have Vanessa, whom we created, and who is pushing Vinnie toward femininity as we had planned. We have the new personality. Let's call him Mr. Hyde. He is all of those negative aspects of Vinnie. The cruelty, the enjoyment of other people's pain. In the middle, we have our Vinnie. He is in body female; in mind, he has become a mixture of both Vanessa and himself.

"We caused it. I even know how." Solomon sighed. "We have given Vinnie an insoluble problem. He cannot escape because we won't let him. Our Vanessa..." He waved at Van Pelt, who had been on the monitor that day, "Taunting him that she could escape, but Vinnie couldn't without her help.

"There is nothing Vinnie could do on the physical level. He could however do something on the psychological level. As I said, I could change him from homicidal maniac to saint, and Vinnie has done that for us. The new personality is of that stripe. This new person, the one I would say should be called the Real Vanessa, has thrown away all of the baggage that made her Vinnie. All of the evil he might do has moved into the other, more vicious personality.

“She is nonviolent, so much so that while she was willing to fight back, she couldn’t do the one thing that would have freed her of this other monster. Vinnie is ambidextrous. We took that into account when we used the technique we did. Yet while Vinnie could kill with either hand, all the left hand, the Vanessa hand, did was try to stop Vinnie from killing her. She could have snapped her own neck, or crushed her own larynx but she didn’t even consider it. She fought back, but didn’t try to kill.

“But you have to understand it from my viewpoint,” Solomon said, looking at them. “The instant the real Vanessa did this, we were no longer dealing with the same person. We were dealing with an entirely different, innocent personality, and I don’t give a damn about the money any more! Or vengeance! I will not torture an innocent. I will not become what Vinnie was.”

Chin looked at him. “You are the psychologist. I must accept your professional position. I withdraw my argument.”

“But...”

“Martin, would you rip the wings off of flies? Shatter a dog’s leg and pour gasoline on it because you could?”

“Christ, Doc! No!”

“Then accept my professional opinion that Vinnie Saliari is dead. The person we are tormenting is not that man.”

Van Pelt sighed, nodding. They all looked at Winters. The old man glared at them, then turned, looking at Hubert. “Well, you always had an opinion before. Say something, Hubert!”

“Sir, I must concur with the doctor’s prognosis. We have succeeded in doing what we set out to do. Except for one small trapped portion of his personality, Vinnie Saliari is dead. We must now deal with the damage we are causing in an innocent woman’s mind.”

Winters glared at him for a long moment. “All right. If I disagreed, he wouldn’t speak to me for the rest of my life.” The old man suddenly smiled. “You know, Doc, when I said that I felt a weight lift off of my chest. I think if I had been honest, I would have said to stop.”

“Thank you, sir. But now as I said, we have one last problem. The Vinnie we have created is out of our control. We cannot hear him or speak directly to him except through our link to Vanessa. We must crush it, kill it. Free her so she can have a life.”

“A life? What kind of life?” Winters laughed.

“The lies we told Vinnie when he woke up are just that. There is no murder charge, no commitment, no call to the Don. If Vinnie appeared on the road outside of the gates this very minute, no one would be looking for him. We can create a persona he can slip into.”

“Sure,” Shandon commented. “A quick romp through the databases, we put Vinnie’s fingerprints under that new name, use something from the old dead files for the records people have, so Vinnie will vanish. But...” He looked at the Doctor. “I don’t think it’s as easy as you are saying it is.”

Solomon sighed. “You are right. If we fail to trap and destroy the evil we have unleashed, she will never be safe. This.” He waved at the building. “Will be as much our prison as his. All of us trapped here trying to atone for the evil we have done.”

"Then I would suggest we plan very carefully," Hubert said. "As much as I like Colorado, I see no reason to retire here."

## XVII

Deirdre came in, carrying the tray with the meds. Vinnie opened his eyes. "Don't you ever go home?"

"I live here, Mr. Saliari. I only go into town when I'm bored."

"What's it like? The town?"

"Snowdon? Population about 5,000 when they have skiing, and 300 off season."

"Sounds wonderful." He sighed. "A place where you just drop in and disappear like a stone."

"Maybe. I prefer a little more entertainment." She popped the cap off the syringe, pointing it upward.

"What is that?"

"The doctor thought that if we mixed Janusin with a ten-to-one of your normal sedative, you could meet and speak with all of the personalities," she said.

"There's a new one, I hear?"

"Remember what I was like when you first met me?" he asked.

"Yeah. A real asshole."

"This one makes me look like a saint."

“Well, let’s hope you can deal with him, because I don’t want to go through that again.” Deirdre injected the medicine in a vein, wiping the spot with a swab. Then she left the room.

Except for her, everyone was in the control room waiting. Solomon had lit a cigar and was watching the screen. Juliana was on the monitor with a throat mike so that people could suggest things to her without a break in the conversation. She looked tense, but nodded when Solomon quirked an eyebrow.

“Begin.”

*What have you done, Vinnie?* Vanessa asked.

The world was still sharp but Vinnie sounded as if he had just found his mother. “Vanessa, help me. We made Vinnie and I have to stop him!”

In the control room, Juliana shrugged.

*Vinnie, I have been losing control as time went by.*

“What do you mean?”

That as you came closer to my ideal, I have become part of you. Like eating a fish. All those little molecules feed you, and the rest is just shit.

“No, I need you. I have to stop him!”

He can only be stopped if he dies, Vinnie. There’s nothing I can do to help you.

“Please.” The room was starting to stretch a little. “You beat me! Help me beat him!”

*He has all off your weaknesses and none of your strengths, Vinnie. Use them. I will lend my strength if I can. But most of me is in you now.*

He could see her. She had faded, shrunk a little. No longer the horrible nemesis he had first met. She was almost familiar and comfortable now.

The door opened and Juliana stiffened. Her finger punched the off switch. "Christ, the door!"

"Deirdre..."

"It's too late. Just get ready to knock him out. We can try again another night."

Down in the room, the small figure walked over. "Oh my love."

Vinnie looked up. It was Jennifer, looking woe-begone in her teddy. She bent over him and began unbuckling the straps.

"No. Don't let me loose!" Vinnie tried to say. But the words fell into syrup and were gone between his brain and his mouth. He felt a darkness coming; on the horizon of his mind, he saw a black tornado named Vinnie.

"Vanessa, help me!"

*You have to confront him, Vinnie. I know his weaknesses, but I've never felt them. You did! Fight him!*

Jennifer squealed as two hands suddenly caught her by the arms.

"Jennifer, do you love me?"

"Oh Vanessa, we love you. Both of us!"

His head lowered. "If you love me, you will trust me. Please."

"Anything, my love."

"Leave. Go back to your room. Either I will beat him tonight, or I will die." The head came up and the

expression was serene. "Either way, remember that I love you both. Now go."

Jennifer flinched back, then ran.

The cloud was there and Vinnie felt himself being slammed down off the bed.

*Fine, bitch! Now you're mine!*

Vinnie towered over him, a monster in every way. He reached down and Vinnie caught at his throat. He gasped, struggling. The monster lifted him up, looking down into the eyes of his victim. *But maybe one last fuck?*

On the screen, Vinnie was on the floor, writhing. The right hand was locked on the neck, the left frantically beating on it. Juliana leaned forward. "You know his weaknesses, Vinnie, fight him!"

*You know his weaknesses, Vinnie, fight him!*

Vinnie suddenly remember his third birthday. They had gone to the beach and he had chased the waves, then ran away from them. Someone had called him, distracting him, and a wave had smashed him down.

He'd always been terrified of the water since then. His worst nightmare was to drown...

She pictured it and suddenly the monster and he were being swirled around in a millrace. Vinnie broke free, rising to the surface, gasping. The monster rose, and before he could take a breath, she caught him around the throat, slamming him back under.

On the screen, both hands were locked on the throat, throttling him. But the face was still serene.

*No! Stop it, you bitch!*

I can't kill you, you crazy bastard, but I can kill myself!

The figures swirled around. There was no real speech, only thoughts flashing out and being answered. There was no telling which way led to the surface. There was only the fight, the hands locked on throats, knowing that whoever ran out of air first was dead.

Vinnie could feel Vanessa flow into him. She had always used his fears to beat on him, and now he turned that to his advantage. The figure he struggled with was shrinking, becoming more manageable. Then it was Vinnie, the shark skin suit stuck like a real shark's skin. And Vinnie himself began to change. His features blurred, becoming those of the woman he had fought all this time. The woman that now threw her own strength into the conflict on his side. The woman he was now and forever.

*No, Vinnie, the composite said. I renounce you. I will live without you.*

*You can't, bitch! I'll fucking kill you!*

I have air, you don't, the composite purred. The monster struggled frantically, trying to break free. His terror outweighed his anger. She held her grip, then suddenly the legs came up, punching the monster in the stomach at the same time the hands eased.

The monster instinctively sucked in water. Before it could be expelled, the hands were back, squeezing tighter and tighter.

*If I die, so do you,* she purred as they descended into blackness.

## XVIII

The patient's eyes opened. There was a dappled pattern on the wall. A door with a screen stood open. A woman with red hair in a nurse's uniform came in, walking up to stand by the left side of the bed. The patient was restrained; all that took was a simple stiffening of the arms and legs to ascertain. "Ah, you're awake." The nurse lifted a tumbler with a glass straw, fitting it between the patient's lips. "All right, drink as much as you want."

Thirsty. The patient had never been so thirsty. The lips puckered and water drenched the dried tissue. They sucked the glass empty.

"The doctor is not at all pleased with you. Or with Jennifer."

"Why?" the patient asked. There was something of great importance in that phrase. But what?

Solomon walked in. The patient wondered if he ever put down that clipboard. "All right. Now, who am I speaking to?"

"Doctor, don't you recognize me?"

"I know who you are, but I want to know who you think *you* are."

"You're silly. Let's pretend we've never met. Hello, Doctor, My name is Vanessa."

"All right." He made a note. "Now where is Vinnie?"

"Who?"

"When you came here, you had a split personality."

"A split personality..." The patient murmured, looking toward the wall. The dappling became two figures fighting in a cold wet world, sinking into stygian darkness, then one swimming for the surface at last alone.

"I don't know how to explain it," Vanessa said. "I... I see two people. One was a monster in all but species. A man with the soul of a monster. I faced it, I fought it. With the help of..." Her brow crinkled. "With the help of someone else, I beat him."

"Someone else?"

"A mirror image of myself, Doctor. I can't explain it any better." Vanessa rubbed her throat. "What happened?"

"After being given an injection, you proceeded to throw yourself around the room and tried to strangle yourself."

"Oh God. Am I getting any better?"

"I don't know." Solomon sighed. He put away the pen. "Someone wants to see you, if that is all right?"

"Do you think it is?" she asked seriously. "Am I a danger?"

"I don't know." He walked over to the door, opening it.

Vanessa's face lit up. "David!"

The young man walked over, standing over her. "Vanessa. Or is it Vinnie?"

"Vinnie?" She looked confused. "Vinnie is... He's dead, David. He went away and is never coming back."

His hand reached out, touching the cuff. "Then why..."

“They aren’t sure, David. I understand that and I’d rather be cuffed for a year than hurt anyone.” She leaned back. “Give me a kiss, love. Let me know you love me.” David bent over, kissing her delicately on the mouth.

“David,” she said tartly. “If you love me, kiss me like you mean it!”

He smiled shyly, then bent forward. The kiss was long, soft, gentle, yet demanding. Vanessa was whimpering when it ended. “David, could you come tonight?”

“What?”

“I suddenly got a surge of lust when you did that.” She looked at the cuffs. “Maybe part of me wants to be tied up while you have your way with me?”

He chuckled. “All right, later.”

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The testing took a month. Vanessa was watched more closely than he had been since he arrived. There was no sign that Vinnie had ever existed.

Solomon sighed, looking over the taped scenes over and over. The orderlies had been instructed to up the pressure a little. While the rules of a mental hospital don’t allow torture or abuse by the staff, they do allow you to defend yourself. A lot of orderlies had succeeded in beating patients over the years by forcing it.

Yet Vanessa never showed anger, not even the slight amount that would have been normal. She was sweet-tempered, generous to a fault. When an orderly named Jackson Pickett had complained about a prob-

lem with a law suit, Vanessa had sat down with him, giving him a dissertation on what to do to settle the problem without undue fuss. It hadn't even been couched in the second generation Italian he had used up until then. Instead it was the smooth mellow tones that the Vanessa they had created used.



She had been inseparable from David or Jennifer. She was disconsolate when they were away, and ecstatic when they were there. She intentionally placed herself between the person she cared about, in whatever gender they were at that moment, and any outside threat. She had stood up to Max without violence. Watching her, snug against David's side, or holding Jennifer snug against her side as they walked, Solomon finally buried Vinnie.

\*\*\*\*\*

They lay in the bed, their sweat almost freezing in the chill of late autumn. Vanessa ran her fingers through Jennifer's hair. She had never felt such contentment. "Love?"

"Mn?" The head swiveled. In the last month or so, David had allowed his hair to grow. In maybe another six weeks, it would be long enough to braid or style. There are a lot of pretty men in the world, and David would merely look like a man with long hair without the makeup. Yet all Jennifer would need to do is put on her clothes to come out. The best of both worlds.

"I want you to do something for me."

"All right." The voice was trusting. She could have asked him to put his hand in a garbage disposal, and he would do it.

"I want you to suck me." She stopped Jennifer. "No. Down there."

"But..." Her lip quivered. "You were hurt that last time!"

"I know, love. But the person I was then is gone now. I love you, I trust you. If I think it is going to hurt, I will ask you to stop. But I must know."

Jennifer's head dropped. "Okay." She slid down, and Vanessa felt the tongue that flicked across the head, making her gasp. It felt wonderful.

She began sobbing, hands on Jennifer's head, not to force, but to show that she loved what was being done. Suddenly a finger entered her ass and she screamed in an orgasm.

Jennifer slid up her body. "Why did you have me do that?"

She kissed the diminutive crossdresser. "Because I want you able to touch any part of me, knowing I will let you, and it does not hurt." Then she rolled over, holding the girl down. "And I will do the same!" She began tickling Jennifer, and they collapsed into a gently chuckling pile.

\*\*\*\*\*

Vanessa suddenly sat up. She was behind the wheel of a car, parked on a dark city road. The key ring dangled in her hand.

*Here's your final test, Vinnie.*

*"I am you, Vanessa. I thought I had proven that."*

*Not yet. This is the last test. Once we're done, I will render my decision.*

Vanessa had dressed to the nines for this trip. She wore a little black dress that would have men drooling. She carried a purse with money and the keys in it. Sti-

letto heels which Vanessa had chosen herself adorned her feet.

“All right. Where to?”

*There is a bar about half a mile down. Why not stop and have a drink?*

“How about dinner first? It’s my first night out in a long time.”

*Okay. Half a mile farther on is a small cafe. They should still be open.*

Vanessa started the car. “All right with me.” She drove carefully. There were so many difference between what she had been and what she was now. He had been a maniac, thinking that everyone else should get out of the way. She was a good driver, but in a quiet way that showed expertise without a lot of horn and screaming.

Knowing Vinnie’s specialty, the surveillance team was at a distance. The cameras in the pendant and earrings would show what was happening right before him. By timing it right, say when he stopped at a light or sign, they could still drop him like a pole-axed steer. Since the town only had a few small roads, they had to run in trail and ahead of him.

The cafe was a small out-of-the-way place, the kind tourist communities start with. A nice quiet eating place that served the locals, and the few tourists around at this time of year. The sign merely said **Santee**. She parked, locked her car and strode in.

The waitress was an older woman who served her silently. There were few customers; it was late. Vanessa was the last customer. She ordered a salad and coffee, ate silently, looked out of the window. It was a beautiful town, and if she hadn’t been an escaped prisoner

from a mental hospital, she would have settled down here and become just another face on the street.

She pictured it, Jennifer or David walking beside her, feeling the crisp autumn air, madly in love and happy just to be together. Bodies in the evening cuddled against the chill, or in the heat of summer under a sheet, always touching, as if in fear that the other would vanish as if they had never existed.

Another difference: Vinnie had always liked the nightlife, the club scene. He picked a different girl every night as if they were tampons to use and throw away. Vanessa wanted peace and quiet, and someone to grow old with.

She paused, looking at the cup. What would she really do if she escaped? Wander the world alone because David might not be able to escape with her. No money, hunted by implacable enemies who would kill her instantly if they knew she was alive. She didn't want that. She wanted the cottage, where it was didn't matter. David and Jennifer at her side, holding each other in the night. That had become her dream since they had made love. The last weeks had been the most blissful imaginable. What if there was no place for them beyond that fence?

She paid for her meal; the chill of the evening fit her mood. She fumbled out the keys in the aisle and they fell. Before she could bend, a voice said, "I'll get those." A head appeared in her sight and old reflexes cut in. She was trembling with an adrenaline rush as the man stood. Part of her knew she could kill him with a single blow; another part knew that unless she was in danger, she couldn't even contemplate hurting someone.

He was an older man with an open face and a soft smile. "Can't have an attractive woman crawling on

her knees, now can we?" She had heard the accent before on television.

He held out the keys, and she took them gently. "Thank you."

"Do you live here?" he asked.

"No. I am just passing through."

He looked around, and for some reason she pictured him in a butler's uniform with a sour expression. "Nice little town. A good place to meet people and live out your life." He looked askance at her. "Maybe grow old with a special someone."

"I was thinking that myself," she replied. She looked around, sighing. "But I don't know if there is a place for me."

"If you don't try, you have already failed in life," he said.

"I wish there was a place for me," she whispered. "More than anything."

"Do you know anything about shellfish?"

Now she looked at him askance. "What does that have to do with it?"

"There is a variety called the hermit crab. It doesn't have a shell. To protect itself, it slides its abdomen into shells of other creatures that have passed on. But it grows just as does all life, and soon that old shell becomes... confining. When this happens, it finds another shell, and moves into it.

"Like that animal, your life has grown beyond what you expected. There is a place, but you must find it."

"You're a butler."

"Is it that obvious?"

“The accent, that upright posture. The aphorisms. If you weren’t a butler, you have wasted your talents.”

He chuckled. “I was a butler, but I retired.”

“Thank you, sir.”

“Oh, please. Sir is what I called my employer for almost forty years.”

He reached out. “I am Hubert.”

“Vanessa.”

He took her hand, then bent, kissing the back. Vanessa felt a thrill down her spine. “Very nice to meet you, Vanessa. Keep looking.”

“I will.”

“Ah!” He held up a finger. “I shall.”

“Thank you again.” She got into the car. Hubert watched her drive away. The van pulled up beside him, and Shandon looked out.

“I think you are more insane than he is.”

“She, sir. There was no trace of the monster we have been tormenting in her face. Her heart is upon her sleeve, to be poked prodded and destroyed.”

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It was called the Dew Drop Inn and she almost didn’t go in. The name was hokey, and it was probably as bad inside. But she hadn’t had a drink in God alone knew how long. She parked, locked the car, slid the keys into the purse, slung it, and strode in.

Actually it was kinda hokey inside too. A western motif that didn’t quite come off. There were only four

people there, a pair of men behind the bar, and a couple that looked like this was their second home.

*How about a Brandy Alexander?*

“Chocolate liqueur?” Vanessa asked. “No. I’m saving myself for those that love me.” She slid into a bar stool. “Now don’t talk for a while,” she muttered. “Can’t have them thinking I’m crazy!”

The younger bartender had seen her sit down and was in front of her a moment later, setting down a napkin and coaster. “Yes, ma’am. What’ll it be?”

“I think... Can you make me a Strawberry Daiquiri with brandy instead of rum?”

“Sure. Of course I could make you an Irish car bomb if you like.”

“What?”

“An Irish car bomb is half a glass of Guinness with a shot of Bailey’s and a shot of Bushmills.”

“Oh heavens, I wouldn’t even get home after one of those!” Vanessa chuckled.

The bartender walked away, then set down the drink Vanessa had ordered.

Behind it was the drink he had threatened her with. “Here. That’s five. This one’s on the house.”

“Thank you.” Vanessa slid a ten across. “Keep the change, sugar.”

The strawberry drink slid like iced perfection down her throat. She resisted all of four seconds before she sipped the car bomb. Sharp Guinness, smooth Bushmills, sweet Baileys. She purred as she finished it.

“I think I could grow to like this,” she murmured.

*Maybe, but you have to get back to the hospital.*

"Just one more drink." The jukebox started, a slow dreamy dance. "And one dance."

*All right.*

She stood. "Bartender?"

"Yes ma'am?"

"Could you do something for me? I really have to go soon, but... It's been a long time since I danced. Would you dance with me?"

He looked as if she'd offered him the keys to the kingdom. "Joe! Cover for me!"

"Why should I..." Joe snarled. Then he saw Vanessa. "You lucky fucker."

The bartender came around and Vanessa poured herself against him. They moved with the music. Thanks to modern day 'elevator dancing,' it didn't matter who led. Vinnie was a warm growth pressed into the man's chest.

"What's your name, kid?"

"Vanessa."

"Why the bust out?"

Vanessa stiffened. "What do you mean?"

"You're a high-class woman, in this dive. Either you're newly divorced, or you're out screwing around on your husband."

"Oh he is a bastard, but he's not my husband. Unfortunately, he's still alive." She hugged him, running her hands up and down his back. "I didn't know how much I missed this."

"What?"

“Drinking, dancing.” She looked up. “Doing what I want. I’ve been trapped for years, and everyone knows that a prisoner yearns for freedom. I will have that soon. If I am worthy.”

“Who decides?” he asked confused.

She tapped the side of her head. “She does.”

He shook his head. She was cute but she wasn’t making a lot of sense. The song ended and she held him, head looking down, the crown touching his chest. “Now I must go back to hell. But I want one more drink.”

“Anything. I’m buying.”

“A Brandy Alexander.” She chuckled. “I want the taste on my tongue when I get home.”

She drank the drink, tipped him another ten and a gentle kiss, then strode back out to the car. She started it, then collapsed.

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The men laid her on the bed, then left.

In the control room, Drea was ready to zap him if he reacted negatively.

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There was the taste of brandy and chocolate in her mouth when she awoke. Vanessa looked at the ceiling, at the clothes she wore. She stood, stripping, then dressing in the same nightgown that Vinnie had fucked

her in. Now someone would make love to her in it, removing the old stain forever.

She pulled open the door, running barefoot down the hall. She found the door and pushed it open. Jennifer had obviously been in charge when they went to bed. She was in a teddy, curled up on her side, a thumb below her mouth. Vanessa pulled the covers up and slid into the bed, enfolding the smaller woman in her arms. "Sleep, my love." She kissed Jennifer's head. Then she closed her eyes.

## XIX

The room looked barren. The people that had come to torment a horrible man had instead created a caring woman. They had not tortured him to all eternity, but even the thought, when you come down to it, is rather bland. Nothing to do but torment. Demons probably go to work thinking about that, looking forward to their holiday somewhere peaceful and cool.

Winters looked at the emptied out structure. All of the nurses and orderlies had gone on to other jobs, to their lives. Every patient had been sent to better hospitals.

"Sir." Hubert walked up behind him.

"We didn't get our vengeance, Hubert."

"No sir, but we gave something that God will allow, sir." The old man looked up and Hubert leaned forward. "Mercy to the innocent. As horrible as Vincent was, Sir, Vanessa is and was an innocent."

“Well I am tired, and I have things I have to do at home. I’m not dead yet, Hubert, but you’re free anyway.”

“No sir.” Hubert pushed the chair. “As long as I am of service, sir, I shall remain.”

The cars were waiting. The money Winters had split was in bank accounts, and everyone had their bank books. They gathered there.

“Is this all?” Juliana asked.

“Well you never know.” Chin said jokingly. “Maybe we can find another bastard and turn him into a caring person.” Everyone looked at him, surprised. It was the first time the doctor had joked since they met him.

“Sure. You find him, we’ll fix him,” Shandon quipped.

“Next time.” Solomon said. He stood by the car as the others drove away. He held the deed to the hospital in his hand. “I’ll be waiting for that day.”

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It had been anticlimactic. Vanessa had expected a fight. Expected Vinnie to try again, or Vanessa to rant at her that she wasn’t really there yet. Her hand reached down, feeling the lump in her panties. It was still there. Jennifer had sucked it and it hadn’t hurt. She had enjoyed it, screaming into an orgasm that had shifted her world.

Then this morning, she had woken up in the car again. The sun had been in her eyes, but the sunglasses she had on cut the glare. Jennifer was asleep in the

back. Beside her was the recorder that Solomon had used. She looked at it for a long time before she pushed the button.

“Hello, Vanessa. That’s right, I acknowledge you did what I could not. You made yourself a loving person, the kind of person I wanted us to be. I was too much like Vinnie. I was pushy, a bitch. The only difference was I had an upper hand, not a weapon. But I was no better.

“So I’m letting you go. As you hear this, I am loosening all my ties, Vanessa.

“I must admit I lied just a bit. I didn’t call the Don, You aren’t hunted. I took all of your cash including that skim you were taking. It’s in an account. You have the card you need to get it at any ATM.

“I had planned on going it alone, but you and Jennifer changed that. David? Which one should I refer to? Anyway I manufactured an ID for me, but I had to bust my hump getting some made for them.

“You are what we were supposed to be. I couldn’t even chop off that bit of flesh I hated so much. You proved to be a better man than Vinnie, so I left it to you. Cut it off, keep it, I don’t care. Goodbye.”

“But I *do* care.” Vanessa closed her eyes. “You’re not leaving!”

She felt pain, then a sarcastic female voice. *What, you aren’t letting me go?*

“I need you, Vanessa,” she whispered. “I need someone to tell me when I’m going wrong, when I start acting like, like *him*, again.”

*Well if you don’t talk out loud, I’ll stay. But only until I think you’re doing it right.*

Watch over me then, Vanessa thought. In her purse was an ID for Vanessa Sawyer, with a Colorado address. Behind it were two IDs, one with David's face and another for Jennifer with the same last name. There were also a bank book with just over \$400,000 in it, a bank debit card and a gold Master card. About what she should have.

Jennifer suddenly sat up, looking around. "Where are we?" she asked in fear.

"Free, my love." Vanessa started the car. She motioned. Jennifer slid over the seat, pulling at the uncomfortable David clothes.

Vanessa showed her the ID's and money. "We have enough to last for years if we are careful. Where do you want to go?"

"Disneyland?" Jennifer asked.

Vanessa Sawyer, 2 weeks old, though her license said 28, laughed, hugging the small girl. In the middle of the hug, David came up, and she found herself in a loving kiss that stretched forever.

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