

# Dylan's Stepmother



**Jessica Matthews**

An "Adult TV" Novel



## **Reluctant Press TV/TS Publishers**

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# Dylan's Stepmother

By Jessica Matthews

“Look at these crowds.” Dylan looked through the darkly tinted windows of their chauffeured limousine. “Have they really all come here to see you? I can’t believe it.”

“I told you that I was a well-kept secret.” Rosalind smiled at his naivety. “I’m not really famous but among people who like the things I do, I have a big following.”

“Then they’re gullible idiots.” Dylan shook his head. “I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have said that.”

“No, you should never even think that, let alone say it. They’re ordinary people who believe in spiritualism. They like watching me in communication with their lost loved ones; they like having their cards read and have faith in palmistry. Some come to get in touch with their former lives.”

“I still think they’re idiots.”

“Well, keep that to yourself; remember they are the people who pay to keep up my lifestyle.” Rosalind looked at him with an indulgent smile. “And of course, *your* lifestyle too.”

“Do they know how well you live?”

"I'm sure they do." Rosalind patted his hand. "They like to think that it helps me to rest and meditate upon the things they most value."

"Is that why you let those journalists do a photo spread about your house and garden?"

"Of course, but you'll remember that I never said more than a half-dozen words to them, other than showing them round."

"I guess you'll say that all publicity is good publicity."

"That's why I have you as my assistant."

"I'd still be your assistant if you let me be a boy while I'm doing it."

"Nonsense; that would never do." Rosalind looked at him severely. "My assistant must be female, feminine, fey and ethereal. You've been created to give off all those qualities."

"Will you ever let me go back to being a boy?"

"Probably not," Rosalind replied. "I know you've only got small breasts but as you're so skinny, they reinforce the image of a raw and unconscious sexuality that I need in my female assistant."

"I wish you hadn't made me have these implants." Dylan ran a hand under his breasts and looked down the neck of his low-cut silk dress which hung voluminously over his tall and slender figure.

"They're only small ones," Rosalind replied. "I bet you don't even know that they're there most of the time."

"I think that's the only way I've been able to live with them," Dylan replied.

"That's a good girl," Rosalind chided him. "Remember your place. You have a comfortable life, and all these people provide it for you."

The limousine turned and came to halt at the private entrance to the rear of the venue.

"Now look at me, it's time for you to get into character."

Dylan's trigger made him turn and look into her eyes. She took his hand and stroked the back of it with her other hand. Dylan knew he couldn't resist and obediently closed his eyes. He didn't hear what she said. He didn't have to as he slipped into a trance.

Rosalind touched the red stone ring on the ring finger of his right hand and again, then the middle finger of his left. She'd programmed his mind carefully. She knew that each time he saw or felt a ring, it would reinforce his conditioning. He was her girl now and would stay that way until it suited her to release him.

She snapped her fingers, and he was awake again. This time his voice was softer, and his demeanour softened. His body language changed so subtly. No one would ever guess that Dylan wasn't exactly as he appeared.

He casually flicked back his long straight hair so that it hung down his back and untangled a long dangling earring from the hair on one side. The bangles on his left wrist jingled and jangled as he did so.

The car door was opened, and he stepped out, feeling the layers of black silk of his dress falling into place. He smiled at the doorman who held the door open and turned to offer his hand to Rosalind who made an elegant performance of smoothing her dark purple dress and adjusting the veil of the stylish hat so that her face was half concealed.

Arm in arm, they entered the hotel.

"Where do you think you're going?" Marcia's voice halted him in his tracks as he tried to sneak out of the house.

"Nowhere in particular," Dylan answered, turning back to face his stepmother.

I need you to stay here," she demanded. "Rosalind Meldrum's coming to see me, and I want you to be here."

"That silly cow." Dylan couldn't help himself.

"Don't you dare call her that; she's a good businesswoman. You're a layabout."

“She’s still stupid.” Dylan didn’t hide his contempt.

“As it happens, she needs someone to assist her,” Marcia replied. “She needs a driver and someone to host her evenings and when she offers private readings.”

“That’s a job for someone as stupid looking as she is.”

“Rosalind has a distinctive mode of dress, but it’s not stupid,” Marcia defended her friend. “It’s expected that she looks the part when she’s giving a reading or a presentation.”

“She sure does that. She looks like a representative of the living dead, holding séances for idiots trying to contact the recently dead.”

“She offers a great deal of reassurance and comfort to lots of people.” Marcia came to stand close to him. “She’s not all as screwball as you think either. She does tarot card readings, palmistry, and some other kinds of fortune telling.”

“Does she predict that idiots are going to cross her palm with silver?”

“Oh, it’s a lot more than silver,” Marcia said softly, but with a delivery that said she’d won the argument. “It can be hundreds or thousands if she gets the right clients.”

“And she never resists the opportunity to relive a fool of their money. How admirable.”

“She uses it wisely though,” Marcia said. “She’s the one with the big house, the nice clothes and that BMW you were ogling last time she called here.”

“It’s living off immoral earnings.”

“So, tell me, Mister Morality, what have you done to relieve anyone of any money these last few months? What have you earned? You mope around here all the time, pick up any loose change I leave lying around, and waste all your days.”

“My father left enough money for us both to live comfortably,” Dylan snapped back.

“He left it to me,” Marcia replied. “Don’t you forget that.”

“So, I should have a share too. It was in the will.”

“I haven’t forgotten.” Marcia smiled. “He left your share in trust with me. You get some of it when you’re twenty-five on condition that I’m satisfied that you’re able to be responsible.”

“I’ve not done anything irresponsible.”

“You’ve not done anything since leaving school.” Marcia walked back to the kitchen table. “I’d call that very irresponsible for a seventeen-year-old boy, wouldn’t you?”

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Dylan heard the door opening and Marcia greeting Rosalind effusively. He could even smell her perfume from up the stairs, as he went quickly into his room.

“Get yourself down here,” Marcia called sometime later.

“Hi,” Dylan said grumpily as he came face to face with Rosalind.

“I thought you said Dylan?” She looked from him to Marcia.

“I did, this is Dylan.”

“Oh, but I thought Dylan was a girl,” Rosalind said. “I can’t possibly use him. A boy would never do.”

“He can change,” Marcia said bluntly, looking at Dylan again. “He’s skinny enough and not too tall. That long dusty looking hair of his might even be an advantage.”

“I couldn’t possibly...” Rosalind started, then hesitated. “Maybe you’re right. It would be fun to have a boy fooling them all.”

“Don’t I get a say in this?” Dylan couldn’t believe what he was hearing. “I don’t want anyone to think I’m some dumb girl.”

“I don’t care if they think you’re dumb or not,” Marcia snapped back, her temper apparent as he

protested. "But you're going to make them think you're a girl, if Rosalind will have you."

"Marcia, you were always the most daring of us all." Rosalind's face glowed with excitement. "I've heard of boys being able to act like girls and I think it would be really exciting to have one working for me."

"I'm not working for you," Dylan interrupted.

"You're not working for anyone right now." Marcia's temper increased. "If I decide you're going to do this, then you're going to do it and like it."

"But..."

"But nothing; you're going to be the sweetest, most girlish of girls if it kills you."

Dylan grunted and turned away.

"Stay there," Marcia commanded, and he did so, fearing her temper, and remembering his inheritance too.

He came back and kept his eyes on the ground.

"Rosalind, he's not usually like this." Marcia shook her head and smiled again. "If I can get him to look presentable, would you give him a chance?"

"Of course, dear, but if he's going to be a liability, I daren't take the risk." Rosalind looked him up and down. "I must say that he looks like has potential. The girls I've interviewed were really the wrong sort."

"What's the right sort?" Dylan asked. "Is it some brainless bimbo who simpers all the way and pretends that she believes you're wonderful and wise?"

"No dear." Rosalind smiled a genuine smile at him. "She's someone who knows how to talk and carry herself well. She should like dressing up because different services require different costumes, and she should know her place."

"I think I know my place," Dylan sneered.

"If you don't, I certainly do," Marcia replied and turned to Rosalind. "Give me some time and I'll have him ready for you."

"I think you and I are really going to get along fine," Rosalind said to Dylan as she stood to leave. "I really love a girl with a bit of spirit."

"Right, you useless waster." Marcia turned on him with venom that he'd never seen before. "Your girl lessons begin in the morning."

"You think..."

"I know. We're going to get all your clothes together right now. Go and start now. I want everything out of your wardrobes, your drawers, and all that disgusting pile from your bedroom floor. I'll follow you with some rubbish bags."

"We're not really doing this, are we?" Dylan said as Marcia stood in front of him, holding a bag for him to fill.

"What didn't you understand?" she said. "I want shoes and boots as well."

"You can't mean to take everything."

"I can, and I do. Now start filling this bag."

Grudgingly, Dylan started to fill the bag. When it was getting full, Marcia tied the top and unrolled another bag. Again, Dylan filled it and watched as she tied the top again.

"I'm not going to have anything to wear if you take all these."

"I can fix that," Marcia replied. "And if I don't have anything suitable, you'll have to wear a towel until I can get you something from the internet."

"Like that's going to happen," he replied.

"Don't try me. There's only going to be one winner if you do." Marcia shook the bag for him to carry on. "Think which one of us has the money."

"Some of it's mine."

"In another eight years when you're twenty-five maybe. Remember I have discretion here."

"I get it whether or not in the end."

"You do, but that's when you're thirty. What do you plan on doing until then?" Marcia stated the obvious, and shook the bag again.

When Dylan had filled five bags, she had him take them down to the garage. She checked everywhere to make sure that he'd left nothing.

"You forgot these jeans." She held them up for him to see.

"But they're new. They cost a fortune."

"Put them in the bag." Marcia stood as he obeyed. "Now show me that you've cleared everything."

Grudgingly, Dylan held open the wardrobe doors, then, one by one, opened the drawers. Marcia pointed and he reached under the bed to pull out a couple of T-shirts and his Speedos, which followed into the bag.

"Now strip," she commanded.

"In front of you?"

"You don't have anything that I've not seen before," Marcia replied. "Remember, I was married to your father for eight years and I'm sure his was more impressive."

"That's gross." Dylan stood. "It's too much information."

"So, stop thinking and strip." Marcia shook the bag again and held her position until a naked Dylan stood in front of her with his hands covering his genitals.

"What do I do now?" he asked.

"You can wear a towel or wait while I look if I have something for you to wear."

"I'll get a towel," he replied sullenly.

"As you wish." Marcia took the last bag out with her, put it into the garage, and locked the door behind her.

She looked round, then took another bag. In it, she placed Dylan's washing from the utility, a couple of his jackets from the hooks near the door, and a pair

of cowboy boots he'd been excessively fond of recently.

The bag went into the garage with the rest.

"I wondered if you'd like to wear these." Marcia threw a bundle of clothes across Dylan's bedroom as he sat at his computer, still wrapped in his towel.

Dylan stood and picked up something from the bundle. It was all soft fabrics in feminine colours with lace and bows. There was one black item. He unfolded it and held it out.

"You're kidding. You're not serious," he said.

His nose crinkled in distaste as he held out a black baby doll nightdress.

"Your father thought I looked wonderful in it," Marcia said.

"Ugh." Dylan's towel fell away as he looked at other things. "These are all your things."

"Yes, what did you expect?" Marcia asked. "You can't have a whole wardrobe full after a couple of hours."

"A couple of hours? What do you mean?"

"I mean that you can't expect everything within a couple of hours of deciding to change from being a boy to being a girl."

"I never said I'd do that."

"I know you didn't. You were simply being foolish. I decided for you," Marcia said.

"How do I get you to understand that this isn't going to happen?" Dylan's eyes filled with tears of frustration.

"Get real; it's happening."

"You can't expect me to go along with this."

"Of course, you're going to go along with it. I think it's going to be good for you," Marcia said, unperturbed by his display of temper. "You'll make a wonderfully attractive girl."

"I want to get into a girl's panties, not to wear them."

"Don't be crude," Marcia said. "Boys don't like their girls to be crude; playful is okay, but never crude."

They looked at each other, staring hard and daring the other to look away. Dylan blinked first as Marcia knew he would.

"You look ridiculous trying to hold that towel around you. Why don't you slip into your new baby-doll, and I'll go and find the matching robe and panties? They'll protect your modesty better."

She turned and left him standing, one hand on the towel and another holding the lingerie.

"Heck, if she thinks she's going to outdo me, she's another thought coming," he said to the closing door. Marcia wasn't there to listen

Dylan dropped the towel, slipped the nightie over his head, and promptly fell to his ankles. He picked it up, pulling it to where he thought it should be. It shouldn't be complicated, he thought; he'd seen enough pictures. He struggled until he realised that it had spaghetti straps which were supposed to hold it on his shoulders.

He flicked his long hair away from the straps. As he bent down to untangle the hem, some of his light red hair fell over his shoulders. He'd always liked to keep his hair long and cared for it obsessively. Now he wondered if it was going to place him at a disadvantage as he felt it sway down his back between his shoulder blades.

He turned to look at himself in the mirror. He knew he shouldn't do it. He knew he shouldn't want to know what he looked like but there was something about the feel of the silky material, the way it moved against his body, that made a glance irresistible. He felt something stirring; an excitement that he didn't really want.

"Someone must be happy with their new nightie." Marcia returned and noticed immediately.

Dylan stood as she walked round him, appraising his predicament sticking rigidly in front of him. It



pushed the short hem of the nightie out and tightened it against his bum.

Marcia smiled and held out a matching robe for him to put his arms into. It slipped over his skin, all frills and lace, delicate patterns within the silky black material.

“You’d better wait before you put these on.” Marcia smiled again as she handed him the matching panties. “I thought you’d like the shoes as well. I used to wear them for your father too. Be careful, they’re backless slip-ons and the heel may catch you off-guard when you’re not used to them.”

Dylan looked at them with a look of disgust. Backless and wedge-heeled pumps, with black marabou feathers across the foot. He picked them up, then defiantly slipped them onto his feet. He took a step and almost overbalanced. He wasn’t prepared for the height of the heels.

“You’re joking. I’m never going to get used to girls’ shoes.”

“Never say never to me.” Marcia’s smile was cold and threatening. “When you’re ready, you can come down and we’ll talk about getting you ready to work for Rosalind.”

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A couple of hours later, Dylan appeared downstairs. Marcia was watching television, a glass of wine on the table beside her chair.

“I think you look really lovely,” she said as Dylan sat opposite her, pulling down the baby doll and robe.

“I don’t know how you walk comfortably in these shoes,” he said, moving awkwardly towards a chair.

“You’ll learn,” she replied. “Elegance comes with a price. Imagine yourself walking seductively dressed like that. It’s a powerful feeling.”

“It’s for girls and I’m not one if you can remember that far back.”

“That was then, this is now, and now you’re learning to be a girl.” She smiled wickedly. “Imagine if your

toenails were painted dark red to match your fingers and the toes were peeping through those mules. I defy any red-blooded man not to look twice.”

She got her cell phone and took a few pictures as he tried to arrange his clothing and sit comfortably. The robe flapped open, exposing his shoulders and the spaghetti straps.

They almost covered the tops of the legs where the fabulously frilled panties protected his modesty. He saw her look and turned in the chair with his legs closed tightly.

“You’re learning,” Marcia noticed. “Girls have to keep their legs closed, otherwise men look up where they shouldn’t see.”

“They’ll see a lot more than they expect if I ever get to that position,” Dylan retorted. “But it’s not going to happen.”

“Of course, it isn’t. Rosalind will expect you to dress very differently when you’re her assistant.”

“What happened to her last assistant?” Dylan didn’t want to think about what might be forced on him in the future.

“I think she went to college, or perhaps that was the one before,” Marcia tried to remember. “One of them went on to perform as a spiritualist in her own right.”

“I bet that didn’t go down well with Rosalind.”

“Oh no, I think she was pleased and helped her to get established. There’s a regular scene going on if you’re interested in that sort of thing.”

“I bet there is,” Dylan said sarcastically.

“Come on; show a bit of interest,” Marcia replied. “You may not want to do it right now but there’s a lot out there. Rosalind does a lot of individual readings, fortune telling and cards, but she’s absolutely fascinating when she does past lives regression.”

“You’ll have to explain why that’s interesting.”

“It pays good money, for one thing,” Marcia replied. “You’ve seen Rosalind’s car, just wait until you see where she lives.”

“Does she live in a past life where it’s all so much cheaper?”

“Now you’re being silly,” Marcia humoured him. “People think that they’ve lived before. You know how you can think you’ve seen somewhere before or heard something before, even though you know that can’t be real.”

“I read about *deja-vu* in my psychology class; it’s everywhere.”

“It may be, but Rosalind helps people to get in touch with their past lives and helps bring those memories forward so that if there’s a lingering trauma, they can understand it and deal with it.”

“What does she do if they’ve been Hitler or Caligula?” Dylan scoffed. “What about Lucretia Borgia?”

“I don’t think she’s come up against any famous figures from the past.”

“That’s probably because it’s not real,” Dylan scoffed again. “People must be stupid.”

“I think the chances of finding someone as infamous as those, or any other, would be remote. Most people live ordinary lives,” Marcia replied. “And whatever you may think about it, people pay.”

“And Rosalind lets them.”

“Of course, she does.” Marcia smiled. “It’s a way of making a living and it beats stacking shelves in a supermarket.”

“Is that what she used to do?”

“Actually, she’s a qualified behavioural psychologist but she left that behind a few years ago when she realised that this was much more enjoyable and far less stressful.”

“Okay, I get that she’s a success, but I still don’t get why I have to dress up and work for her.”

“You can stop thinking about it.” Marcia took his picture again with her mobile. “I’ve made the decision for you.”

“I’ve nothing to wear.” Dylan sat in the negligee at the breakfast bar and smirked as he looked at Marcia next morning. “I can’t possibly wear this all day.”

“That’s true,” Marcia smirked back. “There’s a dress and shoes by the door. They’ve only just been delivered. It’s a pity that you need a smaller size than I do.”

“Can’t I have some of your jeans?”

“Maybe when you’ve learned how girls walk in a dress and heels.”

“You’re not going to insist that I wear heels as well.”

“Of course, I am. What sort of mother wouldn’t make sure her girl had the best training to prepare her for being a woman?”

“I’m not your daughter,” Dylan said emphatically. “And I’m not going to be a woman anyway.”

“While you’re living here, you’re going to learn how to be my daughter, then how to be a woman,” Marcia replied. “And as a special treat, there’s some lovely lingerie for you to wear under the dress. That should make you feel feminine.”

“It’s going to make me feel stupid.”

“That’s something you’ll have to get over,” Marcia said. “You can’t expect to present yourself as a cool and confident assistant to Rosalind if all you’re doing is thinking how stupid you feel.”

“Can’t we stop this charade?”

“It isn’t a charade,” Marcia replied. “Get used to it; go and get dressed.”

Dylan looked at her but there was no mercy in her eyes. She looked grim and determined as she stared at him, daring him to disobey. He got up and looked away, then he walked to the door and picked up the package. He came back and, under her gaze, he opened the flap.

“It’s a dress,” he said with distaste.

He opened it to see a white dress with a poppy red flower pattern boldly across the fabric. It had a flared

hem and a back zip to a rounded neckline. Dylan wanted to screw it up and fling it away, but his stepmother's unwavering gaze told him that it might not be a good idea.

He reached into the package again and pulled out several items of pure white lingerie, then a packet of stockings. At the bottom of the package, he found a pair of white court shoes with impossibly thin heels about four inches high.

"Would you like me to help you dress?" Marcia was watching him intently. "Or can you manage? I'm sure you know how it all fits together; I've seen those magazines under your mattress."

"How did you..." Dylan thought better of completing the sentence. "I don't want to dress like this."

"Okay, you can sit around in that nightie all day if you want to." She smiled as if sharing a secret. "You're not going to get anything else to wear until I see you in those."

"But I can't go anywhere," Dylan protested.

"When you're dressed properly, you can go anywhere you want."

"I can't let people see me wearing a dress."

"Yes, you can." Marcia stood and leaned over him. "You're not going anywhere unless you're wearing a dress for the foreseeable future."

"But I'll look stupid."

"Then you'd better learn how not to look stupid then," Marcia said. "And part of not looking stupid would be to learn how to use makeup too."

"I'm never doing that."

"I think you will be doing that very soon," Marcia replied. "I know that Rosalind has a specific look she wants her assistants to have and that includes makeup."

"I don't want to, and you can't make me."

"I don't care if you want to or not, but I can make you quite easily," Marcia replied. "Don't worry, I'm not going to tie you up and force makeup onto you."

You're going to learn all about it yourself and learn how to do it all properly."

"How do you think that's going to happen?"

"I could send these photographs to everyone you know."

"You wouldn't."

"You've no alternatives. If you want to go out of this house ever, it's going to be as a girl. You're going to be believable, undetectable, and fashionable. Remember which one of us has the money and which one of us would be in a mess if he was thrown out with only a dress to his name."

"I could take you to court."

"Maybe you could if you could pay an attorney," She smiled. "Now be a good boy and go and get dressed."

"It's too bright," Dylan resorted to complaining about her choice of colours. "I'll be instantly noticeable."

"That's the idea. The bodice is meant to be tight to show off your shape. The flared hem is designed to move when you walk and give an attractive profile in motion."

"I don't have a shape."

"We'll have to do something about that."

Dylan saw that he was losing the argument. He stood and took his new clothes back to his room. He returned a couple of hours later.

"That's better." Marcia eyed up his appearance in the dress, stockings and heels. "I think you need something in your bra. I assume you're wearing it like I told you, but you need something on your chest. The dress is meant to show off a girl's figure."

"And girls have the biology," Dylan sneered. "They get the breasts to put there."

"So, use your imagination," Marcia replied. "Put something into the cups to make the dress fit. Don't let me see you walking around with the dress hanging loosely."

“Oh great.” Dylan looked disgusted. “What do you suggest, balled-up panties?”

“That will have to do,” Marcia said. “I’ll order a better solution today.”

“Thank goodness. I thought for a moment you’d be sending me for implants.”

“Not a bad idea; maybe later when we find out if Rosalind’s going to use you.” Marcia smiled sweetly. “And it’s time you started wearing makeup too. I can’t think of any girls your age who don’t use makeup.”

“I’m getting fed up with telling you that I’m not a girl.”

“And I’m telling you that you’re going to be one so get that into your thick head,” Marcia replied. “I’m ordering some makeup for you, and I expect you to learn how to use it properly.”

“And who’s going to teach me?”

“You can learn all about it on the internet.”

“How long are you going to keep me like this?” Dylan asked two days later. “I usually have a clean shirt every day and you’ve left me with this one dress to wear. I think it needs a wash.”

“You could be right,” Marcia agreed. “White isn’t your colour really, you never learned how to keep your clothes clean.”

“Why can’t I have my own clothes?”

“You’re *wearing* your own clothes,” Marcia said bluntly. “That dress and the lingerie is what you’re expected to wear now. There’s no going back. How did you get your dress so dirty anyway?”

“I don’t know how those stains appeared. It’s not as if I’ve been out anywhere.” Dylan’s voice was subdued, and he sounded resigned to his fate.

“It’s probably as well. You don’t look anything like a normal girl yet. Your body language is lumpy, even with whatever you stuffed in your bra. Your hair’s a mess and you’ve no makeup or jewellery,” Marcia pounced. “I can’t think of a girl of your age who’d be seen dead like that.”

"I keep telling you that I'm not a girl and I don't want to be one," he tried again; the despair in his voice was palpable.

"Those decisions have been made and you know the answer." Marcia's look told him that argument was futile. "You're going to be the best girl I can make of you."

"Okay, so no girl would be seen dead in the same grubby dress for day after day."

"Can I count that as your first thought as a girl?" Marcia asked sarcastically. "Well done if it is."

"Come on; it's not fair." Dylan was subdued now. "I can't keep wearing the same clothes day after day."

"I agree," Marcia said. "You can go online and choose a new dress and shoes to match."

"Can't I get some jeans?"

"No, you can't. Definitely no jeans, slacks, or joggers. And before you ask, no flat shoes either," Marcia replied. "I want to approve your choices first."

"You'll probably have to," Dylan said bitterly. "You're the one with the credit card."

"Yes, I am, aren't I?" Marcia smiled at him. "If you're good and I like your choices, you can order some more lingerie as well."

Dylan looked at her and she saw something in his eyes. It could have been resignation or realisation. Dylan would have said that he felt defeated as he slouched towards the table to pick up his laptop.

As he switched it on, Marcia handed him a list of girls' clothing sites to browse.

"And before you start looking, go and put some makeup on," she shouted. "I want to see a real effort from you."

"That's much better." Marcia ran her fingers gently through Dylan's head as he sat in front of his laptop. "Simple eyeliner and mascara can make such a difference. I really like the way you've drawn under your eyes too."

"I thought it was getting messy," Dylan grumbled.

"It's not at all messy; it simply looks casual and lived in," said Marcia. "I like the effect and I like that you've made an effort."

"If you're going to keep me in this sham, I thought I might as well experiment a bit." Dylan didn't want to sound too enthusiastic although he could feel the seductive power of makeup starting to fascinate him.

"Are you going to show me the dresses you've picked out?"

"I've kept the tabs open," Dylan replied. "I'm not sure about sizes and I wondered if I could have a denim miniskirt with a couple of tops as well."

"I think that's a good idea." Marcia wanted to emphasise praise for things that were going her way. "I think showing off your legs would be a great idea."

"I'm not sure that I thought about showing off." Dylan suddenly felt a bit of panic in case he'd made a silly choice. "It's only that I know girls I used to go to school with looked good in them."

"Of course, they always look good. It's a fashion that never seems to date too much. You could wear it with pink trainer boots or maybe matching blue wedges. I think we'll have to get those as well and maybe some blue shiny heels to dress it up, with a purse to match."

Marcia looked at Dylan, sensing that his silence meant that she'd taken things too far and too fast, even though she was determined to have him as a fully functioning girl as soon as she possibly could.

"I guess," Dylan mumbled none too enthusiastically.

"What about lingerie?" Marcia asked. "I've seen those magazines under your bed. Some of those girls are wearing the most impractical things."

"I don't think they were meant to be practical." Dylan turned to look at her. Then, when he saw her face, he understood that she was teasing him and couldn't help but smile.

"Why don't I help you find lingerie that's near your fantasy but something that could actually be worn?" Marcia asked.

“If I have to wear that stuff, then that’s a good idea.” Dylan tried not to sound at all keen.

“And of course, you’ll need some breasts,” she announced, pressing home her advantage.

“You’re joking,” Dylan gasped.

“Not at all,” Marcia replied. “You know why you look at those magazines and it isn’t because the girls are flat-chested.”

“That’s not the point.” Dylan blushed. “I’m a boy and I don’t have breasts.”

“I know but we can remedy that. For now, we’ll have to buy some prosthetics.”

“Prosthetics are what go into horror movies.”

“And they also go into brassieres when a girl thinks her breasts are too small or when a lady has been ill and has to have something removed.”

“That doesn’t mean that *I* have to have them.”

“Either you have proper breast-shaped prosthetics that are easy to wear, or you’ll have to be stuffing rolled up panties in the bra cups forever, and that would be silly.” Marcia opened another page on the laptop. “Of course, you could always opt for implants.”

“You’re joking.” Dylan turned to her in shock.

“No; some small implants might be good. With a push-up bra, you could look like you had far more than you have.”

“Like Becky Milligan at school,” Dylan laughed. “Everyone knew they were fake.”

“Knowing that they’re fake is one thing but I’m not having you going to work with Rosalind with anything that looks obviously fake.” Marcia pointed to a page of breast forms on the screen. “You can even decide what size you want to be.”

“How about letting me have tiny ones?” Dylan asked, wishing he hadn’t said that as soon as the words were out of his mouth.

"I agree." Marcia smiled, realising that he couldn't back out now. "I'll order the B-cup size for you right now."

With a few changes of the page, Dylan watched as, in quick succession, she ordered dresses, skirts and tops; shoes and a purse, then the dreaded breast forms.

"You'll have to trust me to get you the right lingerie." She clicked through more websites. "And I'll get you a proper set of cosmetics too."

Dylan could only watch as she entered her details several times, thinking that his fate had been decided.

"I'm so pleased that you kept your hair long," she said. "If I get some really good quality hair products, I think it's going to look fabulous."

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Two weeks later, Dylan was discovering that there was no relief; no easing of the position into which Marcia had put him. Under relentless pressure, he complied grudgingly, then he complied with reluctance. As he got used to her expectations, his reluctance began to wane.

"Your manicurist is coming today," Marcia announced one morning.

"I don't have a manicurist."

"Of course, you do; every girl needs to keep her nails looking good. I've asked her to give you some special acrylics."

"She'll laugh at me when she realised that I'm not a girl."

"Exactly, but only if she realises that you're not a girl." Marcia smiled. "Of course, it would be better if she didn't realise that. I think you'll be able to make yourself look like a young lady for her."

"Is that a threat?"

"Of course not; it's simple advice. She should be here in an hour or so."

Dylan stood and glared. He felt a tear of frustration trickle down his cheek and turned away quickly, hoping that she hadn't noticed. He went to his room and sat in front of the mirror. Reality was colliding with his fears.

He sat a few moments longer and then with a sigh, picked up a hand mirror and inspected his face. He knew what to do; he'd watched the videos showing him how to use makeup to change his face into a more girly face. He'd practised, even though he'd been careful not to allow Marcia to see the times when he really did it well.

He started; moisturiser and foundation were followed by some light shading. He used eyeshadow and liner, as dark underneath as on top of his eyes, with mascara thinly over his lashes. He kept his lips pale but outlined to look thicker than they really were.

He dressed quickly, pushing rolled-up panties into his bra and massaging them into something resembling a correct shape. A high neck pink top, loose and to his waist went over it, then he decided on the short denim shirt with no stockings.

He wasn't going outside and so remained bare-footed. He heard a car outside and looked through the window. Someone he didn't know was on the drive and he guessed who it was.

He inspected himself in the mirror, turned and understood that he needed to wear something else to conceal the bulge which had grown and was pushing out his skirt. He whipped off his panties and pulled on some tight elastic ones before putting his first choice over them. They were boy-boxers and concealed the elastic fully.

He ran a brush through his hair, sprayed perfume over his neck and shoulders, and set off downstairs as Marcia was at the door.

"Here's Dylan now," she said. "I think you'll be comfortable in the conservatory. There's a table and the light is good."

"Dylan, meet Charlene. She's my favourite nail artist and she's brought the equipment to pierce your ears too. Isn't that kind?"

Marcia stood back and smiled as Dylan stood there, then realised he was expected to say something.

"That's lovely, thank you," he said, trying to smile.

He decided he'd come this far in his attempt to look like a girl, it was no use to start objecting now.

"Won't it hurt and bleed?" he asked, suddenly fearful.

"I promise it's quite painless." Charlene's face radiated confidence. "A tug and a snap; that's all there is to it. All you must do is keep your ears clean for a week or so and it'll be like you've always had earrings."

"I'd feel naked without mine." Marcia held out her hands and then led the way through to the conservatory. "There's a cloakroom through there and if you need anything, Dylan can get it for you."

"Let me look at your hands," Charlene said as soon as she'd set out her equipment at the table. "I can't believe that a girl of your age hasn't had her nails done properly before."

"I guess it never seemed necessary," Dylan replied as she took his hands and examined them.

"These hands could use a lot of treatment." She looked up. "Do you never take care of them properly?"

"I guess not." Dylan looked at her.

"I'll do your nails first and then I'll show you all the creams and lotions you should be using. I'm sure Marcia will have them all. I guess she never thought of giving you some."

"I'm sure she'll never let me neglect them again," he said sardonically.

"She's told me to give you the strongest acrylics and a really classic deep red. I think you'll love them."

"I don't want them to be as long as Marcia's. I'll never be able to do anything."

“That’s just silly,” Charlene laughed. “You’ll soon adapt to them and in a few days, you’ll forget you ever had anything else. Besides, Marcia’s told me what to do.”

“But what about what *I* ask you to do?”

“I’ll let you into a secret; Marcia’s already tipped me.”

“Okay, do your worst.” Dylan managed a little smile, realising that his choices were non-existent.

He watched as she worked, building up the acrylic over his roughened and cleaned nails. She shaped and files, primed and painted them so carefully, matching finger to finger and hand to hand, so that the result was as even as they could possibly be.

“They’re a bit long,” Dylan said, flexing his fingers after she had finished.

“They’re meant to be,” Charlene replied. “And before you ask, that’s the shade of red that Marcia told me to use. I think they’re beautiful. You’re so lucky that she’s willing to pay for them.”

“I guess so,” Dylan replied, feeling a little confused as he looked at his hands.

“Don’t worry, in a day or two, they’ll feel as natural as can be,” Charlene said. “Now I must do your ears. Marcia has given me these earrings to use so I’ll pop them in.”

“Aren’t you going to hurt me?”

“Not at all, relax and they’ll be in there before you know it.” Charlene wiped his ear lobes with a little antiseptic. “Now I’m going to use a freezing spray so don’t be alarmed.”

She sprayed the lobe of his right ear and he felt it chill. It wasn’t unpleasant; when he heard the click of her piercing gun, he knew that the first earring was in there. A second one followed, and the process was repeated on his left side.

“That wasn’t so bad, was it?” Charlene smiled at him, wiping her equipment. “I bet you never felt anything.”

“No, it was all quite painless,” Dylan replied, surprised at his own compliance.

He felt his ears in disbelief and there they were. Each ear had a hoop and a stud behind it. It was no use complaining, they were there for all to see. He sighed as he realised that he’d passed another hurdle on his way to being the girl they wanted him to be.

“You’re looking good today,” Marcia said one afternoon as they sat in the sun together. “I think Rosalind is going to love that look you’ve adopted.”

“What look would that be?” Dylan was surprised by her comment.

“It’s that sort of slightly slutty but ever-so-clean and nice makeup, with your hair in neat tangles.”

“You’re joking.” Dylan couldn’t help but laugh. “How do you get to neat tangles?”

“I don’t know; it’s what you do,” Marcia replied. “Your hair falls beautifully but then you push your fingers through it, and it looks like such a wild child look.”

“I don’t understand what you mean.”

“Forget it,” Marcia replied. “I like it anyway; the way you use too much kohl on your eyes and then let it smudge into your mascara, it’s such a delight. You’ve really turned into a much more natural girl that I ever hoped.”

“And that’s good?” Dylan asked.

Of course, it’s good. When you look back, you’ll see how easy the changes have been and how easily you’ve adapted.”

“Don’t think I like any of this,” Dylan said with less anger than he intended. “It was those threats to put pictures of me on social media every day unless I did what I was told.”

“Yes, that was rather more effective than I thought it would be,” Marcia said with false sympathy.

“I should have been stronger and stood up to you.”

“That would only have made things more difficult and in the end it would simply have taken longer. I’m

glad you realised that you should do what your step-mother tells you. I only have your best interests at heart.

“Isn’t it enough that you can threaten to withhold my inheritance?”

“That does motivate you, doesn’t it?” Marcia said. “If it’s any consolation, I think that we can move to the next phase of your development.”

“Am I girly enough?”

“I think Rosalind will decide that you’re more than girly enough,” Marcia replied. “She’s been asking when you’ll be ready to join her.”

“I could easily make my escape then,” Dylan said softly.

“Of course, you could if you were that stupid.” Marcia held his gaze. “But you’d have no money, nowhere to go, and I’ve a lot of pictures.”

“If I’m working with Rosalind, I’ll get my picture taken.”

“Of course, you will but they’ll show her female assistant, and you’ll look lovely.”

“You really look lovely.” Rosalind hugged Dylan after air kissing each cheek. “You’re exactly the person I need.”

“I don’t know how you work that out.” Dylan stood back from the heady scent of her perfume.

“Wait and see. We’re going to have so much fun working together.” Rosalind turned to Marcia. “When can I have him... I mean her?”

“When do you need her?” Marcia asked.

“As soon as possible.” Rosalind kept hold of Dylan’s hand. “There’s such a lot to learn and the longer we have before my next engagements, the better it will be.”

“What do I have to learn?” Dylan was puzzled.

“You must complement the image I create. Think of me as a modern Madame Arcati; eccentric and a little strange in a good way,” Rosalind explained. “You must be something like a junior version of that.”

"I don't understand," Dylan replied. "I guess I only have to stand around and look vague. What's to learn about that?"

"There's such a lot. You must know what to say and even more importantly, what not to say. You'll have to learn how to walk and behave in costume." Rosalind saw Dylan's face drop at the mention of a costume. "Don't worry, it's all modern dress; no crinolines or lace kerchiefs but I need you to dress more ethereally to convey the right atmosphere."

"I have no idea what you mean." Dylan's face showed his incomprehension.

"You'll learn to act a little fey; other-worldly, fairy goddess-like as if you're connected to the spiritual as much as the real world. It helps get clients in the mood."

"The mood to be fleeced?" Dylan asked quietly.

"Not at all; we provide reassurance and a gentle therapy to those who need our services and entertainment to the others who are more sceptical. No one forces them to come."

"I'm sorry." Dylan realised that Rosalind was trying to be kind to him, and he suddenly felt that he shouldn't be mean to her.

"That's alright, dear." Rosalind held out her hand to him. "I'm sure you're going to fit in perfectly."

"What do I have to wear?" Dylan changed the subject.

"Dresses, of course, when we're seeing individual clients or even assemblies of people. I've a huge wardrobe left over from my previous assistants. There are shoes and wigs and makeup too."

"What about when we're not performing?"

"Performing; that's not a word you should use," Rosalind chided. "We don't perform, we hold audiences with people."

"Okay, so when we're not holding audiences?" Dylan asked.

"Then you're free to wear whatever girls of your age would wear."

“But I’m really a boy.”

“Yes dear, nobody’s perfect but you have the soul of a girl, I can tell,” Rosalind stated as if it were a proven fact. “And you’ll come to love the opportunities ahead of you.”

“When do you want him?” Marcia interrupted. “You didn’t say.”

“He can come with me now.”

And so, it was decided. For his first trip outside as a girl, Dylan found himself in the passenger seat of Rosalind’s plush SUV on his way to somewhere... he knew not where.

All he did know was that this was the adventure Marcia had decided on was to be his fate.

“I want you to make yourself at home here.” Rosalind had taken him on a tour of her mansion. “You’ve a separate entrance to your suite and I don’t mind if you entertain a friend there every so often.”

“I don’t have any friends; at least, I don’t have any that I want to meet looking like this.”

“You look perfectly lovely and if you don’t have friends, then we’ll have to introduce you to some of my friends’ children.”

“I’m not the sort of girl they would want to meet,” Dylan said.

“I’m sure you are; don’t be so hard on yourself.” Rosalind looked thoughtful. “You need to have some fun. I’m not going to keep you working all the time.”

“I’m not sure what you actually do,” Dylan said. “I mean, I know it’s all about fortune telling and silly séances but that’s about all I know. I think you take advantage of gullible old ladies.”

“That’s harsh,” Rosalind replied. “But I think you do deserve an explanation and you shall have one this evening. I’ve ordered dinner to be delivered at eight. I’m going to have a leisurely bath and change. I’d be delighted if you’d do the same. I’ll see you in the library for a drink before dinner arrives.”

“I didn’t have time to pack many clothes.”

“That’s all right. Your wardrobe as my assistant is in the dressing room attached to your suite. I checked with Marcia and it’s all your size. Before you ask, it’s all freshly cleaned. I’ve had to buy shoes to fit you. My last girl had smaller feet.”

For all his doubts and fears, Dylan couldn’t help but have feelings of warmth towards Rosalind. It was more Marcia’s fault that he was here. He’d never seen anything like he was going to witness working for her. Underneath it all, it might be quite interesting, if not exciting.

He went to his suite and threw himself onto the bed to think quietly. He concluded quickly that whatever he thought, he’d better be prepared for all kinds of things he’d never even considered.

He stripped off and dropped his clothes into a pile on the floor. He walked through to his shower room. He looked through the selection of toiletries there for his use, noting the luxury brands, all new and waiting to be tried out.

He showered, washed and conditioned his hair, enjoying the feel and scent of the products he used. He patted himself dry with a huge soft towel and put on a soft white robe which hung on the back of the door.

He came to sit in front of the vanity in his bedroom to dry his hair. He’d learned a lot from the internet and knew how to use mousse and barrel brushes with his drier to produce a set of soft waves which framed his face.

“It’s a bit mousey,” he thought as he inspected the final effect in the mirror. “I wonder if I should get it coloured... or perhaps some blonde streaks like the other girls.”

He stopped that thought. “Other girls?” Where had *that* come from? Was he forgetting that he was a girl by force, not by birth or choice? He shook his head, decided to park that thought and went to look in the dressing room to see what he should wear.

“Goodness, what a selection.” He whistled in admiration as he took in the racks of clothes there. “Some of these dresses must have cost a fortune.”

He dismissed the long dresses. He was dressing to have dinner with Rosalind, not formally for dinner.

“It’s going to take forever to look through this lot,” he thought. “I don’t know if I’ve a spare month to try everything on.”

He looked further and despite his initial reluctance, the sight of all these clothes, the dresses and shirts, the tops and shoes, excited him. And then he realised that time was passing. He went to the drawers, guessing that there would be some equally delightful surprises there.

“Goodness!” he exclaimed softly as he took in the styles and the colours, folded neatly in matching sets; bras and panties, in several styles. “There’s enough here for every occasion.”

Underneath the lingerie, he found a couple of black boxes, plain and unremarkable but clearly put there for him to find. He opened one and found something wobbly fitted into a plastic mould. He touched it with his finger, finding it to be soft and pliant, but with real substance. He picked it up.

“It’s a breast!” he gasped. “I wonder if this is what they really feel like.” He put it back and explored further.

He held up a silky teddy, almost transparent, and couldn’t help smiling. “There’s something for every occasion, including the most decadent too.”

He decided to dress a little more conservatively and quickly slipped into panties and matching bra in pale pink shade, with nude tights. Some more silicone breast forms were in the same drawer; some were bigger than others.

“I’d be overbalanced.” He rejected the big ones and placed some modestly sized ones in his bra, settling the new weight on his chest. “I guess these are going to become my best friends.”

He padded back into the dressing room and selected a plain light denim shirt-waisted dress with buttons down the front and a high-collared neck which he left unfastened. There were some matching blue sandals with wedge heels and an open toe. He

tried them on and admired the deep red of his toenails through the thin tights he'd chosen.

He checked himself in the mirror. "I do look good," he thought as he watched the way his hair swung loosely over his shoulders and the swell of his breasts made the dress hang as if he really had a figure.

Makeup was easy. Foundation and a little contouring to enhance his cheekbones came first. He remembered what he'd been told and used black kohl over and under his eyes, into his wet line too. He used a dark pewter shade over it on his top lid and added a little silver sparkle to the inner corner. Several coats of sooty black mascara added the final touch to his eyes.

He outlined his lips with a pencil. This was a new skill from his lessons on the internet. He drew outside his natural lip line, making them look larger than they were. He wasn't quite sure of the effect or if Rosalind would approve but he did it anyway and finished off with a pale shade of lipstick, covered with gloss.

He checked the time. It was after half-past seven and with a final spray of perfume, he set off down the stairs.

"Oooh, I like that." Rosalind watched him as he walked across the room into her waiting arms for a hug and air kisses like old friends. "That's a lovely look; I knew you'd fit in."

"Thank you but I don't really know what I have to fit in with. I only know a rough outline of the things you do."

"And I know that you're sceptical about it all." Rosalind handed him a glass of wine.

"I think the word you heard me use was probably charlatan," Dylan admitted. "I didn't mean to be hurtful, but it's been hard for me to change in the way that my stepmother wants me to."

"Of course, and I do think you're very brave."

"She didn't leave me any choices."

"I know, and it all must seem so strange." Rosalind's eyes radiated such concern and gentleness

that Dylan felt himself willing that he could be seduced into her world.

"It's strange but I'm finding it increasingly comfortable, now that I'm away from home." Dylan listened to himself admitting things he'd never even acknowledged in private. "I can't wait to work my way through all the clothes in your wardrobes."

"I'll remember to leave you plenty of time to try everything," Rosalind said. "If there's anything else that you want, please tell me and I'll arrange it."

"That's really kind," Dylan said. "I didn't think that I'd ever get the hang of makeup but now I find it fascinating."

"I love the look you have tonight." Rosalind poured a little more wine into their glasses. "That's the sort of thing I want you to do when we have clients or an appearance."

"I found myself fantasising about having blonde streaks," Dylan confessed.

"That can be arranged if you'd like," Rosalind said. "I'd like you to get used to wearing a wig sometimes too. There will be occasions when I want you all in black from the tips of your toes to the top of your head. At other times, I may need you to be all in white, from shoes to hair, with the palest of makeup."

"I know, and with the heaviest of black eye makeup."

"That always works." Rosalind allowed herself a giggle.

"Why all black?" Dylan asked. "And why all white?"

"It's about meeting people's expectations," Rosalind said. "Look at me now. I hope that I look like a reasonably attractive middle-aged lady. My hair is superbly cut and styled, with good colour. My jewellery is expensive but tasteful and I'm wearing a designer casual dress and heels."

"You look really elegant."

“But this would never do when I’m working,” Rosalind replied. “I have to look more eccentric and wear a costume; it’s like a uniform for the job.”

“Do you always wear the same thing?”

“Of course not,” Rosalind laughed. “That would be boring; I like to play with my image all the time. The key is to look a little eccentric, other-worldly, and to give an aura which harmonizes with whatever the client expects.”

“I think I’m beginning to realise that there’s a lot more to you than I ever realised.”

“Why thank you,” Rosalind beamed. “I do think I provide good value to my clients.”

The chimes signalled that their evening meal had arrived.

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They chatted over the meal; small talk with nothing serious at all. When it was over, they retired to a lounge with huge windows overlooking a lake.

“This is a fabulous house; have you always lived here alone?”

“It was never my intention.” Rosalind looked sad. “I intended it to be shared, but then Afghanistan happened.” She suppressed a tear and hesitated. “It was all to be so different, but then he didn’t come back; a bomb, something they called an improvised explosive device ended all my plans.”

“I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have asked.”

“It’s okay.” Rosalind recovered. “It’s how I got into this. I seemed to hear him, almost to see him. It was like messages from beyond, telling me what to do.”

“You must have loved him a lot.”

“He was my world.” She paused. “But then I realised that if I could hear him, maybe there were others seeking something like that, but they couldn’t hear it for themselves. I discovered that I could when I was near them. It was as if I were the receiver for a distant signal.”

“That must have been impossible to explain.”

“I never tried,” Rosalind said. “I’d have sounded as if I were mad. Gradually, I evolved into the person I am now. It was never planned; it wasn’t something I intended but I know I can bring comfort to people and so I carry on.”

“But not everyone can be receiving messages like that.”

“No, and I can’t fake messages, so when I’m faced with someone like that, I must improvise. I admit it. I fake it to give comfort and maybe to give someone an excuse to move on.”

“When you describe it like that, I think my use of the word ‘charlatan’ was cruel and misplaced.”

“You’re forgiven.” Rosalind smiled. “It’s not something that I ever envisioned doing. I trained as an actuary and statistician but that was long ago.”

“And you do past life regression too.”

“Don’t ask me to explain that one,” Rosalind said. “I fell into it by accident.”

“I’m going to ask you to explain,” Dylan replied.

“I’m not a hypnotist and can’t pretend to be one, but the technique appears to rely on deep relaxation and guided questions.”

“I thought that someone had to be hypnotised to be able to regress.”

“I can’t do it. I’ve studied and taken courses, but hypnosis seems to be beyond me. I’ve no idea why,” Rosalind said. “Maybe I get light trances, but that seems to be enough.”

“And do they recover memories from past lives?”

“Usually, they believe that they do but I have to be careful not to implant false memories.” Rosalind frowned. “Some theorists say that these memories are compilations from long forgotten books or films and not at all real.”

“They must come from somewhere.”

“I don’t know where these memories come from. If they go from being pleasant to some sort of traumatic

event, I must make sure that the trauma from the past doesn't come into today."

"Wouldn't that prove some sort of reincarnation?" Dylan asked.

"Generally, the people seeking this do have a belief in reincarnation and many ancient Eastern beliefs have some reference to it," Rosalind replied. "I don't pretend that it's therapy; there's never any proof. As I said, sometimes people reinvent ideas from sources they've largely forgotten."

"Couldn't it be harmful if it uncovers something nasty?"

"It could and that's why I always have to stress that they can't bring anything back to today. I'm careful not to lead into a false memory and always record everything." Rosalind sighed. "It's only for those who really want me to do it. I'd rather do simple tarot or readings."

"So why do you need me?"

"You're important." Rosalind smiled. "You have to look right and give off the right atmosphere. You float around, looking like it's all ethereal. Above all, you look and sound sincere."

"That sounds easy, but it could be difficult."

"You've got it," Rosalind replied. "And it's up to you to learn which way the girl works best in any situation."

"Today is rehearsal time," Rosalind said a couple of mornings later as they were having coffee. "I have a group of ladies coming here for a reading. I think they want me to relay messages from beyond."

"Can you do that?"

"I can always come up with something comforting," Rosalind said. "I know who they are, and I do my research."

"So where do I come in?"

"I want you all in white for this one. You'll be largely silent and use a lot of gestures. I may look at you intently, in which case you'll stare fixedly into my eyes as if we're communicating. Don't say anything

and don't let your gaze waver, whatever happens, until I drop my gaze.

"What do I do then?"

"You swoon or faint; act as if you're disorientated and come round slowly." Rosalind gestured with the back of her hand against her brow. "Listen to what I'm saying to them and act accordingly."

"You're putting a lot of faith into my skills to improvise."

"I think there's a performer inside you who's just waiting to come out." Rosalind's face showed her approval. "And if I want you to get out of the room, I'll say something, and you do it at once."

"Do I come back?"

"No, wait by the door as if you're recovering from some great effort. They'll see you on the way out and be sympathetic, in which case you'll thank them and say as little as possible."

"I should look as if I've been in another world?" Dylan asked.

"That's right; there's no script, improvise and vamp it. Now go and get into a costume. You can wear anything at all, as long as it's all white. Take all the time you need, and I'll expect to see you sometime this afternoon."

"When are these ladies coming?"

"Oh, didn't I say? They'll be here about seven this evening for drinks. You'll serve them in the conservatory, then at eight, you'll bring them through to the library where I'll join them once they're all settled and waiting."

"Do I have to change the chairs or anything?"

"No, there's only five or six of them and they'll sit round the table. I'll enter, welcome them, and speak a little. When I hold my hand to my forehead, that's your signal to dim the lights and help me into my chair at the head of the table."

"And I stay silently somewhere in the room?"

“You’ll be standing at the other end of the table, ready to react if I stare at you.”

“That’s when I improvise and say nothing.”

“You’ve got it,” Rosalind replied. “Don’t worry; it’s all going to come easily. You’ll be doing it by instinct in a week or two.”

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Dylan went to his suite and sat to think things through. He had a rough idea of what he was expected to do.

“I think it’s going to be an experience, and this is my first time,” he told himself. “What did that actress say about getting into character? You start with the shoes. I don’t know if that’s the way I can do it, but I’ll try.”

Dylan searched through the dressing room. He tried a couple of dresses, and as soon as he’d put them on, he decided against them. He tried a long skirt and paired it with a long top with lots of lace and tiers.

Together they hung beautifully straight from the dropped shoulders of the top to his ankles. The sleeves were long too, widening at the cuffs, which had heavy tassels hanging down almost to his knees. White stockings and white Mary-Janes, old-fashioned looking with chunky heels, completed the outfit.

He laid it all on the bed and then decided that something as white as this ensemble needed pure white lingerie too. He stripped and then dressed; looking at the clock and deciding that he’d better hurry a little to be ready in time.

“All white, she said,” he remembered. “I wonder if that means hair too.” He looked again in the dressing room and remembered some wigs in one cupboard. “I watched some videos about how to wear a wig; this is the time to find out if I’ve learned anything.”

Dressed in his lingerie, he quickly completed his makeup. Black eyes, with the usual overdone mascara; paler foundation, contouring and powder; pale lips defined with liner to make them look fuller than



they really were, and then it was time for him to try the wig.

He fastened his hair in a wig cap and pinned it tightly to his head, being careful to get all his hair concealed. The wig was long and fell in loose waves. It was long enough to reach his waist, with bangs long and slightly waved. It had a lace front and looked like it had been styled but never worn. He knew to cut the lace closely.

“Spirit gum; it must be here somewhere.” He searched through the cupboard until he found some.

He painted the gum onto the centre of his forehead and in front of his ears. He knew to let it get tacky and decided to use it generously.

“Rosalind would never forgive a wardrobe malfunction,” he said to himself as he flicked the long hair over his shoulder, then positioned the cap over his head.

He could feel the glue gripping and touched up the edges in front of his ears. The fringe seemed to have a mind of its own as he placed the hairline carefully in place. A couple of flicks with a broad toothed comb, and then a spray of lacquer fixed that. He sat back and looked left and right.

“That looks quite real,” he said, feeling pleased with himself. “You’re too darn pretty to ever have been a boy.”

He dressed quickly and touched up his lipstick. On an impulse, he picked a long white silk scarf from a drawer and wrapped it over his shoulders, allowing it to hang loosely over his chest.

With a last look in the mirror, he took a deep breath and headed out for Rosalind’s approval or otherwise.

“My, you do scrub up well,” Rosalind gasped when she saw him walking across the room towards her. “I think you look perfect, and my guests will love you. Remember to be ethereal and don’t talk too much.”

“I’m so nervous,” Dylan replied. “You don’t think they’ll spot me for a fake as soon as they come in?”

“They’ll never know and even if they do, they’ll think you’re one of my eccentricities.”

“I feel like one.” Dylan twirled, making all the frills and flounces move. “I didn’t have any white nail varnish to complete the look.”

“I wouldn’t have asked you to use it even if I’d thought about it,” Rosalind replied. “Dark blood red nails are never wrong and the contrast with your all-white dress is striking.”

She picked up a small box from her desk. “Here, try these; I think they’ll fit you.”

Dylan opened the box and found two rings with quite large red stones. He looked at her.

“One is for the middle finger of your left hand; the other is for the ring finger of your right,” she explained. “I want you to wear them all the time. They’re to remind you that you’re a girl. You’ll feel them, you’ll see them, and they’ll keep reminding you how to behave.”

“I might not always be a good actor,” Dylan replied.

“That’s why they’re there.” Rosalind took his hands and, one after another, pushed the rings over his knuckle and into place on his fingers. “They’re tight but that’s good. They’re not meant to be taken off.”

“They look very feminine.” Dylan admired them.

“So, they’ll remind you that you have to be very feminine too,” Rosalind said. “I was very sceptical when Marcia suggested you as my assistant, but I detected a feminine spirit buried somewhere inside you and my need for a new assistant was solved.”

“What happened to the lady who used to work for you?”

“She decided that she had the powers to set up on her own and she worked *with* me, not *for* me, just as you do.”

“Weren’t you angry when she set up on her own?” Dylan asked. “Surely that would make her a rival who knew all your secrets?”

"I wasn't upset; I was really pleased for her. The more of us there are, then the greater acceptance there will be of our powers, such as they are."

"But there's only a certain amount of clients to serve?"

"There are more than enough to go round, and many will come to several of us," Rosalind replied. "We aren't rivals; we complement each other."

The doorbell sounded far away at the front of the house.

"That's your signal," Rosalind said. "Take them through to the lounge and offer them wine and nibbles. Let them talk and don't say anything if you don't have to. I'll call you when it's time to bring them into the library to see me. Now I'm going to prepare."

"You must be Dylan." A very elegant lady stood at the door. "I've heard so much about you from Rosalind. You must be really special."

"That's really kind." Dylan did a little bob, like a small curtsy, and stood back to usher her inside.

"I'm Mrs Kayak, but you can call me Libby," the lady said. "My friends are going to be here in a minute or two. I think there'll be five of us."

"I'll show you through to the lounge." Dylan indicated the way.

"I'll see myself through; I think I can hear another car on the drive."

Sure enough, the other four ladies arrived in quick succession. Dylan served them and stood back to allow them to chatter between themselves. If he ever understood what Rosalind did, their excitement gave him a new insight; new respects for her ability to give intelligent people like these the degree of comfort they were seeking.

A bell rang, signalling that it was time for them to go through to the library. Dylan ushered them into the darkened room where they took their places round the table. He stood back, noting that there was an empty chair and an object covered by a black cloth at the head of the table.

They took their places and Dylan went to wait beside the door.

Rosalind walked in. She had changed and was dressed all in black, with diaphanous layers settling elegantly around her, black scarves round her neck and over her shoulders. She moved slowly, never looking around and making no eye contact. Her gold bracelets jangled on each wrist as she sat and bowed her head.

She remained still and silent for some minutes, aware but 'unaware' of the eyes upon her. These ladies knew what to expect but Dylan watched in awe and fascination. She sighed and removed the cloth, revealing a shining crystal ball, opaque and resting on a wooden stand.

"Dylan, you may withdraw," she said. "Ladies, would you please place your hands on the table, with your left hand touching your neighbour's right," Rosalind said softly and waited as they complied.

Dylan heard the deep silence descending as he closed the door behind him and settled to wait.

"That was truly transcendent." Libby was the first to emerge from the library, as Dylan hurried to be ready to serve them again.

"And she's so perceptive," another lady's voice answered. "How she could have known that Gerald would have expected me to take my own responsibility, I'll never know."

Dylan handed out the small snacks and filled wine glasses for them, listening but not taking part in their conversations. They seemed to be exhilarated by their session with Rosalind, who did not appear with them from the library.

Dylan took an opportunity to look in there after they were all served and chattering. The room was empty, and the crystal ball was gone.

"Rosalind usually joins us after she's taken time to allow her spirit guides to take their leave." Libby came up behind him. "She says it's wrong to make them leave or to ignore them if they have more to say."

"She hasn't discussed that with me," Dylan replied, wondering what he was expected to say to these ladies.

"I expect she's waiting for your consciousness to develop naturally," Libby said gently, as if expecting him to understand the concept.

Fortunately, he was spared any further thoughts on the matter as Rosalind came into the room. She had changed from her all-black garb and now wore a red and black dress, entirely in keeping with her guests.

"That was truly a wonderful experience." Libby took Rosalind's hand and squeezed it.

"I'm so glad." Rosalind was surrounded by all the others, wanting to express their appreciation. "As you remember from being here in the past, I don't always know what the spirits have been saying to you all. I'm quite exhausted from being their conduit."

The conversation flowed, with Rosalind listening rather than leading any discussion. Dylan worked the room, passing plates, re-filling glasses, and listening to snippets of their conversation. Whatever had gone on in the library, it had left a huge impression on these ladies.

Were they the wealthy and gullible, or was there more happening than he imagined?

"I think you made a good impression on our clients," Rosalind said as Dylan was clearing away the glasses and plates after they had all left. "I'm really pleased."

"I don't really know what I did," Dylan replied.

"You were yourself, perfectly still and calm, listening and allowing them to talk to you. You look perfect for the occasion. I like you in all white."

"I quite liked dressing up," Dylan admitted, smiling and doing a twirl so that the layers and flounces of his skirt and blouse flew round him. "It's like I became a different person."

"Libby really liked you and she's asked if you can be here when I do her regression."

“You’ll have to explain that to me.”

“Past life regression is a strange phenomenon as I think I said before,” Rosalind explained. “I never know what’s going to come out, but I always have to be careful not to allow any past trauma to creep into the present.”

“I think I understand.”

“I’ve never had a regression go to anyone who could be historically verifiable,” Rosalind continued. “Of course, the time period can be recognised but I often wonder if that’s for real or if it’s a collection of half-remembered ideas from books or movies.”

“Are you saying that people have preferred times to regress to?”

“No, sometimes a person will regress to several different times and sometimes to a place which neither they nor I can understand.”

“Does that mean that they come more than once?”

“I do have a certain reputation.” Rosalind smiled. “Some ladies, like Libby, ask for a session every few months.”

“Do they always go back to the same thing?”

“Almost never. That’s what makes it so fascinating.”

“Marcia wanted to call in later this week.” Rosalind sprung the surprise on Dylan a couple of days later. “I told her that we were too busy but that she could come in a few weeks.”

“What day?”

“I told her I’d call when I knew our schedule.”

“I don’t want her to see me like this,” Dylan reacted quickly.

“Why not? You look beautiful.”

“But I’m her stepson, don’t you understand? I mean it’s been fun being here with you, but she turned me into this girl thing. I didn’t want her to do it but she’s such a dominant person.”

“Surely that’s the wrong way to consider it. She saw something in you. I think she saw something special, and she knew I was looking for an assistant and companion, so here you are. You’re not unhappy, are you?”

“No, you’ve been so lovely to me but I’m a boy; I don’t know how much longer I can go on with this masquerade.”

“I want you to carry on.” Rosalind hugged him. “I think you’re amazing. The way you’ve adapted to dealing with my clients is perfect. I’m coming to think of you almost as my manager.”

“Just because I’ve re-arranged your schedule and taken over booking venues and personal appointments, that’s hardly managing you.”

“You’ve done more than that. Before, I was running around everywhere to fit things in. Now I know where I’m going. It’s calmer and easier and above all, I know what and when I’m going to be paid.”

“I’ve only applied a bit of logic to it all.”

“And I’m grateful. I wish I’d had you years ago.”

“But Marcia...” Dylan looked pained.

“How would you feel if I helped you to deal with her?” Rosalind smiled as if about to reveal a secret. “I’ve always suspected that she’s basically vain and insecure underneath that strong personality.”

“I don’t understand what that’s got to do with it.”

“I have a plan, if you’re willing to go along with it.” Rosalind patted the chair next to her for Dylan to sit down.

“I get the feeling that you’re going to be devious and that I’m not going to like it.” Dylan smiled uncertainly.

“She thinks that she’s got you on the run. You’re unhappy and insecure, heading towards mental problems. She wants to use it to deny you your inheritance.”

“I didn’t want to pretend to be a girl but I’m not having mental health problems. I thought it was going to be awful but being here with you, having a pur-

pose and something to do, has been something I never expected to enjoy so much.”

“So, if we play that up, Marcia may see her plan backfiring.”

“I don’t see how.”

“It’s simple. When she sees you, you’ll be the most perfect young lady, without any trace of maleness about you.”

“I don’t know if I can do that.” Dylan’s face showed distaste. “I don’t want to go deeper into this.”

“I’m not pushing you deeper. I’m suggesting you make Marcia think that you’re completely brain-washed and that she’s succeeding.”

“I can see the logic, but how would I do that?”

“If you want to play a role, the actors say that you start with the shoes.” Rosalind laughed at his puzzled look. “I mean you appear to be the most well-adjusted and feminine creature ever invented.”

“That would take a magician, a wizard...”

“Or how about we try something like hypnosis?”

“Okay,” said Dylan slowly. “Let’s try it.”

“I have to say that I’m not really a hypnotist, but I do use light trance and relaxation regularly,” Rosalind said. “I can’t do the stuff where the subject barks like a dog or flaps like a chicken.”

“So, what *can* you do?”

“I can do a deep relaxation with you. I think it could ease your mind and make it easier for you to accept the changes that you’ve gone through,” Rosalind said. “It could help you towards the changes to come.”

“Can we try that now?”

“Rosalind took him to her study and drew the drapes so that the light was subdued. Dylan reclined on a couch as Rosalind sat opposite him. Slowly she began to speak, giving him images of gentle breezes and easy colours in scenic locations.

He found it hard to concentrate but as she dropped her voice almost to a whisper, he tried harder to listen and soon found himself fading into her words. He had no idea what she was saying on one level. On a deeper level, everything was seeping into his subconscious.

Images and scents, feelings and sensations. all passed through his mind. It was so pleasant; he knew time was passing but there were no cares in the world.

Then it was over. "What did you do?" he asked.

"I only helped you to accept things and enjoy them," Rosalind said. "Are you ready to become the perfect young lady now?"

"Okay," Dylan said uncertainly. "How do I do that?"

"Leave it to me," Rosalind replied. "I'll call in a few favours. Be prepared to have a busy few days."

"Libby's called and asked if you can schedule her and a couple of her friends for a regression session soon." Dylan hesitated when he saw that Rosalind had a visitor.

"This is Katia," Rosalind introduced him. "She's one of the favours I called in."

"Hi, I'm pleased that you could come." Dylan shook her hand formally but looked puzzled.

"She's an image consultant but don't let that put you off," Rosalind said. "I've asked her to help you decide on the image you'd like to project."

"You mean for Marcia." Dylan understood.

"Not only for Marcia but for yourself too," Katia said. "Rosalind has explained a little. I think I understand because I had a stepmother who was difficult too."

"But I bet yours didn't get you into a mess like mine."

"No, you are unique as far as I can tell," Katia replied. "I think I'm going to enjoy working with you."

"I hope so," Rosalind said. "I'll leave you two together and go call Libby."

"I think you've a space next week," Dylan said. "The diary's on the desk."

"I can't believe that you're a boy," Katia said once they were alone. "I'd never have guessed. Don't worry, the secret's safe with me."

"Thanks, but I'm not sure what you can do for me." Dylan sat down beside her.

"I'm here to help you get comfortable with your appearance. I can help you with mannerisms and gestures, although you seem to be doing pretty well without me. I'm also here to help you decide on your image."

"That would be good; I don't really know who I am anymore." Dylan laughed at the absurdity of this. "Rosalind has had me change my appearance depending on what she's doing."

"She tells me that you're very adaptable and that your makeup skills are lovely."

"I'm surprised how much I like wearing makeup and changing my looks," Dylan said. "I guess that makes you think I'm weird?"

"Not at all; it's a fascinating subject. I had to study but you look like a natural."

"I guess I discovered something," Dylan replied. "I don't know what made me admit that to you. I've hardly dared to admit it to myself."

"If I asked you to tell me how you'd like to see yourself as a woman, what does that picture look like?"

"That's difficult. I think I'm forever going to be changing. A woman can be so many things whereas a man is stuck most of the time."

"That's a profound attitude," Katia replied. "I'm here to get you ready to meet your stepmother though. You can be the chameleon afterwards."

"Okay." Dylan liked her down-to-earth attitude. "I want to look like I'm confident and comfortable. I don't want her to think that she's won by forcing me to be someone I don't want to be."

"That's all in your mind. I can't help with that, but I *can* help you to achieve a look that says all the things you'd like it to."

"Then I can hide behind that image."

"Of course. If I'm successful, you'll do more than hide, you'll become the woman behind that image."

"That's a nice idea." Dylan thought for a moment. "I want to look feminine above all." He hesitated. "I want to look as if I'm using every beauty aid there is but that I'm comfortable with it all. I don't want to look like a drag queen. I want to be real, but in an artificial way."

"I think I know what you mean," Katia smiled at him. "I like the way you're thinking too."

"I'm glad you do," Dylan replied. "I can hardly imagine all that entails."

"It means nails and hair for a start," Katia said. "You want to look well-groomed but expensively, so I'll work on that. You'll have to trust me though. Are you blonde or brunette? Please don't say redhead."

"I'm blonde of course. I know it's a stereotype but there's truth in stereotypes."

"Be ready tomorrow morning," Katia said. "You're in for an exciting ride."

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Katia picked him up early and drove to an exclusive resort and salon outside town.

"Are you sure they'll let me in here?" Dylan asked, looking at the luxury of the place.

"It's my salon," Katia said. "Once you're in, you have several treatments scheduled and a few decisions to make. It's going to take a couple of days but you're going to be leaving here as close as I can make it to your ideal woman."

"That's scary." Dylan felt his tummy fluttering.

"Not as scary as being less than your ideal woman," Katia teased.

“I think I’m going to enjoy all this,” he said as they entered.

“I want you to be certain on this before we start.” Katia sat him down with coffee in the salon’s rest area. “Let’s think of three blondes. There’s the statement blonde like early Madonna or Marilyn. There’s the sleek business blonde, smooth and perfect and then there’s the trophy blonde girlfriend. Don’t think; just answer quickly? Which are you?”

“I’m the trophy girlfriend,” Dylan answered instinctively. “But I don’t think I want to be a girlfriend.”

“Never mind that for now.” Katia smiled with him at that last thought. “Trust me and we’ll create that look.”

“This could be a bumpy ride.” Dylan remembered what she’d said previously.

“But it’s all fun and in a good cause. Your first session is a full body wax with some electrolysis to get rid of nasty hairs.”

“I don’t shave, hardly ever,” Dylan said. “I guess I didn’t get the genes for a beard and moustache.”

“We’ll inspect that carefully,” Katia replied. “I assume you have some body hair though.”

“Not a lot, just in the normal places.”

“Don’t worry; we’ll get rid of all the hair below your eyelashes.”

“I guess that’s going to hurt.”

“Maybe a little, but it’s in a good cause.”

“You weren’t kidding.” Dylan, dressed in one of the resort’s robes, joined her in the lounge a couple of hours later. “I didn’t think that the hairs from down there could hurt so much. They ripped them out mercilessly.”

“That’s what they’re supposed to do but don’t worry; having it done every month won’t hurt as much.”

“Every month?” Dylan gasped. “You mean it’s not all over?”

“Hair grows,” Katia reminded him.

“I guess,” Dylan said slowly, his hand straying to feel the new smoothness between his legs. “It feels different, but I think I like it.”

“Wait until you’re outside and a gentle breeze blows under your skirt.” Katia’s smile said that she was trying to provoke him.

“I’m not going to respond to that,” Dylan said, rubbing his eyebrow. “I still think that they took too much off my eyebrows. Heavy ones are more fashionable now.”

“Of course, but what you have now is a higher brow line. You can use it as a guide and fill it out with makeup to whatever thickness you like.”

“That makes sense,” Dylan said. “What’s next? I’m hoping the rest of this makeover’s not going to be as painful.”

“Nails and hair are the next things.”

“I’ve gotten used to nails. I feared them at first but now I’m so used to having them that I think I’d feel wrong without them.” Dylan held out his hand. “That’s an awful admission from a boy.”

“They look good on you, and I’ve noticed how you use your hands quite naturally. They don’t seem awkward at all.”

“I’ve learned to use a purse,” Dylan admitted. “The one thing I can’t do with these nails is use pockets like I used to. Car keys are a nightmare.”

“What about the colour?” Katia asked. “You could have all kinds of decorations on them or even a jewel or two.”

“Rosalind likes me to keep them dark red. She thinks they fit any situation and always looks good. I think I agree.”

“And I can’t disagree either.” Katia stood. “Are you ready for the next part of your makeover?”

“Trophy blonde girlfriend, here I come.” Dylan stood to follow her.

“First, you’re going to have a backwash,” Katia announced. “That’s to make sure all kinds of products that you may have used on your hair are washed away. We don’t want one chemical to interfere with anything I’m going to use.”

Dylan laid back and felt the warm water flowing through his hair. “I could get to like this,” he said, feeling Katia’s fingers massaging his scalp.

“Now I need to get the excess water out of your hair.” Katia wrapped his head in a towel and gently patted it to absorb the water.

Dylan moved to a chair in the salon, in front of a large mirror and bright lights.

“And now the real process starts.” Katia began to comb his hair and fasten it in sections.

Taking a bowl from the side, with a long-handled brush, she began to work, coating his hair from root to tip, and wrapping it together. Slowly and steadily, she worked until all his hair was covered.

“Now, after I’ve smooshed it through, we leave it to develop.”

“Smooshed? What’s that?”

“I don’t know where the word comes from. I guess it means I massage through, making sure that all the hair is covered and there aren’t any patches that I’ve missed.”

“Is that it?” Dylan asked. “It sounds like a very descriptive word.”

“Not by a long way,” Katia explained. “This is only the first stage to strip your hair of its natural colour. I do the ends and mid sections first, then when they’ve started to develop, I do the roots. The hairline is last of all. That’s the weakest hair and I don’t want to damage it.”

“Is that it?”

“No, you must wait about forty-five minutes. I’ll be checking it regularly though,” Katia said. “I’ll get one of the girls to do a fill on your nails while you’re waiting.”

"I want the same dark red," Dylan said. "Maybe you could ask her to make them a little longer this time too?"

"You can tell her yourself," Katia said. "Relax and enjoy being pampered."

Dylan waited through the development period. His nails were started and interrupted as his hair was checked, then his hair was washed and rinsed again.

"Don't worry; it's going to be a pale yellow next," Katia said. "It will look horrible but that's not the result."

"That's not nice." Dylan agreed.

"I did warn you but don't worry, there's a lot to do before you're finished," Katia said. "The real magic starts when I put toner onto your hair."

"What's the toner for?"

"It's to give the shade you want," Katia replied. "In your case, I'm going to use different ones in strands to give a naturally unnatural variation across your head."

"Naturally unnatural; that sounds wrong," Dylan said.

"It's going to look wonderful, believe me," Katia replied, working the colour into the strands of his hair, sectioning and making sure that the colour spread evenly.

She stood back to check her work when the whole head was covered. "You said you wanted something really feminine, so this is how I do it. It's going to be a light mink shade with some lighter and some darker strands. It's something that will stand out everywhere but not because it looks false."

"I think I may have gone too far." Dylan looked up at her in shock.

"It's too late now; trophy girlfriend's hair is going to be revealed shortly. One more wash, then conditioner and blow dry. Don't worry, you'll look fabulous."

"I'm hoping that I can act fabulous," Dylan said softly. "I'm not sure I knew what I was letting myself in for."

“Too late now; you’ll knock ‘em dead, girl.”

“Just stand still and let me look at you,” Rosalind said as soon as she saw Dylan. “I love that look. Marcia’s going to hate you.” She laughed and hugged him.

“Are you sure it’s not too much?” Dylan asked.

“You look really beautiful,” Rosalind replied. “I’m having my eyelashes done this evening and I’m going to get Alicia to do yours as well.”

“I don’t think I know what that is,” Dylan asked.

“It’s really lovely. You’ve not used false lashes yet, have you?”

“No but |I think they look lovely,” Dylan said.

“Alicia does semi-permanent eyelash extensions,” Rosalind said. “Look at mine.”

“I always thought they were really luxuriant.”

“That’s because she’s good,” Rosalind replied. “I’ll ask her to do yours this evening when she’s done mine. You’ll love them but you must be careful because they do fall out, and they do need re-doing regularly.”

“It’s so hard being a girl,” Dylan sighed. “I never realised that there were so many things you had to do to maintain the look.”

“Not every girl has the time or the desire to do these things,” Rosalind said. “It’s pretty high maintenance. I do it because I must be a little larger than life to attract clients.”

“I can understand that but why am I doing it too?”

“You’re my assistant. You must be striking.”

“Thanks; that means I can tell myself that I’m doing it for my job, not simply because I’m becoming a vain female impersonator.” Dylan giggled at the thought. “I’m feeling silly. Maybe it goes with being so blonde?”

“Okay, you might as well go all the way,” Rosalind said. “Alicia does lip fillers too; I’ll ask her to do yours.”

“Won’t that hurt?”

“Probably it will hurt a little, but it will give you beautifully full and shaped lips. Don’t worry, she’s an artist. She won’t make you look strange; she’ll make your lips a little fuller so that when you’re fully made-up, they’ll look luscious and kissable.”

“I’m not sure I want to be kissable.”

“I think you’re going to want to try out your power as a woman before we’re too much older.”

“Don’t say that; you’re frightening me.”

“Okay, maybe you don’t want to be kissable,” Rosalind replied. “That’s not a problem but you don’t want to be lonely, and I wasn’t saying that you had to want boys to kiss you.”

Dylan thought for a few moments. “Do you think I dare do all of that, the eyelashes, the lip fillers. It’s all too girly.”

“So said the glamorous blonde with the long red nails.”

“Point taken. Let’s do it all.”

“Do you think I’ve gone too far?” Dylan was sitting across from Rosalind as they went through their schedule. “Am I too feminine?”

“I think you’re developing beautifully.”

“Am I only developing? I thought I’d gone about as far as I can go.” Dylan ran his fingers through his hair. “I mean, am I too blonde and too obsessed with how I look and how I dress?”

“You’re becoming exactly the girl I wanted you to be when I agreed that you could come and work for me.”

“You’re avoiding my question.”

“No, I’m not; women change all the time. Fashions change, hair styles change; it’s only natural. You’ll change too, no matter how feminine you think you are now.”

“I do worry...”

“Then don’t worry.” Rosalind took his hand and squeezed it gently. “Let’s work out this week’s schedule. You are who you are now, and it would take a lot of work and time to change you back.”

“First up is Libby’s regression,” Dylan said. “You’ll have to explain what I’ve to do and what to expect.”

“We usually do it in the evening, and keep everything dark,” Rosalind said. “I want you all in black for that and you can wear that long chestnut wig that’s in the dressing room.”

“I’ve never had really dark hair,” Dylan said. “Won’t it make me look old?”

“Not if you don’t act old,” Rosalind replied. “I don’t think you know how to do that anyway. Keep your makeup pale, with darker lips. Your usual heavy eye makeup will be fine but wear all black and floor-length.”

“Okay, I can do that, but what do I do; what should I expect?” Dylan asked. “If you’re going to hypnotise Libby, how do I know you won’t hypnotise me too?”

“I don’t use hypnosis; I’ve never really been able to do that,” Rosalind replied. “I use deep relaxation and it takes some time to achieve the state of relaxation that I want, but there’s nothing more to it.”

“So why do people want it?”

“I guess they think that looking into their past may help them deal with today. It allows them to explore their inner minds and of course, I always tell them that they can’t bring any trauma from the past into today.”

“So, it’s a way of exploring the subconscious?”

“You could say that.” Rosalind looked serious. “People say it gives them some insights into the way they feel and react to things in their daily life. Deep relaxation gets past the ever-running thought and worries about everyday stuff that we all have.”

“So, it’s slow and gentle.”

“You’ll see when Libby’s here.”

“After that, there’s the audience that you arranged in the spa resort hotel. I think you said to limit it to

twenty people and when I checked with them, you had all the places filled.”

“You know what to do there; you’ll be the hostess and after you’ve introduced me, you gently pass through the audience, allowing them to ask questions.”

“How do I know that they’ll ask the right questions?”

“Don’t worry,” Rosalind replied. “Most of them will have been before and will know what they can ask. They know I won’t answer personal questions in that situation.”

“How do I dress for that one?”

“However you like,” Rosalind replied. “You can be the complete trophy girlfriend; I’d like that.”

“Would your audience?”

“They’ll love it; I’d guess that they’ll want your number for their son or their favourite nephew.”

“I’m only interested if they’re filthy rich.”

“I knew you’d become the trophy girlfriend soon.”

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Dylan took ages to get ready for Libby’s arrival. He didn’t know what to expect from her regression but knew what he was expected to do.

“Everything has to be black,” he reminded himself as he wrapped a towel around his hair and another around his body after emerging from a long and very scented bath.

He’d laid it all out in his dressing room. A black bra and panties to match, black stockings and a garter belt were ready and waiting. His dress was floor-length, like the white one he’d worn before, it was full, but straight with layers of lace and tulle. The sleeves were long and tight, with button cuffs. Black stiletto heels completed the look.

He fastened his hair in a wig cap; feelings of regret filled his mind as he did so. He’d loved being so blonde. It seemed to raise his spirits, not that he was



ever downcast since he'd escaped from Marcia's malignant influence.

The chestnut brown wig was really dark. He looked at it on its stand, wondering if the pale makeup would look how Rosalind wanted him to appear. He started with his routine, keeping it pale, with minimal shading and contouring.

Making up his eyes was easy. It was second nature now to make them up with black kohl under and over his eyes, and then mascara over his extended lashes added to the effect. He drew his eyebrows heavier and darker than he would usually have done.

"I should have asked Rosalind for black contact lenses," he thought as he inspected the effect in the mirror.

He lined his lips. "I'm beginning to forget what I looked like before I had the filler in my lips."

He paid careful attention to the shape, the line slightly outside his lip line, then filled with darker lipstick. He looked at his reflection and decided to put a slightly lighter shade in the centre and a slightly sparkling lip gloss to finish the effect.

"Maybe this is what Rosalind would call kissable lips." He blew a kiss to his reflection and inspected the full effect in the mirror.

He reached for the spirit glue and prepared to fit his wig. Making sure that the glue was tacky first, he slipped it over his shoulders and then into place, lapping the front slightly over his hairline, patting the lace front into place in front of his ears and across his forehead.

The wig was already styled in tumbling waves, reaching down to his shoulder blades. He tossed his head and turned from left to right, watching the hair move and falling back into place. He

"I never dressed in all black before." Dylan looked in the mirror and waved coyly to his reflection. "I do hope Rosalind approves."

He went to await Libby's arrival. He knew Rosalind would be getting ready herself and that she would remain alone to prepare. She would only emerge once

Libby was ready and awaiting her in the small study which she used for these sessions.

Walking carefully in his heels, being careful not to let them catch on the hem of his dress, he went to wait near the door.

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Libby arrived on time. Dylan heard her car on the drive and was waiting by the open door as she clicked the remote to lock her doors. They air kissed like old friends.

“You look wonderful.” Libby held onto Dylan’s arms and stood back a little. “I love that dress and your makeup is perfect.”

“I hope Rosalind will approve,” Dylan replied. “She’s been meditating for hours to be ready for you.”

“I know she takes such care,” Libby replied. “I must disappoint her because I never regress to anything exciting, but it does seem to help me resolve things in my mind.”

“You always seem so balanced,” Dylan said. “I didn’t think you were a person who needed to resolve things.”

“My dear, you know so little about me,” Libby said. “Life has lots of pressures.”

“I didn’t think... what do you do?”

“I’m a plastic surgeon; a consultant for a private hospital group,” Libby said. “I design procedures and help surgeons map out other procedures which could be complicated.”

“I didn’t realise,” Dylan said. “That must be so stressful.”

“It’s also rewarding,” Libby smiled. “If ever you think the boob fairy hasn’t been kind to you, come and see me.”

“Oh, I couldn’t...” Dylan could feel a blush under his pale makeup.

“Of course, you could,” Libby said. “I’ll tell Rosalind to persuade you. I could give you a stunning figure to go with your stunning looks.”

“I’ll take you up on it... maybe,” Dylan said, turning to lead the way as if doing so could hide his blushes.

Dylan settled Libby in the study and changed the subject as they chatted about nothing in particular, waiting for Rosalind to make her entrance. Dylan wondered if she timed it carefully, to enhance the mood of expectation.

And then she was there, dressed all in black too, with all her usual accessories, jingling and sparkling as she settled herself into a chair at the side of Libby. She nodded slightly to Dylan. That was his cue to wait outside.

Dylan could hear little through the door as Rosalind spoke. He knew that she was starting to induce that mood of deep relaxation that bypasses the conscious, so that the unconscious mind can come through.

Dylan put his ear to the door to hear more and found the voice compelling, and entrancing. Before he knew it, he was drifting away too. He was walking on a gentle path beside a pretty stream, walking upstream against the tide of time, slipping backwards through the years.

“Look down at the ground,” Rosalind said. “Look at your feet.”

Dylan did so and saw black shoes, sturdy things, with a gilt buckle decorating the front. The shoes were a bit too big, but he knew somehow that he’d inherited them. He continued to look down and saw his skirt, full and plain, almost dragging along the ground where the hem had come down. He knew it had been his big sister’s. His big sister; where did *she* come from? He couldn’t picture her.

Then he drifted away again as Rosalind’s voice grew fainter through the door. His thoughts drifted and pictures came unbidden into his mind. He saw Libby there, in business dress with a younger man. She sensed a great turmoil in his mind.

Somewhere in the recesses of his mind, Dylan remembered that this was supposed to be a past life that he was seeing, but somehow it wasn't. Another thought told him that it hadn't happened yet. That was strange.

Gradually he became aware that the session was over. Libby's voice came indistinctly through the closed door. He got up and went to bring the wine and nibbles that Rosalind had ordered. It was his job now to make small talk with Libby until Rosalind changed and re-joined them.

"That was amazing," Libby said when Rosalind came back into the room, dressed in a simple dress, far from the costume of her performance. "I could see clearly. A man, I think it was my father, or it might have been an uncle or even an employer. There was a barber's pole outside. I could see it through the window."

"That's the old sign for a surgeon." Dylan knew that.

"He was telling me something about a woman who was lying on his table, with a leather strap clenched in her teeth."

"Was she looking frightened?" Rosalind asked, the concern in her voice readily apparent.

"No, she had asked him for help with something." Libby looked puzzled. "I stood and watched as he lifted her skirts and did something with a thin wooden implement which he'd washed in soapy water. I saw it going inside her and then the picture changed."

"You said a picture changed," Rosalind said. "Was it like watching a movie?"

"It was and then it wasn't," Libby said. "I was there and then I was like a detached observer."

"I heard you sigh as if you were relieved or contented," Rosalind said. "That's when I brought you back to today."

"I did feel that." Libby looked surprised. "I saw the woman walking away. She thanked the man and walked away. That's where it ends."

“Does it mean anything to you?”

“I think it does,” Libby said. “I remember always wanting to do something medical and you know what I do now. Maybe it all came from a distant ancestor or an experience long ago and far away. It makes me content that I made good choices but there’s a lot for me to think about too.”

Libby chattered some more and then it was time for her to leave. An envelope was pushed into Rosalind’s hand. They hugged, then Libby hugged Dylan too.

“Remember my offer,” she whispered before she went through the door.

“That was a good session,” Rosalind said. “She’ll tell her friends and some of them will come too.”

“I saw something,” Dylan blurted out.

“Rosalind looked at him, her eyes saying that this was important.

“I saw Libby with a younger man. He was worrying about a secret he had. He didn’t know if he should tell her. I think he was some sort of relative.”

“Libby doesn’t have any children,” Rosalind said. “I think her favourite nephew is a dentist; could it have been him?”

“I don’t know but it was such a clear picture.”

“You’d better tell me more.”

“I was listening at the door. I seemed to drift away as you were talking to Libby. That’s when I saw it.”

“I don’t think this gift of fortune telling is catching but it sounds like you could be sensitive to something other-worldly.”

“That’s a frightening thought.”

“No, it shouldn’t be. Remember I told you that my last assistant went to run her own practise. Maybe it’s something you have a capacity for. Think of it as great humanity and a gift.”

“I’ll try but do you think I should tell Libby?” Dylan’s look said that this was an urgent question.

“Leave it with me,” Rosalind replied. “I’ll think of a way of asking her gently.”

“Please don’t tell her it came from me.”

“I won’t if you don’t want me to,” Rosalind replied. “And she told you not to forget her offer. Do you want to confide in me? What did she offer?”

“She offered to be my boob fairy,” Dylan laughed. “Can you believe it?”

“I’ve spoken to Libby.” Rosalind and Dylan were in her office, planning the next week’s events. “She was in the audience last week.”

“She’s something of an uber fan,” Dylan suggested.

“I’d prefer to think of her as a friend though,” Rosalind said. “I told her about your vision.”

“Did she laugh?”

“No, she spoke to her nephew. He’s a dentist. He was struggling to tell her that he thought he was gay. Your insight helped her to help him, and she’s really pleased.”

“I never expected that.”

“And I never expected you to be so sensitive to people. I think you may have the gift.”

“Speaking of gifts, what happened to Marcia’s visit?”

“I put her off. I said we were too busy and that you were working too hard. I actually said that I didn’t want her to upset you.”

“That was really kind,” Dylan said. “She seems to delight in doing that.”

“But if she hadn’t been so determined to upset you, you wouldn’t be here,” Rosalind reminded him. “You’d still be some lonely boy with an evil step-mother.”

“That’s one way of looking at it,” Dylan replied. “But I don’t know where I’m going with this. Am I still a boy, or am I really a girl with the wrong plumbing?”

"I can't answer that. What do you feel is the answer?"

"Like I'm a trophy girlfriend without anyone to be a friend with."

"That's profound," Rosalind said. "Is this anything to do with the way you feel your sensitivity is developing?"

"I don't know; maybe you could try regression on me, and I can probe into the past to find an answer?"

"I'm not sure that would work," Rosalind said. "I think you and I are too close."

"I'd like you to try."

"If that's what you want, I'll do it." Rosalind looked serious. "Do you want me to treat you like a client or should we do it casually?"

"I'm not sure," Dylan said slowly. "I think I'd be more receptive if you did the full deal. I love your costumes and I know that you need time to mentally prepare. I think the atmosphere would help."

"Tomorrow evening seems to be a good opportunity."

"Then it's a date," Dylan said. "I'll take time to prepare too."

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Early the next afternoon, Dylan excused himself. "I'm going to prepare for our session this evening."

"I'll call for you when I'm ready," Rosalind replied. "Shall we use the usual study?"

"I'd like that."

Dylan went to his room and stripped. He started with a long bath and then washed his hair. "My roots are starting to show," he thought before he wrapped a towel around his hair.

He patted himself dry, then tied the towel around him. "I'm doing this like a girl," he thought as he secured it over his breasts. "I wonder what that would feel like."

Dismissing the thought, he began to get ready. He laid out his prettiest lingerie, pink for a girl this time. He quickly put them on and decided on a garter belt rather than tights.

He dropped the towel from his hair and pulled mousse through it with his fingers. Taking a barrel brush and his hair drier, he began to style and shape his hair, blowing it out as fully as he could.

He took his time over his makeup. "I need to get my eyelash extensions done again next week," he thought as he looked critically in the mirror.

Working slowly and carefully, he started on his face, shaping and contouring carefully, with strategic highlighting on his cheekbones, chin and nose. He darkened his eyes in the way which now seemed so familiar with kohl and mascara.

"I'd feel naked without this eye makeup." He smiled at the realisation. "Perhaps Marcia did me a favour; I do like this look."

"I want to be really feminine tonight," he thought, as he selected a bigger size of breast form than before, feeling the weight on his shoulder straps. "I'm not sure that I'd like to have them this big all the time."

He fastened nude stockings to the tabs on his belt before stepping into a pale pink dress, tight and plain. He pulled up the zipper and smoothed the tight bodice into place. He turned in the mirror, checking left and right.

Satisfied that he looked good, he slipped pink kitten-height heels onto his feet, fastening the strap around the back. Looking at the time, he started down to the study to wait for Rosalind.

"I'm pleased to see you," Rosalind said formally. "I'll explain what we're going to do carefully. I know you've heard part of this before, but I want to be clear about what may happen. Above all, remember that you're in control all the time."

That done, Dylan was told to relax as she slowly went through suggestions of relaxation. Dylan slipped into compliance and registered mild surprise

as he allowed his mind to drift away. He saw the stream and walked alongside it, against the current.

Rosalind took him further and further, more and more relaxed, and paused when he came to a gentle waterfall and then above it, a quiet pool of still water. He looked into the water and saw reflected there a young girl, dressed in a peasant blouse and long skirt. Her hair was loose and blowing across her face in the gentle breeze.

Pictures and impressions followed. She was younger sometimes, possibly seven years or so, playing with her mother's clothes. She was older, rings on her fingers; looking through a window and waiting for a horseman to ride into a courtyard which she knew was the front of the house where she lived.

A feeling of relief came to her when she realised that he was unhurt and walking towards the door.

Images followed from different places and times. They were all fleeting, some with a tinge of sadness, others with feelings of joy and delight. It was a cavalcade over which Dylan had no control.

And then it was drawing to a close. Feelings of contentment came flowing through from the regression into the present and Dylan found himself back in the study with Rosalind looking intently at him.

"You seemed to go very deeply into your past," she said. "If you feel comfortable with your experience, I'll leave you for a while as I need to contemplate and change. These sessions really take a lot of energy from me. I think I pass it to you or my other clients and that's why you have the experience of visiting something deeply buried within yourself."

"Please come and talk to me afterwards," Dylan said. "I need a few moments to arrange my thoughts, but I need to talk it through."

"I was always female throughout that session," Dylan said. "That surprised me."

"I noticed that your breasts were bigger when you came into the room," Rosalind smiled gently. "Should I read anything into that?"

"That was only a whim. I wanted to look really good. I didn't think you'd notice."

"I could hardly fail to notice given the way you walked across the room, with your hips swaying."

"I wasn't conscious of that," Dylan replied. "But does it mean that I've left being a boy behind? Have I adapted my past to my present, or have I been born in the wrong body this time?"

"I can't answer those questions. You must allow a conclusion to form in your own mind rather than forcing things through."

"I'm so mixed up." Dylan's tears started, washing mascara down his cheek.

He dabbed at it with a tissue. "I must look such a mess," he said. "And only a girl would say something like that. I think I need to put all this out of my mind."

"I did try to warn you that sometimes these explorations can take a course different from the one we expect."

"And you told me that I couldn't bring trauma from the past." Dylan paused. "I haven't brought anything from the past. There wasn't any trauma, only a series of images."

"Are they vivid images?" Rosalind asked.

"No, they're fading fast but their essence is lingering. I'm feeling calmer with every minute that passes."

"I think you need to stop thinking and allow your subconscious to work things out."

"Was I hypnotised to find these things?" The thought hit Dylan hard.

"Not at all; I told you that I couldn't do that even when I really tried," Rosalind admitted. "You may have a degree of self-hypnosis with the two rings I gave you to wear. Remember I told you that they'd always remind you to act female whenever you realised that they were on your fingers."

"I don't remember you telling me that," Dylan said as he instinctively looked at the rings and twisted them on his fingers.

“You were deeply relaxed and that allowed your mind to wander and focus wherever it needed to go,” Rosalind said. “It was the same sort of state when you first wore the rings.”

“I guess you’re right. I need to stop trying to overthink these things and let my mind take its own course.”

“That’s a wise decision.”

“The bit I don’t understand is why I don’t feel right if I take these rings off.” Dylan said.

“That’s the effect of your self-hypnosis.” Rosalind hugged him gently.

“I don’t think I’ll ever understand girls like me.”

“Libby asks that you go and see her this evening,” Rosalind announced after they’d run through the scheduling meeting. “I said that you’d be able to go. I hope that’s all right.”

“I guess... but how do I get there?” Dylan asked.

“It’s easy to find,” Rosalind replied. “You can take my car and I’ll put the address in the satnav.”

“I’ve never driven anything as big as your car. I’m a little scared in case I bend it.”

“You can take the Mini instead then. It’s easy to drive and the satnav is just as good.” Rosalind reached into a cupboard and handed him some keys. “The house is set back from the road, but you can’t miss it. It’s the only white one in the valley.”

“Do you know why she asked to see me?”

“It’s to do with your visions of her,” Rosalind said. “I forgot to tell you that I’d told her what you detected while she was here.”

“‘Detected’ is putting it a bit strong.”

“What would you say if I told you that she called later to say that you were right and that she was able to help her favourite nephew?” Rosalind said. “He’s a dentist in town. He confided that he was reconciled to being gay. He wanted to tell her before she heard it from other people.”

“That’s a bit of a post-modern way of saying it.”

“Probably but then he is the sort of guy to struggle with things,” Rosalind said. “I know him quite well; he’s my dentist too.”

“But I still don’t get why she wants to see me.”

“Whatever, you should go. She’s a good client and a nice person and it’s important to keep your friends.”

Some hours later, Dylan sat behind the wheel of the Mini. He’d dressed carefully, this time in a little black dress, tightly fitted in the way he’d come to like. His makeup was perfect as usual and as he sat there, he realised he’d chosen the larger breast forms.

He thought of going back to change them but decided that she’d probably never notice. He sat for a few moments, making sure that he was familiar with the controls. He slipped his feet out of his black stiletto heels and replaced them with ballet flats for the drive.

“Welcome.” Libby pulled Dylan into a warm embrace as soon as she admitted him to her home. I’m so glad you came.”

“Thanks.” Dylan looked around. “You have a lovely home.”

“Let’s go through.” Libby took his arm and took him to a lounge where the lighting was low, and the music played softly. “Rosalind told me of your vision and I’m so grateful.”

“I hardly dared to mention it,” Dylan admitted. “It seemed to come from nowhere, but the thought was so compelling.”

“I think you’re getting Rosalind’s gift.”

“I don’t think so.” Dylan shook his head. “The message or whatever it was should have gone to Rosalind and got channelled to me because her mind was busy.”

“Well put, but I don’t believe you.” Libby poured wine and handed him a glass. “I’d like to reward you and you know what I do each day.”

“You’re the boob doctor,” Dylan laughed. “And you think I need some bigger ones.”

"That's one way of putting it but I do all kinds of facial surgery too. It would be boring if all I did was breast after breast."

"Of course; I didn't mean to sound rude," Dylan said. "I'm grateful but I don't think it's for me."

"You'd be doing me a great favour. I have a vacant slot and a student who needs to learn the newest technique. I need a volunteer and there'd be no charge."

"May I think about it?" Dylan played for time.

"Of course, you may," Libby assured him. "If it's any help, I know you weren't born a girl."

Dylan sat, frozen in stunned silence. His face betrayed any attempt at denial.

"How do you know?" he asked quietly.

"Doing the things I do, I have learned to be observant. Little things, taken together, tell a story that you're not conscious of telling," Rosalind replied. "Don't worry, your secret is safe with me but I'm going to try to persuade you to accept my offer."

"Does Rosalind know that you know about me?"

"Not yet but I'm going to tell her," Rosalind replied. "That's going to mean that there'll be two of us trying to change your mind."

Dylan sighed. "I don't suppose I could persuade you to change your mind."

"On the contrary, I'm going to try and change *your* mind," Libby said. "And I can be very persuasive. Also, I can play dirty."

Her smile said that this wasn't really a threat.

"I can be very determined," Dylan smiled back; a good-hearted, no offence kind of smile.

"Then we'll agree to remain friends." Libby stood and came over to hug Dylan again. "But there is one favour I have to ask of you."

"That's intriguing." Dylan relaxed as this signalled a change of subject.

“It’s my nephew; the one you sensed. He’s a dentist in town and needs someone to partner him. He has some social obligations and doesn’t want to scare off his conservative clients.”

“Are you asking me to date him?” Dylan asked bluntly.

“No. Well, at least I’m not asking in the biblical sense,” Libby replied. “I hoped you’d agree to meet him and maybe partner him to some of these events. He doesn’t know anyone to ask.”

“So, you’re asking for him?”

“I’m asking if you’d meet him and maybe think about agreeing,” Libby pleaded. “Rosalind tells me that you don’t have much social life. This could be a distraction for you. Please say that you’ll think about it, and then I promise to change the subject.”

Dylan remembered what Rosalind had told him before he came out: “I feel obliged to do anything to keep a friend,” she had said or something; he was certain it was something like that.

Dylan thought for a moment and then held out his hand for Libby to hold. “I’ll meet him but no promises.”

True to her word, Libby changed the subject and by the time to leave, Dylan thanked her for a lovely evening.

“Another fine mess I’ve gotten myself into,” he said to himself as he drove home with a smile on his face. “But wouldn’t it really piss off Marcia if she thought I was dating a man for real?”

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It was with some trepidation when Dylan came down next morning in his robe, to find Rosalind already drinking her first coffee of the day.

“I guess Libby called you,” he asked.

“She did. I didn’t know what she was going to say beyond thanking you. It’s all a complete surprise to me that she wants you to meet her nephew.”

“Did you hint to her that I was... that I *wasn’t*...?”

If you're asking if I gave away your secret, the answer is that I did not," Rosalind replied.

"So why did she offer to give me a boob job?"

"She told me that she'd worked it out," Rosalind said. "Looking back, I can understand how she may have guessed."

"What did I do wrong?"

"You didn't do anything wrong, but she's used to studying people. It's her profession. You won't be the first transsexual she's met."

"Hey, I'm not transsexual!" Dylan could hardly believe his ears.

"I didn't mean it like that," Rosalind tried to correct herself. "I mean she's seen boys pretending to be girls before and seems to have learned how to read the signs."

"What signs were they?"

"I have no idea." Rosalind threw up her hands. "It's something I'd never have noticed. To me, you're perfect."

"Now she wants me to pretend to be the perfect trophy girlfriend."

"It's not so bad," Rosalind said slowly. "She's not going to broadcast what she knows, and her nephew is a perfectly charming guy. Who knows, if you meet him, you may think so too."

"I've said I will meet him," Dylan replied. "I've also refused her kind offer."

"You do know she's very persistent?" Rosalind asked. "She's already asked me to persuade you."

"I'm not surprised."

"Then you'll not be surprised if I tell you that it's a good idea," Rosalind said. "Having your own breasts rather than those forms in your bra would reinforce your natural feelings."

"But it would commit me to staying this way forever and I'm not sure I want to do that," Dylan replied.

“It would make you more confident.”

“And I could wear something with a plunging neckline and really show off. That could be fun, especially if Marcia’s around.” Dylan paused and looked across the table. “I didn’t really mean that.”

“Maybe not but you liked the wickedness of the thought. I saw your face.”

They looked at each other, then laughed, breaking the tension.

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The next weeks passed easily. Rosalind had a busy schedule, with personal appointments for tarot readings and regressions, then they had to travel so that she could do appearances at conventions and small séances for the select few.

Despite his initial reluctance, Dylan found that he was enjoying it all. His hair grew and his dress sense changed. He knew he was getting obsessed with dresses and shoes and as much as he tried to stop himself, he was constantly on the lookout for something pretty and now for something extravagant.

Wherever they went, Rosalind made sure that their manicure never failed. Before a big appearance, she had her favourite makeup artists and hairdressers do their magic in each town so that she and Dylan looked at their best before the public.

“Who wants to see some drab old medium?” she asked rhetorically. “They need to be dazzled by us.”

“Perhaps they think we’re a little eccentric too?” Dylan suggested.

“Maybe but that’s not a fault. It goes with the charm and the territory. If they think we’re a little over-the-top in dress and manner, it’s what they expect.”

“And probably what they’re going to talk about with their friends,” Dylan added.

“You’ve got it. Someone said that there’s no such thing as bad publicity. I’m not sure that’s true but word of mouth amongst the ladies who we see most can only be good.”

“As long as they don’t find out about me.” Dylan stopped suddenly.

“I don’t think that would matter much,” Rosalind said. “It all goes to the eccentric nature of it all. Besides, you aren’t the first boy who finds life better as a girl.”

“I’ve been thinking about that,” Dylan replied. “Much as I try, I can’t imagine going back to being a boy again.”

“Does that mean you’re thinking about the boob fairy?”

“You keep reminding me so it’s never far from my mind, but I can’t imagine what having breasts for real would do to me.”

“Half the world seems to get along pretty well with them.” Rosalind smiled as she said it. “And you’ve not committed to meeting Libby’s nephew yet. You did promise her that you would.”

“I know but we’ve been so busy.”

“How about if I make an informal arrangement for when we get back home?” Rosalind asked. “I’ve got a six-week gap in the schedule to do some writing. That would be a good opportunity for you to have some time to yourself.”

“I’m not sure...” Dylan said slowly.

“*I’m* sure. I’ll call Libby and I’ll come with you to her house. We can go for drinks and maybe she could have a few other friends around so that it’s not such a set-up.”

“I don’t know...”

“You’re not getting a choice this time,” Rosalind said. “She loves her summer barbecues and drinks in the garden. I’m sure you’ll enjoy it.”

“What if I don’t like the dentist?” Dylan said mostly to himself as a small shudder of fright went through him.

“It’s all arranged,” Rosalind said on Friday evening after they go back home. “Eyelashes, manicure and pedicure in the morning, your hairdresser after lunch, and then we go shopping.”

“What’s the occasion?” Dylan’s heart lurched as he guessed what was coming.

“A new dress and shoes for you and maybe for me as well and then we’re off to Libby’s garden party.”

“You never give up, do you?” Dylan replied. “Tempting as it all sounds, I’m scared of the dentist.”

“That’s what a child would say.” They looked at each other and, after a slight pause, laughed at the absurdity of the thought.

Friday came and the nail salon was first.

“There’s something about new nails,” Dylan mused as he inspected his hands. “They’ve been filled and touched up as we’ve been away, but these feel really right again.”

“I agree.” Rosalind held her hands out for him to inspect. “It takes a lot of maintenance to be good at what we do.”

“I understand that now,” Dylan replied. “Image is as important as performance.”

“That could be a good motto for life,” Rosalind said. “Think of the dentist.”

“Don’t you dare repeat that to him when we’re introduced?” Dylan joked as they walked from nail salon to hairdresser

“You must be going somewhere special,” the hairdresser chattered away as she worked on Dylan’s hair after he’d been through all the processes of bleaching the roots, toning, then conditioning.

“I’m going to a garden party and then to the dentist,” Dylan said.

“That sounds like fun.” It was obvious that the hairdresser was concentrating on what she was doing and not really listening.

“You look gorgeous,” Rosalind said as soon as she saw Dylan coming to meet her in the coffee shop near the mall. “Is this potential trophy girlfriend Mark Two?”

“Don’t even joke about it,” Dylan replied. “I’m so nervous; I don’t know why I agreed to this.”

"I do. I made a decision for you."

"But I'm not looking for a boyfriend," Dylan protested.

"It might be fun, something you'll really enjoy."

"But I'm not made that way," Dylan protested again.

"Be honest; you need something in your life other than working with me," Rosalind replied. "And you're not likely to get a girlfriend when you look sexier than she does."

"Do I look sexy? I've never looked at myself like that."

"Look around you, girl," Rosalind said. "Watch the men's eyes as they walk past. That hair and your tight little figure make them stare."

"You're making me self-conscious."

"That's what makes them look. The way you act says that you don't know how sexy you look."

"I've not really learned how to be a girl, have I?" Dylan said. "That's probably what gave me away to Libby."

"Never mind about that. Drink your coffee; we have important shopping to do."

"Can't we turn back? Please, I don't want to do this." Dylan squirmed in the passenger seat as Rosalind approached the drive to Libby's house.

"You mean you spent all day getting ready and you'd rather have nowhere to go?"

"Don't make me do this."

"Stop it," Rosalind said firmly. "You look absolutely gorgeous. You need to show it off."

"Why did I ever agree to this?"

"If it makes you feel better, you can say you didn't agree, and I forced you to get that pretty pink dress and matching sky-high heels. I held you down in the hairdresser's, then forced you to do your makeup so perfectly."

"I do look good," Dylan's voice softened. "I love it that I can wear a dress as tight and short as this one."

"You really like those dusky pink colours," Rosalind said. "You must have been a horror as a little girl, insisting that everything had to be pink."

"Maybe I wasn't a little girl like that," Dylan replied. "But right now, I can't remember being a boy."

"Hold that thought." Rosalind turned into the parking area and set the brake.

"Are you sure I look okay?" Dylan asked.

He rummaged through his purse, found his perfume, and sprayed it liberally on his chest and arms. He pulled out a small compact and checked his makeup and re-applied lipstick.

"You look fine," Rosalind replied. "Be careful on those heels."

"I'm always careful." Dylan took a deep breath. "Right now, though, I feel like I'm living dangerously."

They got out of the car and walked around to the patio at the rear where they could hear music playing and the excited voices of people enjoying the early evening. There were sunshades and tables, big and small, set around the garden where people sat chattering. Groups stood and circulated.

"I'm so glad you came." Libby appeared from nowhere and took Dylan by the elbow, gently but firmly and steered him away from Rosalind who walked towards another group.

Dylan guessed it had been choreographed all along. He could feel his anxiety mounting as she held on to him.

"You're going to meet my favourite nephew. Please don't be afraid. He's harmless and I'm sure you're going to like him."

As they approached a group of people, one man detached himself and came towards them. Dylan saw him for the first time, for he guessed that this was the dentist.

He was tall, but not too tall, he thought as he inspected the figure walking towards them. He was quite elegant in his chinos and pristine pale blue shirt with an open collar and rolled sleeves. He was well-built and trim, but not too musclebound. There was no flab above his waist. Dylan checked his thoughts. Was he really checking out a man?

Before he had time to collect himself, Libby was speaking, and he was holding out his hand. Dylan took it gently, suddenly conscious that his precious ring had turned on his finger and was digging into his hand. It was as if a dazzling flash had gone through him.

"I'm sorry," Dylan said. "I didn't catch your name."

"James Hannah," he replied with a soft smile and inevitable even white teeth. "And I know you're Dylan, which is an amazingly pretty name for such a pretty girl."

"But you know I'm not...." Dylan said. "A girl, that is, although people tell me that I'm quite pretty."

Libby seemed to have melted away, leaving him alone with this man. He looked at him and felt suddenly stupid for blurting out his secret. But then he guessed that it wasn't a secret to James anyway.

"My aunt is a determined woman," James said, taking Dylan's arm and steering him towards the bar. "Let me get you a drink and then you can tell me all about yourself."

"Surely that's the wrong way round," Dylan said. "Remember, I'm the girl here... well, as near as you're likely to get. I should listen and look admiringly into your eyes while you tell me all about yourself."

"Wow, you've really been reading your stage directions." James had an easy smile and a twinkle in his eye. "Let me get that drink and we'll start even. We can walk a little, talk a little, and maybe even enjoy the party."

"I've been scared stiff about meeting you," Dylan said.

"Well, I'm glad we got that over. Tell me; is it a childhood fear of dentists, or me in particular?"



"It's probably the latter," Dylan said, feeling easier with each sentence between them. "And I'm scared because I don't know how much of a girl I really am."

"We can talk about that later," James said. "For now, keep it easy. How about if I say that you're the prettiest girl here."

"I'd like that." Dylan blushed. "But your aunt said that you were gay; surely you shouldn't be noticing the girls."

"Hey, I'm not blind. I can appreciate style."

"Okay, you win." Dylan could feel himself relaxing as they ambled through the people.

James nodded here and there to acquaintances but kept them apart and together. He got them glasses of white wine and quite suddenly they were sitting at a small table a little secluded from the main party.

"If you don't feel happy to be with me, I'll take you back to Libby. I'll feel very sad, but I won't force myself on you and I won't become your stalker."

"I don't think you would," Dylan said. "Become my stalker, that is. What made you become a dentist?"

"I didn't get the grades to go to medical school," James replied. "It seemed a good option, and I've learned that learning to live with failure is good for the soul. It keeps one modest."

"And you've mastered that."

"Always." James smiled that smile again. "And I think that as a dentist to the stars, I'm making a difference in people's lives and I'm making a good living."

"You don't have to sell yourself to me." Dylan was surprised to be reaching out and touching his hand. "I'm not for sale either."

"So, what do I have to do to convince you that I'm not a monster, I'm not at all dangerous, and I'm delighted to have had the chance to meet you?"

"Keep talking," Dylan said. "I'm a girl; I'm a good listener. I learn fast too."

They wandered through the people, stopping occasionally as James chatted to people and introduced Dylan gently to his friends. Dylan was surprised to notice that the crowd was thinning, and the sun was going down.

“I’d better take you back to Libby,” James said, steering her across the lawn.

They passed the empty tables and chairs and the bar which had closed. Suddenly they were in a gazebo, where James stopped and pulled Dylan to him. Tentatively, James stood to face him and slowly lowered his face so that their lips touched briefly.

Dylan didn’t know how to react. It was as if an electric charge had shot through him. He stood for a second, looking at James, then he put his arm round the back of James’ head and pulled him into a longer and harder kiss.

Dylan felt a tongue cautiously probing his lips. Without a thought, he opened them and let James’ tongue into his mouth where their tongues touched and wrapped around each other.

Then he stood back and looked at James as if seeing him anew. He was suddenly shocked at what he’d done.

He put his arm through James’ arm and, together, they turned towards the house again, walking silently. They were wondering how that had happened and what it meant. Dylan let go of his arm before they came into view from the house where Rosalind and Libby were standing together, waiting for them.

“You’re very quiet,” Dylan said as they drove home.

“I’m waiting for you to say something.” Rosalind smiled across the car.

“Maybe I’ve got nothing to say.”

“I bet you have a lot to think about after this evening.”

“I don’t know what you mean.”

“Yes, you do,” Rosalind said with mischief in her voice. “I saw you holding onto James’ hand a bit lon-

ger that you needed to when you were saying good-bye.”

“I didn’t.”

“And I saw the quick peck on the cheek you gave him when you thought no one was looking.”

“I knew that you and Libby were both watching us like hawks, so I thought I’d give you something to talk about,” Dylan lied unconvincingly.

“So that’s why you’re all dreamy eyes?”

“I am not dreamy eyes,” Dylan lied again but then saw Rosalind looking at him with a look which said she could see through him. “Okay, so I kissed him a little.”

“And you two were gone a long time on your own.”

“We walked and talked. Isn’t that what we were intended to do?” Dylan said.

“And what did you talk about?”

“I don’t know; everything in a getting-to-know-you sort of way,” Dylan said. “It was awkward. You put us in a difficult situation with so much expectation riding on it.”

“Was it so difficult? I’m sorry,” Rosalind replied. “I didn’t want to put any pressure on you.”

“Is that ‘no pressure?’” Dylan asked. “I’m a boy, remember? Underneath all this, I *am* a boy.”

“No one would know if you didn’t tell them.”

“No one except you and Libby and now James as well,” Dylan said. “I’m so confused. I don’t think I’m gay, but he was so nice to me, I found myself imagining all kinds of things.”

“Girl things?”

“Yes, if you must know. I was thinking girl things and *very* girl things too.

“Sometimes I think it must be easier to be the girl.” Rosalind said softly. “All you have to do is be pretty and nice, listen and make plenty of eye contact, and you’re halfway there.”

“It’s the other half-way that worries me.” Dylan smiled across the car. “What do I do about that?”

“I have no idea,” Rosalind replied. “That’s probably best discussed between you. Are you going to see him again?”

“I gave him my number,” Dylan replied. “I don’t know if I’m being foolish or not, but he asked, and I gave it.”

So, you’ll be seeing him again soon.”

“How do you know? He might have second thoughts.”

“I don’t think he will; not after the way he was looking at you.”

Rosalind was right, not that it was ever in doubt. When James called a couple of days later, Dylan felt his heart leap with excitement. They talked for half an hour until James decided that talking on the phone wasn’t as good as talking face-to-face. He arranged to pick Dylan up after his surgery closed the next day.

“I guessed that would happen,” Rosalind said when he told her.

“You don’t object?” he asked.

“You don’t need to ask; you need to have some company nearer your own age.”

“I mean, you don’t object that it’s a man coming to pick me up... as if I was a girl?”

“Dylan, you’ve been a girl for ages now and it’s never worried me, or you. Why should it be a problem now?”

“I don’t know. This is all new to me.”

“Well don’t worry,” Rosalind said. “He seems really a good person, and whatever you do together, he’s not going to make you pregnant and leave.”

Rosalind regretted the words as soon as they were out of her mouth. Fortunately, Dylan took it as a joke.

"I know men have sex with girls all the time, but I know men can't do the same thing," Dylan said naively.

Rosalind started to say something but checked herself before a word came out. She wondered if he had any idea. She wondered if she should tell him, but decided some things were better left unsaid. Things would be whatever they were fated to be.

"What do I wear?" Dylan asked. "I don't have a thing suitable, and I don't know where we might be going."

"Don't worry." Rosalind tried to calm his nerves. "Wear something pretty for him, something that you feel comfortable in."

"Okay," Dylan said slowly. "I'll go and look in the wardrobe. You'll tell me if I look wrong, won't you?"

"Of course, I will but I'm sure you'll make the right choices. You could always call James and ask where he's taking you so that you can dress nicely."

"I don't want to do that; he might think that I'm being pushy," Dylan said, then looked at her. "I'm such a girl, aren't I? What have I become?"

"Stop worrying; it isn't as if you're making a commitment for life. You're going on a first date with the guy. You may end up hating each other before the date is over."

There was a frantic atmosphere as the time for the date approached. Rosalind watched quietly as Dylan changed from Capri pants and a white blouse into a denim skirt and a pale blue blouse and finally into a summer dress. It had a black background with a pattern of roses.

"Does this dress look right?" he asked.

"It's lovely," Rosalind assured him. "I think you should take a jacket though, in case there's a chill later. Those half-sleeves won't give you any warmth."

"You don't think the neckline's too low?"

"Of course not; it's today's fashion," Rosalind replied. "I'll get a pendant for you to wear."

“Can I borrow a couple of your bangles too, please?”

“Of course, come and choose whatever you want. There are earrings galore if you want to change yours.”

At the appointed hour, Dylan was perfectly made-up, with his hair artfully casual, hanging in blonde waves down to his shoulder blades. He had a black casual jacket, a matching leather purse, and heels. He hopped from one foot to the other, anxious to spot James’ arrival.

He checked his lipstick for the fourth time and applied another spritz of perfume.

“Stop worrying,” Rosalind told him. “You’re the girl. You’re supposed to keep him waiting. Go upstairs. I’ll let him in, and you come down five, or, better, ten minutes later.”

“I don’t understand.”

“It’s called making an entrance,” Rosalind said.

“There’s a silver car on the drive. I think it’s him.”

“Then upstairs with you quickly and do as you’re told.”

Dylan hurried out of the room. He got upstairs and out of sight as he heard the doorbell ring. He stood, gasping with fear and anticipation, counting the minutes until it was time to make an entrance as he’d been instructed.

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It seemed to take an age; time passed so slowly. He could hear their voices but couldn’t tell what was being said. He wondered if Rosalind was quizzing him about his intentions. Where that thought came from, he had no idea.

Then Rosalind opened the door at the bottom of the stairs and called for him. With a deep breath to stop his heart thumping, he started down.

James stood as he came into the room. His eyes shouted approval the moment he saw Dylan. Dylan, for his part, couldn’t help himself. He walked to

James, held him quickly and kissed him; just a peck, but on the lips.

Rosalind watched and said nothing. She knew where this was going, even if Dylan had no idea. She watched James open the car door for Dylan to sit in, then watched as Dylan slipped a hand under his dress to smooth it before sitting down.

She picked up her mobile and keyed in a number. "Libby, I think your wishes may be about to come true."

"I've got my fingers crossed," Libby squealed in delight. "This could be so good."

And so it continued. At first it was once a week, then twice, then almost every night; Dylan and James, dining and even dancing. They took long walks and spent hours talking after eating out in delicious restaurants.

"You two are really an item," Rosalind remarked one evening as Dylan hopped from foot to foot, anxious that James was late. He skipped to the door when he heard the car on the drive.

"You look delicious." James looked across to Dylan in the passenger seat.

"Thank you. I didn't know what to wear. Where are we going?"

"I thought you'd like to see where I work, then we'll have some dinner. I know a little Italian place just up the valley that I think you'll like."

"I'm sure I will." Dylan turned a little in his seat to look at James. "You look pretty good yourself."

As soon as the words were out of his mouth, he wondered why he said such a thing. Was he really thinking like a girl on a first date with a handsome guy with nice teeth and a good income?

He dismissed the thought. "Promise you're not going to look at my teeth with a professional interest."

"I've looked. It's inevitable when you're a dentist. Yours are beautiful."

"They're real too." Dylan relaxed. "Most of what you see isn't real, but the teeth are my own."

“The whole package looks good to me.” James put his hand on Dylan’s knee.

Dylan looked at it, wondering if it was too much, too soon. The thought passed quickly, and he put his hand over James’ hand and squeezed it gently, as if to encourage him.

“What am I doing?” he thought. “I’m giving all these signals, but do I know where they could lead? What will he think of me?”

But James’ hand felt nice in his. He looked down at the entwined hands and saw how much bigger James was and how his blood red nails wrapped through James fingers. It felt comfortable.

As they drove and talked, Dylan grew easier and forgot his doubts about meeting James for this date. Date: that’s what it was. He couldn’t call it anything else now. To his surprise, he wasn’t feeling bad about it either.

“This is my office.” James pulled into an underground parking lot, then into a space with his name on the wall in front of it.

He took her to the elevator, then through a corridor. He stopped at a door with his name on a brass plaque and opened it with a pass card.

“This is a group practise,” he said. “I share reception and admin with three partners. We have our separate patient list, but we can help each other when there’s something complicated.”

“Something complicated; what’s that?”

“Generally, implants and repairs when someone’s had an accident. Most of my work is cosmetic so I’m the specialist in the practise.”

“That must keep you busy.”

“I get too busy sometimes.” James pulled Dylan to him. “That’s why I hope you’ll be able to distract me a little.”

Dylan knew he was going to be kissed right there and then. James leaned in and their lips touched. Dylan could feel any resistance he might have had fading fast. He leaned into the kiss and somehow his

hand ended up behind James' head, running fingers through his hair. One kiss became two and then three.

Dylan pulled back. "You've smudged my lipstick," he said, turning and reaching for his purse.

"Let's go to that little Italian restaurant you promised," he said as he put his lipstick and mirror back into his purse.

"How about showing me your place?" Dylan asked as they drove from the restaurant car park.

"Are you serious?" James sounded surprised this time.

"I'd like to know where you live," Dylan said, never really wondering where that thought came from.

Sure, if *you're* sure." James accelerated back towards town.

"This is near where Libby lives." Dylan recognised the houses set back from the road.

"I'm about a hundred yards from her but on a smaller lane." James turned, then turned again into a drive.

They went through a short, wooded area and then he turned again. There in front of the car, was a traditional house; stuccoed walls with wisteria in blossom cascading on one side. It looked bright and airy, with lawn areas to the front and the hint of a conservatory at the rear.

"Which part is yours?" Dylan asked.

"All of it," James replied. "This is my home."

"It's beautiful," Dylan said before they got out of the car.

"When I graduated and set up my practise, I promised myself that I would live somewhere nice and that I'd drive a decent car."

"It must have taken years to buy something like this," Dylan said.

"Not really; I bought the plot very cheaply from Libby, had the basic building done, then extended it. It's taken eight years."

James opened his car door and walked round to Dylan's side. He opened the door and held out his hand to help him get out.

"Do you want to see inside?"

"I thought you'd never ask." Dylan kissed him quickly, then took his hand and pulled him towards the door.

"You have good taste." Dylan reclined on the couch, sipping from a wine glass. "But aren't you going to show me the rest of the house?"

"The rest...?" James refilled Dylan's glass.

"The bedroom, silly. You haven't invited me to inspect upstairs," Dylan said.

Dylan kicked off his heels and stood. He reached a hand out to James and pulled him towards the stairs. He ran up, feeling his stockings against the carpet.

"Is this one yours?" Dylan opened the door to a light and airy bedroom, minimally furnished but with everything shouting good taste and quality.

James followed, by which time Dylan had thrown himself onto the bed.

"This feels good." Dylan tested the mattress, the effects of the wine making him light-headed.

James walked across the room and held out his hand to Dylan as if to help him up.

"There's no need to rush," Dylan said, reaching for James' trouser belt to pull him closer. "I wonder what's in here. You'll have to help me; I don't want to break a nail. Rosalind may wonder what I've been doing."

"Do you know what you're doing?" James could feel his penis rising stiffly inside his pants.

"Not really." Dylan pouted and looked up at him. "Do *you* know what I'm doing?"

Dylan reached inside James' pants and wrapped his fingers around the penis inside them. He looked up at James, his face feigning surprise as he pulled

the penis out. He looked at it as if examining a strange object.

“Mine isn’t as big as this,” Dylan said in a coquettish tone, running his fingers up and down the shaft, squeezing it and cupping the balls underneath. “I wish I had one like it.”

“Are you sure that you know what you’re doing?” James asked.

“Shut up and come closer,” Dylan said. “I’ve been changed into a girl and now I’m going to find out what things feel like for a girl.”

He leaned in and flicked his tongue across the tip, tasting a little drop which had appeared there.

“I want to know if I’m going to like it.”

He slipped off the bed and came to kneel on the floor. He put his lips against the tip, then opened them to allow it to slip inside. His tongue swirled round, and he heard James gasp.

Dylan leaned back and looked at the penis in front of him. He wrapped his fingers around it again, then ran his tongue down and up to the tip again. He put his head back and sucked as he took some of the length inside his mouth.

He sucked and began to work his lips up and down, taking more of the length into his mouth each time. He could feel a gag reflex and tried to suppress it in vain. He leaned back and looked at it again, then took as much as he could into his mouth.

His tongue pressed against the underside of the shaft. He sucked and sucked, rubbing as hard as he could with his tongue. He heard James grunt and felt him push his hips forwards, arching his back as if to push even more into Dylan’s mouth.

The taste told Dylan that he’d reached James’ limit. His penis swelled inside Dylan’s mouth. Dylan could feel his own penis straining inside the tight panties he was wearing and wished he could let it loose too, but it was too late for that now.

James’ penis pulsed in Dylan’s mouth, then it pulsed again and again. Dylan swallowed as fast as he could, but he could feel something dribbling down

his chin as James carried on. He slowly became aware that his own penis was pulsing at the same time.

Then it was over; James was shrinking and slipping away, slowly subsiding in his mouth. Dylan held it for a while, then leaned back to see it drooping. He looked up to see James looking down at him. Dylan took a deep breath, leaned back against the bed and pushed himself up to sit on the edge.

“I have no idea what came over me,” he said, looking at James with his eyes shining. “I never planned to do that. I don’t know what made me do it.”

“Stop apologising.” James sat beside him, and they kissed long and slowly.

“You’ll get your mess all over your chin.” Dylan wiped his finger over James’ chin, then licked it. “It’s not unpleasant,” he said.

“I never expected... I didn’t plan...”

“It’s okay.” Dylan replied. “I thought we needed to get that over so that the wondering could stop.”

“And have you stopped wondering?”

“I think so,” Dylan said. “I think s, but I won’t know until you’ve taken me properly, like a man with a woman.”

“I think they’ve reached something significant,” Rosalind confided to Libby when they met for coffee a few days later. “Dylan came home and ran upstairs without a word. I got a glimpse of him. I could see his makeup was all over the place and I heard him singing in the shower.”

“It seems significant indeed,” Libby replied. “James seems to have a smile on his face whenever I see him too. Aren’t you worried for him though? He’s so much younger than James and can’t be that experienced.”

“I think he’d tell me that he knows what he’s doing, even if he’s not so sure himself,” Rosalind replied. “There’s not likely to be much I could do anyway.”

“It really looks like they’ve found one another in a big way,” Libby said.

"We'll find out next week; I've a few appearances booked, and we'll be away for a few nights. I wonder how they'll cope."

There was no need to have been apprehensive. Rosalind and Dylan worked together well through regression and tarot for individual clients in the afternoons and through small séances in the evenings.

"I'm exhausted," Rosalind confessed after the last one was over. "And you just have worn out that telephone."

"I'm only talking to James," Dylan said. "He's asked me to go away with him for the weekend when we get back. He's booked a log cabin at a spa resort."

"You won't be able to use the spa though," Rosalind said. "That's such a shame."

"I know. I'd really love to be able to get pampered," Dylan replied, then paused. "I've been wondering..."

"Yes?" Rosalind said, anticipating the response.

"If I took up Libby's offer... I mean, if I got my breasts done, do you think I could use the spa?"

"You probably could, but not this side of a couple of month's recovery time," Rosalind replied. "I didn't know you were thinking of that."

"It's for James really," Dylan replied. "I've been to a couple of formal events with him, and I feel so dowdy."

"You're never that," Rosalind replied. "You're the trophy girlfriend."

"I'm the girlfriend without a cleavage. I've seen men looking and wondering," Dylan paused for breath. "I've seen their partners looking at me. I know that they're looking critically, wondering about my lip filler, my lash extensions."

"So why worry?" Rosalind sighed. "James doesn't worry."

"I know, but they make me feel such a fake." Dylan shook his head. "They're right of course; everything about me is a fake."

“But that doesn’t explain why you’re thinking of breast implants. Surely that’s adding another fake?”

“I know, but I’ve been thinking about it so much,” Dylan said. “But that’s enough; I’ve decided. I’ll telephone Libby right away.”

“You didn’t need to put yourself through this just for me.” James visited Dylan in the clinic.

“We did talk about it,” Dylan reminded him. “I decided that it was the right thing to do. No more pretending and padding. You agreed that my having breasts wouldn’t put you off me.”

“Stop worrying. I was only afraid that you were only doing it to protect my reputation.”

“Don’t expect sense from me,” Dylan replied. “I’m still spacey from all the drugs and I feel like a couple of bricks are squeezing my chest.”

“That will pass,” James replied. “Remember Libby said it would hurt like hell; they’d look awful when you first see them, but they’ll fall into place and look natural for your frame.”

“I’m rather looking forward to seeing someone leer down my cleavage.” Dylan giggled at the thought. “You must have seen them too.”

“I have, and I’ll watch with pride when you get your first leer; after all, they’re yours and mine.”

“I like that; yours and mine,” Dylan replied. “It sounds good.”

They only kept him in the clinic for two days and that only because Libby was in charge of his case. Three weeks later and the huge surgical bra had been replaced by a lighter one. The bruising had gone down and the scars around his nipples where the implants had been placed were fading fast too.

James had been there every day, sitting and chatting, looking when he was invited to do so, and peeking when he wasn’t. He knew he was gay and that girls didn’t hold any attraction for him, but this was different. This was a boy who’d decided, for better or worse, to cling to him. This was his own dream and desire in one package.

The fifth week after the surgery, Dylan went to see Libby. She examined his new breasts and pronounced them as delightful as any she had created.

"There's one more procedure which you might like," she said. "Your nipples are quite small, and the areolae are boy size, rather than girl size. I have injected as much as I can to make them bigger, but you can have an areola tattoo to make them look like they are real. The effect is amazingly realistic."

"They *are* real."

"You know what I mean, like a real girl would have."

"I've never seen one for real," Dylan admitted. "I've never touched one either."

"But you've seen the magazines and the pornos that go round every school."

"I guess but I wasn't really paying attention to all the anatomical detail."

"Okay, you'll have to trust me," Libby said. "I'll get someone to come and do it for you."

"Will it hurt?" Dylan looked suddenly small and frightened.

"Compared to what you've been through, not much at all."

"That looks perfect." Libby examined him ten days or so later. "I can formally declare that your breasts are as beautiful as any I've created, and that's a lot."

"I can't thank you enough, Libby," Dylan replied. "The areola tattoo was an amazing idea."

"Don't let James bite them too hard." Libby laughed and saw Dylan's grin in return.

"As if he'd dare." Dylan's look said that he might like that.

"Take care Dylan and enjoy yourself at the spa." Rosalind stood at the door to wave him off as he and James set off for their delayed weekend away. "Get a good rest because we're back on the road next week."

"I know; my all black and all white costumes are ready and packed. I hope you don't mind but I sent the wigs out to be restored too."

"I hope you're feeling strong and healthy." Dylan squeezed James' hand as it rested on his knee. "You don't expect much sleep, I hope."

As soon as they were shown to their room, Dylan ran into the bathroom with his case to change. He'd packed the full bridal lingerie, with gown and robe, all lace and flounces, so deliciously feminine that there could be no doubt about his intentions.

He came back into their suite, called James into the bedroom and started. James hardly had time to turn round before his penis was being massaged to its full height. Dylan licked his lips suggestively and started to strip until he was completely naked. He stripped James too, not that he needed much encouragement.

"You can put your penis between my breasts," Dylan instructed. "I'd like to see it there, but you may have to undress me first."

James straddled him and did as he was told. Dylan squeezed his breasts together and laughed at the sight of the tip peeping through.

"That's not what it's for, though," he said. "I've lubricated myself already so I might be a bit messy. You need to lubricate and then you can show me what you're made of."

"You know what I'm made of; you've sucked it often enough," James said. "No, I didn't mean that you've sucked it enough; you can do that whenever you want. I meant you know what it does."

"But it's never been where it's going tonight." Dylan turned so that his rear was presented to James. "It's going to go there several times tonight if you're strong enough."

James positioned himself, ready to enter. Dylan turned his head to see as much as he could.

"I love the feeling of the weight of my breasts when I'm like this," Dylan said. "They're telling me why I'm a woman and waiting for you."

James eased forward. Dylan gasped at the first touch of the penis at his rear and pushed back. His muscles clenched immediately. He held his breath and waited, willing his muscles to relax.

Another pair of pushes, forwards from James and backwards from Dylan. He was no further in, as the resistance of the muscles held fast. Dylan took a deep breath. James sensed what he was doing and slapped his rear cheek hard. The shock of the slap made Dylan's muscles relax and James pushed partly in. He rested, hearing Dylan panting and rocking gently backwards.

James reached a hand forwards and cupped a breast, running his fingers over the nipple and back again.

"I have to complement you on your technique." Dylan squirmed in ecstasy as the fingers continued. "You must have taken lessons."

"It's years of frustration," James replied.

"You're a liar, but I like it." Dylan pushed back, prompting James to push further inside him. "Slow and steady; I don't want this to be over anytime soon."

Dylan squealed as a pain shot through him when James pushed harder. Gritting his teeth, he pushed back too and felt the pain turn from something annoying to something pleasurable. James slipped a little further inside and then further still; with every movement he was deeper and deeper inside.

"Yes, yes, yes," Dylan heard himself shouting. Harder, yes, Yes, oooh..."

"I can't get any further in," James gasped.

"I know, I can feel your balls against my bum." Dylan was gasping harder now and the sounds he made in between words were those of enjoyment, not pain. "Now work it, don't let it be over too soon. I like this feeling and I've waited too long..."

"Not much longer." James pushed and held firm and still, his back arching as if to thrust deeper.

Dylan could feel the swelling that he had produced at other times with his mouth was now deep inside

him. He knew what was to come and almost screamed as James filled that space that might never have been.

“Somebody’s had a good weekend,” Rosalind said as soon as Dylan came through the door with a huge grin on his face. “I guess James came up to expectations then?”

“I couldn’t possibly comment,” Dylan said smugly but his face said something different. “Would it be awful if I moved in with James sometimes?”

“What, permanently?” Rosalind asked.

“Not really,” Dylan replied. “I don’t want to stop working with you but when we’re not working, I’d like to be there. It’s a lovely house and I do like being with James.”

“I can see you as a housewife.”

“I can’t,” Dylan laughed. “I’m far too vain for that, and I don’t want to break my nails.”

“If that’s what you want, then do it with my blessing.” Rosalind hugged him with delight. “But I’ve a piece of news for you. Marcia’s coming to visit.”

“Well, let her come,” Dylan said. “I’m ready for her and she won’t be able to make me do anything ever again. I’ve a man of my own now.”

Some days later, Marcia did come. Dylan greeted her at the door but clearly didn’t recognise this blonde young woman who stood proud and assured before her.

Dylan had planned it perfectly. He wore a dark green dress, tight and plain in the style he loved. This time it was low-cut at the neckline and exposed an obvious cleavage.

Dylan secretly hoped that it exposed a little too much but he didn’t share that thought with anyone.

Rosalind took Marcia through to the patio, where Dylan served them with a light lunch. As the table was cleared, the bombshell was dropped.

“You don’t recognise Dylan, do you?” Rosalind said.

Marcia's expression said it all. Dylan smiled, curtseyed, and left them to it. He never mentioned his inheritance either.

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Dylan's big day came late that summer. He and James had become accepted by so many of the people James had been worried about. Their acceptance in society brought them closer together.

He wore a huge confection of a white dress with lace and flowers as he walked through the garden at Libby's house for a civil ceremony. James turned and smiled as he lifted his veil.

The words were said and repeated. Dylan's eyes locked on James all the time. The others might as well have not been there for all he knew at that moment.

As James placed the plain gold band on Dylan's ring finger, they all knew that fate had been kind, and no one could ask for more than that.

The End