



SUMMARY: A doctor is called into the emergency room only to find his dying twin sister who he touches which leads to an instant switch with him in his sister's body, and his old male self now dead.

EN FEMME

part one

by Valerie Hope

"DR. WALTERS, COME TO THE ER, stat. Dr. Walters, come to the ER stat," the slightly-distorted, perpetually cheerful voice buzzed over the venerable PA set into the faded, paint-chipped walls of the St. Andrew's Hospital ICU. Dr. Ashton Walters, the worn-around-the-edges thoracic surgeon who was making rounds on the critical cases in Intensive Care that evening, was jerked from the half-conscious reverie he had occupied, looking up at the PA as if it were the machine's fault that he was no longer in the thoughtless, numb daydream he'd been enjoying so much.

What could they possibly need me for in the ER? he thought dimly as he stood, his back – veteran of many difficult years in healthcare – stiff and angry from where he'd been lounging in one of the chairs near the nurses' station, the place where he'd sat for nearly an hour, staring at the same chart without seeing a word of it. *Dr. Robertson is on call for thoracic down there. He's a much better doctor than I am, I have no idea why he'd possibly need a consult.*

Walters' stiff stride gradually loosened as he walked towards the elevators, the stiffness and discomfort leaching out of him slowly as he limbered up. He remembered a time when he could stand and walk without pain – not so long ago, relatively – but it seemed a rather distant memory, numbed and hazy from the thousands upon thousands of patients he'd seen since those days; in the ICU, most of his patients were either terminal or at the beginning stages of long-term recovery. Walters never seemed to get a "win," any more. No, his patients usually left the ICU feet-first, despite every effort.

Sad to say, he'd stopped trying to actually *help* his patients long ago. Even though he was still a talented surgeon and diagnostician, he was just going through the motions. Luckily, his motions were quite good, and his burnout had done little to tarnish his professional reputation. A little voice nagged at him, occasionally – *you're way too far gone for a man who's only twenty-eight years old* – but he had no problem diminishing it to a faraway buzz.

The transition from the sepulchral quiet of the ICU – punctuated only by the beeps of the EKG monitors and the rhythmic hiss of the ventilators, the occasional pinging alerts of the IV pumps – into the bedlam of the ER made him stutter a step as he acclimatized. Finding his sea-legs quickly, Walters brushed a hand through his dark, limp hair and pushed his lightweight glasses up his nose before catching a nurse by the sleeve as she rushed by, her arms full of trauma dressings and IV supplies.

"Walters," he said matter-of-factly, respecting her lack of time. "I was paged."

She thought for a moment, then recognition dawned. "Trauma 2," she said, jerking her head in the direction of the room she'd just identified. "Attending is Dr. Jessup."

He dodged around all manner of nurses, techs and doctors who were rushing in all directions, in and out of rooms, past paramedics who were rebuilding their stretchers and trying to finish paperwork in the hallways before going back out to their districts. As the only Level I trauma center in the region, St. Andrew's was an incredibly busy ER – it never seemed to have a lull, it was always this level of cacophony and madness – and it took a light- and surefooted caregiver to keep from getting bumped into or knocked down by the hustle and bustle that existed here twenty-four and seven. With some wild turns and jukes worthy of a professional surfer, Walters made it to the sliding glass doors of Trauma 2, full of doctors and techs and nurses, working over a limp and non-reactive female, strapped to a bloody backboard. One of the doctors – not Jessup, it was one of the residents whose name Walters didn't know – was attempting an intubation past large, bee-stung lips. All he could see around the kicked-anthill of activity was one of a pair of gravity-defying, 'done' breasts pointing proudly at the ceiling and a matted tangle of bloody blonde hair hanging off the head of the bed.

Jessup was by the door, conferring with a nurse. Walters knew him from his days as a student – they'd been interns together – and caught his eye with a subtle gesture.

"Hank, what is it? Why did you page me?" Walters asked in his gravelly baritone, just loud enough to be heard over the raised voices of the trauma-stat running loudly in the background.

"Ash," he said gently, laying his one ungloved hand on the white sleeve of Walters' lab coat. "Car accident, head-on. Massive thoracic trauma – collapsed lung on the right side, ruptured spleen, possible liver laceration, GI bleed. Maybe a fractured pelvis, we're not sure. Pupils fixed and dilated, minimal response."

Walters took the bait, transferring his mind into emergency-medical mode. "Pressure?"

"Eighty palpated," Jessup said back. "Pulse is weak at around 120."

"Why do you need me?"

The hand on Walters' sleeve tightened a little bit. "You never told me you had a sister, Ash."

Walters' eyes flew back to the motionless figure on the ER bed. No recognition broke through, even though he was actively looking now.

"She's my twin," Walters mumbled. "We're... not close."

He shook his head roughly to clear it. "Do you need blood?" he asked.

Jessup shook his head sadly. "I don't think it'll do her any good," he said at length. "Tell me, Ash, do you know if she's a donor?"

"Oh," Walters said. "Oh. I don't... I'm not sure."

"She has you listed as next of kin," Jessup told him.

"Jesus," Walters mumbled, still in mental shock. "The last time I saw her – it's been years, Hank – she said she never wanted to see me again."

"Maybe she never changed her information," Jessup offered. "Or maybe she changed her mind. People change, Ash."

"Not Ashlyn," Walters said sadly. "Once she made a decision, nothing could get her off it."

"Well, none of that matters now," Jessup told him. "She's almost gone, Ash. What do you want us to do?"

He looked again at the bloodied, mangled form of his twin sister, gasping away the last seconds of her life through the sterile, plastic-tasting puffs of a bag-valve-mask ventilator through the tube lodged in her throat. A surge of compassion swelled inside him, something he'd not felt in a very long time, and he lowered his head.

"Just stop," he said roughly. "Let her go."

Jessup nodded once, not even bothering to ask if his friend was sure. They'd both been at this far too long to still hope that someone in that state could pull through. "That's it," Jessup announced to the room loudly. "I'm calling termination of efforts."

Slowly, the techs and nurses, covered in his sister's blood, backed away, showing her to Ashton Walters' tired eyes. The tattoo on her ankle, that had made Mom almost blow a head gasket when she'd found out. The over-large silicone breasts she'd cleaned out her college fund to pay for. The face that resembled his own so acutely.

He walked slowly and heavily to her side, brushing a lank strand of blood-matted bleach-blonde hair from her largely unbroken face.

"Ashlyn," he whispered, placing a warm hand on her collarbone, feeling the cold length of a gold herringbone chain poking from beneath the cervical collar. Looking down, he saw the bloody outline of a small pendant or medallion laying against her chest. Unthinkingly, he picked it up, only dimly noticing the circle of pale flesh it left in the congealing puddle of blood across her upper body.

Something – *shifted*. Like the ground moved underneath him. He felt his knees buckle, and just for a moment Ashton Walters imagined that he was staring up at ceiling tiles and fluorescent lights, with a length of plastic tube coming from his mouth and into his field of vision, and pain wracked him from head to foot before everything went black.

Dimly, as if down the length of a long tunnel, he heard voices he thought he recognized:

"Dr. Walters? Dr. Walters!"

"Get him up! Get me a slideboard in here, now!"

"He's not breathing..."

"Doctor Jessup, look! His sister, her blood pressure... it's rising!"

Walters sank into a comfortable, chilly blackness and knew no more.

* * *

Walters expected pain, or numbness, or detachment – *anything* other than what he got upon his return to consciousness; a feeling of being plugged in like he'd never experienced before, as if he could feel every single molecule of air against his skin, every odor and taste amplified

and fed into him until he thought he might overload with the sensual information of it. With a muffled moan, he tried to sit up and found that he couldn't. A warm, soft weight seemed to weigh his chest down. The moan sounded strange to his ears, but he couldn't quite figure out why.

"Easy, Miss Walters. Take it easy," a soft contralto voice bade him from the darkness behind his eyelids. He didn't register the honorific, right at first, but soon coherent thought came to him through the comfortable fog in which he found himself... *Miss?*

"You were in a car accident. You're in the hospital."

He tried to speak, but all that came out was something akin to "Mmmph."

In a soft, melodious soprano.

His eyes flew open, dimly registering the rim of long, thick eyelashes, fuller and darker than his had ever been before. The mounded covers over his chest were the first things he focused on, and the delicate hands and slender wrists that moved towards his face.

A round Latina nurse in maroon scrubs entered his field of vision quickly and took one of his alien hands between her own soft, warm ones. His over-amped senses clearly felt the dryness of her constant hand-washing as she chafed his fingers between her own.

"Don't try to talk just yet," she told him. "You had a breathing tube in your throat. We just took it out, and your throat is going to be a little swollen and sore. I'll get you some water, okay?"

Scarcely able to believe what was happening, Dr. Ashton Walters nodded numbly and watched the nurse duck out of the room in a resilient, peppy stride. He took the time to lift the standard-issue threadbare hospital blanket and look down at the chintzy pattern on the flimsy hospital gown which stretched valiantly over the huge, soft mounds on a chest suddenly devoid of hair and much narrower than the one he'd grown accustomed to seeing when he looked down.

The long-fingered hands cupped the mounds gently, and he distinctly *felt* the touch. The proud silicone masterpieces on his chest belonged to him, they were undeniably attached, and the nerves in their oh-so-sensitive flesh were connected to his own brain. He instantly discarded the idea that he was dreaming – he'd never dreamed this vividly in his life, even during his brief flirtation with LSD in his college days. This *had* to be real, and that meant that he owned a rather spectacular pair of firm, spherical breasts, perched in gravity-defying pride over a narrow trunk with prominent ribs, a soft but well-defined belly that he could not begin to see over the obstruction of the breasts, adorned with some sort of dangling jewelry in a piercing above the navel, the abdominal muscles tapering and disappearing behind a firm swell of very soft, pliable fat, leading down to...

He willed his hands to stop. *I don't think I can handle knowing that just yet.*

With a struggle, he forced his upper body's weight onto his elbows and looked around. He was in one of the med/surg rooms on the upper floors – impossible to mistake that tacky, 50's-era furniture and the nauseatingly soothing paint on the walls, the geriatric television in its bracket high on the wall tuned to daytime talk television with the sound muted, the white-board on the wall by the glove dispenser and sharps container on the wall near the door, stating clearly that his nurse's name was Maria, his tech was an unknown man named Jerome and the charge nurse for the shift was Lisa.

He looked around slowly, and a tuft of shockingly white-blond hair, with just a hint of curl towards the end, bobbed mischievously across his eyes. He brushed it behind one ear with long fingers in what seemed eerily like a practiced motion.

A petite and delicate foot, toenails painted bubblegum pink, peeked from beneath one corner of the blanket. Dr. Warner willed the toes to wiggle, and they responded instantly. He had to fight the urge to cry out in disbelief and something disturbingly near to terror.

What in the hell happened to me? he thought frantically.

The nurse bounded back in quickly, bearing a small plastic cup of water and a blood-pressure cuff. She gave the cup to Dr. Warner – who drank gratefully, coaching himself to keep it to small sips – and busied herself taking a pulse and pressure.

"What..." he began in the foreign-sounding soprano, before his throat closed.

"You were in an accident. The ambulance brought you to the ER last night, and you were in very bad shape," the nurse explained.

"And?"

She gazed at me speculatively for a moment, one eyebrow cocked up, before lowering her voice to a conspirational tone and saying, "Do you believe in miracles, Miss Walters?"

"Miracles..?"

"You were dying, the doctors said. Right there, on the table. Then, you just... stopped dying. You got better. The x-rays, the CT scans, the MRI, they all confirm it. There's nothing wrong with you. You're completely healthy."

That's not possible, he thought darkly. *There's no way all that damage just spontaneously healed and went away. Ashlyn was just a piece of meat, and this is her body.*

"My..." he stopped, coaching himself to say the right word so the nurse didn't think he was crazy, or suffering from lingering head trauma and causing a new batch of tests, "...brother?"

The nurse's eyes fell and a fat tear glistened at one corner. "He died, Miss Walters. Right beside you. He'd just told the doctors to stop trying to resuscitate you, and he touched you once and then just fell. I'm so sorry."

Walters sighed heavily. He remembered touching something, something cold and hard...

"Did you –" a pause for a wracking cough, and more sips of water "–find a necklace?"

Thankful for the change of subject, the nurse opened the white plastic bag the hospital used to store patient belongings and dug around in it. Walters stole a glance – the bloodied clothing had been destroyed, and only a purse, a pair of heels and some other sundries were inside. The nurse fished inside until she came out with a golden, glittering pendant which threw off bright sparkles of sunlight through the dusty blinds as it spun on its chain.

Warner took it and examined it closely with his new, more-sensitive fingers. He noted, distractedly, the remnants of pearlescent polish near his cuticles as he traced the design on the strange medallion, some strange script and odd glyphs he'd never seen before. They looked Oriental, or possibly even South American, but there was no way to be sure.

Nothing stirred in his mind or body when he touched the pendant, like it had before. Little russet smears of his sister's – *his* – dried blood filled the indentations of the writing and symbols. Many mystic sects believed in the use of human blood to activate items of power. Was that what had happened here? He scraped up a little fleck with a fingernail and it fell onto the fabric of the gown, on the top slopes of his protruding, mammoth breasts. The weight and drag of their considerable weight suddenly flooded into his perception, and he sat back roughly against the scratchy pillow. Rabbit-soft, dense hair seemed to inflate around his face, ringing his entire field of vision with its artificial whiteness.

"You're tired," the nurse said airily, standing and taking her equipment with her. "I'll let you rest. The doctor wants you kept overnight for observation, but you can probably go home tomorrow. They'll be bringing lunch in a moment."

"Who's my doctor?" Walters croaked.

"Dr. Flynn," she said, closing the door behind her.

Eric Flynn is a good doc, Walters thought. I don't know if I can be straight with him about this, though. If a patient told me he'd switched bodies with his dying sister, I'd send him downstairs for a CT scan and then call for a psych consult.

No, I probably better keep this to myself, Walters decided, winding the medallion and chain in his slender fist and closing his eyes. A small, irrational part of himself hoped that he'd wake and find that nothing had happened, that he was still a burned-out thoracic surgeon with a hangdog expression and a bad back, slumped over a counter in the ICU at the end of a long shirt, and could simply vow to never eat dill pickles or pepperoni pizza before bedtime and this would never, ever happen again.

Sleep found him finally, his thoughts fixated on strange glyphs and writing and the wonder of what those scrawls meant.

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He woke alone, a bit disoriented but still undeniably possessing breasts and long blonde hair – from the volume of it in his mouth when he woke, there was no denying its presence. A tray with a cooling, congealing hospital meal sat on the rollaway table beside the bed, along with a fresh pitcher of water. Walters decided that the roll on the lunch tray didn't look too disgusting, and broke off a piece to nibble while he fetched the small purse from the plastic bag of Ashlyn's belongings next to the bed.

The purse was supple black leather and bore the twin, back-to-back "C's" of Chanel. Dr. Warner didn't know much about designer anything, but he did know Chanel was very chic and very expensive. He clicked open the catch with nervous fingers and looked inside, hoping to find something that could lead him to why this all happened, some clue about the life of the twin sister he'd never really known since he was a teenager.

For such a small bag, a remarkable amount of detritus and stuff resided inside. Walters set each item out carefully, arranged on the blanket in front of him to be examined carefully before being replaced inside. Two tubes of lipstick and a makeup compact. Three Tampax "Pearl" tampons – that almost made him groan in anguish. A ring of keys, with a big sterling silver heart key-fob, Ashlyn's name picked out on it in pink rhinestones. No less than fifty business cards, crammed into every space inside the purse. A three-pack of condoms, one missing, that

brought the anguished groan that the tampons couldn't. A spare pair of pink, barely-there tee-backed thong panties. A convenience pack of Kleenex. A silver "lipstick" lighter with Ashlyn's name engraved and a half-empty pack of Virginia Slims Ultra Lights cigarettes that went a long way towards explaining the nervous, fidgety feeling he'd awoken having. Even if his mind was his own, the addiction still resided firmly in Ashlyn's slender body and now it was his own.

Cursory examinations of each item yielded very little information – the business cards were from every area and every vocation he could imagine, from mechanics and property managers to doctors, lawyers and financial planners and everything in between, nothing to suggest a religious or spiritual leader or even a new-age crystal shop where Ashlyn could have purchased the golden medallion – but Dr. Warner had left the cellphone and the wallet until last, so he could devote full attention to them. He stuffed the other items back into the designer purse, closed it, and set about digging into the leather ladies' wallet for some clue, when a soft knock on the door diverted his attention away, and the tall, gawky figure of Dr. Eric Flynn crept through the door, a chart in one hand and the signature cup of coffee in his other. He cleared his throat and offered a pleasant smile.

"Ashlyn, it's good to see you awake," he said in a pleasant tenor. "How are you feeling?"

"Okay," he croaked, throat still ravaged from the endotracheal tube so recently removed.

"Good," he said, taking a seat in the chair beside the bed. "I was so sorry to hear about your brother. I knew him. He was a very good doctor. He helped a lot of people."

Bullshit, but I'll take it, Walters thought, but said, "Thanks."

"We have all of your tests back," he began explaining, leaning forward. "Your x-rays and CT, your MRI, all of them show that there is utterly no damage whatsoever to your internal organs or your bones..."

Walters stopped paying attention, looking instead at the doctor's face and the strange, distracted expression he wore. Walters' mind immediately went into overdrive, hoping for a glimpse of the chart he referred to periodically, wondering over and over what Flynn was hiding, what medical condition it contained that Flynn wouldn't mention. It took the better part of five minutes of frantic, near-panicked thinking before realization dawned.

Oh my God, he's not hiding anything, Walters thought in abject shock, eyes widening. *He's staring at Ashlyn's – I mean my – tits! That fucker's ogling me and he's not even trying to hide it. I should kick him square in the cods!*

Outrage and disbelief warred in Walters' mind, with an end result of just shocked muteness and wide, unbelieving eyes, as his friend and colleague announced all the rest of his clinical findings to Walters' left nipple, which betrayed him by starting to stiffen and tent out the front of the tacky hospital gown.

"There is one thing I do need to discuss with you," Flynn said, clearing his throat and finally having the decorum to look a little embarrassed. "Your toxicology report came back. Traces of alcohol were found, which isn't a problem because you weren't the driver, but we also found traces of MDMA – that's ecstasy – and cocaine in your system."

My sister did drugs? Walters thought abashedly, all thoughts of the scrotal abuse he'd been plotting against the good doctor suddenly forgotten. What the hell happened to her during that time apart?

"I'm going to give you some literature, some reputable rehabilitation centers here locally..."

Walters immediately shifted into "nod and smile" mode, tuning out the rest of the spiel he himself had given to so many of his patients over the years. Perhaps some of the literature would prove useful later, when he started to "jones" for a high, but for now he just wanted to be quit of the doctor and get back to his investigation of his sister's – now his – life.

* * *

One short nap and a very forgettable dinner later, Ashton Walters was awake again, going through his sister's wallet, trying to find out more about the woman in whose body he was now trapped. The wallet contained about \$200 in cash, a drivers' license showing her as a nonplussed-looking, sallow girl without the bee-stung lips and bleach-blond hair she sported now, and insurance on a convertible Mercedes coupe. She carried several credit cards – the standard platinum Visa and MasterCard, but also store accounts with Macy's, Bloomingdale's, Nordstrom's and Neiman-Marcus and had "Preferred Customer" cards with Frederick's of Hollywood and a sex-shop he'd heard of downtown called Tough Love that specialized in leather and latex. He found some drink vouchers for a few nightclubs tucked in here and there, but the most curious discovery was a Screen Actors' Guild card under the names Ashlyn Michelle Walters *and* Ashlynn Brooks.

My sister was an actress? Aspiring, maybe? No, she would've had to be successful to have all these lines of credit and a Mercedes, Walters thought. I would've recognized her if I'd seen her in any movies or TV shows, I think.

The most promising lead Walters discovered was in the phone, however. The address book overflowed with numbers, but they were first-name only, people with names like "Brandee" and "Tiffani" and "Ambyr" mostly. But there was a number for "Duke," and the listing Walters found under that name listed him as her agent. Maybe a call to him would reveal some more information, if he could play the part well enough to convince this "Duke" that he was his sister. Not having spoken to her in years, though, Walters harbored no illusions that he could be convincing, with no idea as to the turns of phrase or idioms his sister frequented. Best to play "injured and out-of-it," he decided. Maybe that would deflect any undue scrutiny.

He pressed 'Send' and pressed the phone to his ear, jumping slightly when he heard the unfamiliar *click* of the handset against the tiny diamond stud through the piercing – one of many in each lobe, and also in the cartilage – in his new, petite ears. The phone rang a few times before an overly-enthusiastic, fake voice exploded against his eardrums, making him jerk the phone away a little.

"Ashlyn, baby, how's my favorite blonde? What can I do for you, honey?"

"Uh... hi, Duke," Walters said in a put-on muzzy, out of it voice. "I was in a car accident."

"Oh my God, sweetheart, are you okay? Are you hurt?" The voice took on a shrewd edge. "Are you gonna be able to work?"

"I'm a little banged up, and they have me on painkillers," he lied, to explain away the gaps. "I'm kinda out of it, but they say I can go home tomorrow. I think I'll be able to work, I guess."

"You have a shoot on Wednesday, baby, do I need to call and cancel?"

Four days from now. "I should be able to make it. Remind me, where is it? What is it?"

"Studio 6. The place behind the restaurant supply warehouse. You've been there a million times, baby doll," he said placatingly. "If memory serves, you have a girl-girl hot tub scene and then a double blowjob scene with Ambyr Steele, and that's it. You feel up to it?"

Oh, Jesus, Walters thought. *I'm a fucking porn star. No wonder I haven't seen Ashlyn in anything, she makes fuck flicks.*

"Uh... I think I'll be up to it," he said, just to forestall any more questions. Walters had no intention of being at that film shoot, but he needed the time to make up an excuse to not be there. "I'll know a lot more in a day or so."

"The get-ready is scheduled for Tuesday at Salon DeVille, okay? Call Monica, she's got everything all set up. You take care of yourself, baby," Duke bade. "If you need anything – anything at all – you let Duke know. Promise me."

"I promise."

"Okay, then," he said. "Listen, doll, I'm late for a meeting, gotta run. Love you. *Ciao.*"

The line went dead before my muttered "*ciao*" even got through to him. Walters dropped the phone from suddenly nerveless fingers and a profound throbbing headache began in each of his temples. He heard his teeth grit audibly, and the porcelain veneers he wore in his augmented smile shifted painfully against his gums.

He took a deep breath to steady himself and massaged his temples. *Get a hold of yourself, Walters,* he bade himself roughly. *If you want to have any prayer of getting things back to the way they were, you're going to have to play the part. People have to believe I'm Ashlyn or they're never going to open up to me, much less the fact that they'd probably have me committed. Which means I have to go through all the motions. Nobody can know I'm not really her, until I can get this mess figured out.*

He sighed heavily and nestled his face into the nest of soft blonde hair blossomed around his head, trying to find sleep amidst tension, stress and some very troubled dreams.

* * *

Walters woke early, spitting out another copious mouthful of soft blonde hair, before shift change on the hall, and took some time to practice the signature he'd found on one of Ashlyn's credit cards so that he could sign the discharge paperwork without incident. She habitually scrawled a little heart next to her name, which was all bubbly circles and flourishes, and he forced himself to adopt it as well even though it made him feel utterly foolish doing so. He fought off the jittery, uncomfortable feeling in his gut – *it has to be a cigarette craving, I'm convinced of it* – and stood unsteadily, trying desperately to acquaint himself with the subtle science of moving a woman's body. By taking smaller steps, placing one foot in front of the other and swiveling his hips in what seemed a shameless display of tits and ass, he was able to approximate a woman's stride without too much trouble, and the hip movement kept him

from slinging his enormous breasts all over the room, which had proved early on to be a very painful and embarrassing proposition.

Then, the part he'd dreaded subconsciously since the realization of his situation first hit. Padding on the intensely cold floor tiles, he made his mincing way to the bathroom and sat on the cold seat, gathering the hospital gown around his hips as he did. He barely got used to the sensation of his new, highly-padded derrière spreading out onto the cold plastic seat when he felt the heavy pressure in his lower abdomen release, and the hot, damp flow of his first pee as a female begin to flow from him to spatter loudly in the toilet water. The tight, controlled stream he knew was gone, replaced by a messy splatter and drip which coated his entire unexplored vulva with rapidly-cooling dampness. Mortified, Walters took a wad of tissue and blotted himself as dry as he could, then released the snaps on the shoulders of his gown and let the insubstantial garment fall to the floor around his ankles.

Cold morning air assaulted his skin, which pebbled immediately, and the over-large pink nipples crowning the two massive spheres on his narrow chest stiffened and tightened into hard points, about the size of mini-marshmallows and jutting proudly. Unable to put it off any longer, Walters started the water in the little stall shower and turned to the mirror to take his first unadulterated look at his new body.

The first thing to strike him was the *ooh-la-la* Jayne Mansfield hourglass. Ashlyn kept herself in remarkably good shape, despite the drugs, alcohol and cigarettes – Walters was certain that she worked out constantly (there was a well-worn gym membership ID in the wallet along with the charge cards) and ate well. In fact, the sudden feeling of revulsion and nausea he'd experienced upon trying to eat the overcooked chicken in last night's dinner pointed explicitly to the fact that Ashlyn was vegetarian, perhaps even vegan, long enough that the smell, sight and texture of cooked flesh had become physically repellent to her.

Smooth but well-defined muscles dimpled the smooth, unblemished skin of her thighs and abdomen, her calves, her back and her arms. Not to the veiny, hard edges he was used to in men, but a softer, distinctly feminine firmness masked into subtle and soft curves by the thick layer of subcutaneous fat characteristic of female skin. It took a bit of work to tear his eyes away from the perfectly round, pert breasts with their erect nipples – they certainly dominated the sight of Ashlyn's naked body – but the rest of her bespoke long hours of hard work, perfectly conditioned and toned. A seemingly-impossible narrow waist flared gracefully into full hips, which tapered to a gentle little swell of mons and the pouting pink of labia tucked out of sight between her thighs, set off by a perfectly landscaped little triangle of downy pubic hair. Muscular but still soft legs tapered gracefully to slender ankles and delicate little feet.

Narrow shoulders and long, willowy arms led into a long swan's neck and a little round face, dominated by huge, guileless blue eyes rimmed with impossibly long lashes. Full, pouting lips – *cocksucking lips*, Walters thought with a heavy heart – in a perpetual flirtatious moué over a delicate, tapered chin, all framed by a dense and shiny landslide of thick, incredibly soft blonde hair falling in soft wavy tendrils to the small of her back, over her shoulders and down to her waist, framing the perfect breasts to artistic effect.

Completely unblemished, nearly glowing skin covered the whole body, impossibly soft and even-toned as though airbrushed, tanned to a healthy, beach-bunny amber glow with white triangles over nipples and vulva, tan-lines from the thong bikini Walters could never remember wearing. The tan had the airbrushed, matte quality of a professional job, done from a spray-

gun instead of risking the damage from the sun. Nothing about Ashlyn's body, he realized, was left to chance. She kept complete control of every bit of it.

A small, rhinestone butterfly dangled from the navel piercing and Ashlyn had a complicated tribal-style "tramp stamp" tattoo in the small of her back made of interlocking hearts and lipstick kisses in addition to the little butterfly on her left ankle. The telltale *click* of something hard against his teeth caused him to stick out a long, pink tongue at his reflection in the mirror and noted a small, silver stud nestled in the deep groove down the middle.

He tossed his head in what could only be instinctive fashion to swing the long, soft hair around his body and arms until it all hung down his back, and brushed the stray locks from his china-doll face with that same, eerily practiced motion. He stepped delicately over the tiled lip of the shower stall and felt the hot water against his incredibly sensitive skin, pulling the curtain closed behind him.

The hospital's soap obviously finished far behind whatever Ashlyn used on a regular basis, feeling harsh and astringent against her skin, but Walters still took his time soaping up and carefully cleaning the vulva and breasts, trying to ignore the thrilling frissons of pleasure spiking up and down his new body at the barest, slightest touch. It seemed to take forever to work the generic shampoo and conditioner through the long hair and get it rinsed out, and the fat coil of wet hair flopped painfully against his ass and back as he tossed it around in frantic attempts to wash it. He even spared a few breathlessly nervous and overly careful moments to shave beneath his armpits and on his shins and calves, not wanting to but committing as strongly as he could to maintaining the illusion that he was Ashlyn. After what seemed like hours, he blotted his smooth skin dry with a scratchy towel, wrapped it around his large breasts, and wrapped another turban-style around his thick, heavily damp hair. He got the head-wrap right on the first try, which surprised him. Maybe those kinds of things were actually genetic, coded to the double-X chromosome, and didn't have to be taught.

He actually began enjoying the sensation of brushing out the long, silky tresses in the chair by the window – there was something hypnotic and soothing about the rhythmic up-and-down motions of his arms, and the strange body mechanics involved in negotiating the huge breasts. His hair was only a little bit damp still by the time the nurse came in – not the round, chipper Latina from yesterday, but a tall, tow-headed male nurse with a soul patch and piercing blue eyes. His eyes latched immediately onto my breasts, which he devoured visually, and his stance took on a predatory, almost menacing aspect that Walters found simultaneously frightening and thrilling. A damp feeling of *flowering open* blossomed between his legs, and he fought the urge to squirm.

Holy shit, Walters thought. I think I'm actually attracted to him! Dear God, will this ever end?

"Hey, I'm Kurt," he said in a smooth basso. "You must be Ashlyn. The Miracle Girl everybody's been talking about. How're you feeling, Ashlyn?"

A shy, blushing smile spread on the pouting lips against all efforts to suppress it. Walters felt his cheeks color and he found himself regarding the young nurse through lowered lashes.

"I'm good," he said in a soprano made husky by the lingering aftereffects of the intubation.

"Ready to go home."

"I bet," he said, coming over to check a pulse that was suddenly fluttering much more quickly than it had before. Little warm tingles rippled along his arm from the touch. "Nobody likes the hospital."

"So, um... I'm gonna need some clothes," Walters mentioned shyly. "They cut all mine off."

He smiled an easy smile, perhaps even a rehearsed one. "No problem," he said. "I'll call down and have 'em bring some up. I can't promise you designer, you understand."

"Just enough to cover my ass," Walters said, then almost jumped when he realized what he'd said. *Drawing attention to my own nudity? I'm actually hitting on this guy without even meaning to! I can't turn it off!*

"I think we have that," he laughed. "Well, you seem to be doing great. The doctor's gonna be here soon and he'll start you on the paperwork. You'll be out of here by lunchtime. You want some breakfast?"

"Just some coffee," Walters said, fearing that a plate of eggs would trigger some dormant vegan reaction and have him vomiting. "Maybe a bagel or something."

"I'll see what I can't scare up," Kurt said, rising smoothly and offering Walters a long – and unnervingly tempting – view of his tight, toned buttocks as he walked out the door. The scary part was that Walters was fairly sure that he *knew* he was ogling him. Like it was all orchestrated just to check what Walters' reaction would be, and he fell for the trap like a naïve little schoolgirl.

Waitaminnit, he thought with rising alarm. *Did I just call myself a schoolgirl?*

He calmed himself. Faced with the constant reminders of the long blonde Barbie-doll hair and the jutting, massive breasts, the long eyelashes constantly in the field of vision and the altered body mechanics and center of gravity battering his senses every moment, no reason existed that he shouldn't begin to visualize himself in the feminine in subtle ways. His sketchy knowledge of psychology – just enough to know when to call for a consultation – allowed him enough introspection to know he probably shouldn't waste energy trying to fight it. Better to concentrate on the big-ticket problems and let the other, smaller ones just fall by the wayside. Besides, referring to himself in feminine terms would go a long way to further the illusion that he was actually his sister Ashlyn in mind as well as body.

The discharge lecture passed in a blur – Walters hardly paid attention, he'd given the same spiel so many times in his career – and he concentrated mostly on keeping the rounded, bubble-script his sister used consistent on the pages he signed and dated in endless series. Kurt came in at one point with a box full of clothing, and Walters excused himself long enough to duck into the bathroom and wiggle his way into a too-tight and too-short pair of jeans, a loose-fitting tee-shirt for a long-gone spring break weekend that still strained to contain his bouncing breasts and a baby-pink bra with lacy cups that pushed his breasts up temptingly and pinched the hell out of his armpits. He slipped himself into the designer Ferragamo heels he'd found in the belonging bag, teetering dangerously on the four inch heels, thankful that he would have a wheelchair ride to the front doors and only a few steps to the back seat of the taxi he'd summoned, never betraying his lack of confidence and balance in the sleek, stiletto-heeled black patent open-toes. He even took a moment to apply some soft pink lipstick, pausing a moment at the cloying, perfumeey taste and scent before blotting his lips on a folded

piece of toilet tissue the way he'd seen his mother do when he'd been young. A folded slip of paper tucked into the belonging bag gave Kurt's cell-phone number, as well.

I guess I work fast, Walters thought before dropping the crumpled Post-it into the wastebasket without a second thought. He fought down a few stray thoughts of what calling the attractive young nurse might lead to, which gave him more pleasure than he'd expected.

He left the hospital by wheelchair about an hour later, waiting in the bright sunlight outside as the yellow cab pulled under the portico to pick him up. He gave the address he'd memorized from Ashlyn's drivers' license and tucked the little Chanel purse under one arm, tottering on the high heels for the five steps from the chair to the back seat. He pushed a pair of oversized, bug-eyed sunglasses with a Dolce & Gabbana logo on the side on his slender nose and lounged in the backseat, fishing in the purse again. He set aside the visions of all the tumors he'd removed, all the damaged tissue he'd cut from countless patients, and pulled one of the over-long, white cigarettes from the pack he'd found. He had to maintain the illusion – Ashlyn smoked, so he had to smoke as well or someone would notice, and at this point even a tumor would be preferable to the squirming, irritable ache behind his eyelids and the little throbbing headache he'd developed from nicotine withdrawal. The first drag brought uncontrollable coughing, but by his third puff he figured out to let the smoke cool momentarily in his mouth before drawing it down into his lungs. A tingling little buzz spread through his fingers and toes, easing the built-up tension and discomfort, as he let the inhaled smoke out through the open car window in a long, feathery plume. They didn't taste as horrid as he'd imagined, either – the flavor was nothing like the smell. It was actually quite pleasant, once he got used to it. By the time they pulled away from the curb and into traffic, Walters found himself thoroughly enjoying his cigarette, and actually saddened a little when he had to toss the spent, lipstick-stained butt out the window and exhale the last of the smoke into the outside air.

The cab turned into a well-to-do, manicured subdivision a short time later, past long driveways and professionally-tended lawns, onto a shady street with some old-growth oak trees stretching above the quiet street to provide dappled shade. They turned into a circular flagstone driveway in front of a modern, glass-fronted one-story house. A candy-apple red Mercedes convertible sat in the drive.

"Here we go, ma'am," the cabbie said amiably. "That's gonna be thirty-eight dollars and twenty-three cents."

Walters wordlessly passed him two twenties and a five and climbed unsteadily out of the car, waiting for him to disappear down the shady street before slipping out of the heels and padding across the uncomfortably warm flagstones to the front door. The key on the heart-shaped ring fit the lock and Walters ducked inside into a tiled foyer decorated with tasteful and expensive-looking furniture, a coat rack, a low table with a Mexican tiled top and a gorgeous framed pencil sketch of a silhouetted figure on horseback. Walters dropped the designer purse and sunglasses unceremoniously on the tabletop and began a detailed exploration of the large house, searching for clues which would make his portrayal of his porn-starlet sister even more convincing, leading him deep enough into her life that he could find a way out and back to his old self.

* * *

He tapped ash from his long cigarette – his third since he'd arrived at the house – into a crystal ashtray and looked again at the long double rows of framed posters for pornographic movies

lining the walls of the entertainment room. Ashlynn Brooks is *Insatiable*. *Inside Ashlynn Brooks*. Ashlynn Brooks in *Girls Will Be Girls*. Ashlynn Brooks in *Booty Calls*. Ashlynn Brooks in *Bored Housewives*. Ashlynn Brooks is *The Cheating Wife*. Ashlynn Brooks stars in *The Chambermaid*. Dozens more, each featuring a lurid, hyper-glamorous picture of his sister – himself, now – in some racy costume, hair teased and makeup flawless, posing provocatively atop platform heels and breasts dangerously near to popping out. A small case near the enormous 64" plasma television contained some adult video awards for Best Newcomer, Best Girl-Girl Scene, Best Group Sex Scene and Outstanding Actress. It nearly overwhelmed him, seeing the volume of overt sex his sister – he – had used to establish himself and make his living.

He clutched the mother lode in his hands – a stack of DVDs of Ashlynn Brooks' movies, each with a behind-the-scenes featurette listed among the special features. At long last, Walters would be able to get a peek at how his sister acted outside of her roles, the way she talked and walked and laughed. Finding only champagne, whipped cream, ketchup and some caviar in the refrigerator, he ordered a vegetarian pizza from a nearby delivery place and selected an apple from a fruit basket on the kitchen counter to munch while he waited, along with a bottle of water. Once ensconced with his lunch-slash-dinner, Walters intended to turn the ringer off on his phone and lock the doors, studying nothing but his sister's mannerisms and turns of phrase until he had them letter perfect, even if it took him all night.

* * *

Morning sun was just peeking over his fastidiously-manicured hedges to the east when Walters rubbed his eyes gently, yawned, and stretched a collection of kinks and knots out of his slender, well-muscled back. After changing from the ill-fitting hospital clothes into a pair of satin pajama bottoms and a little camisole spaghetti-strap top, he'd fallen asleep curled in a capacious leather recliner in the screening room, watching behind-the-scenes interviews from Ashlynn Brooks in *Untamed Heat* over and over trying to master the throaty giggle his sister used to denote sexual amusement. He'd practiced her mannerisms and gestures, her turns of phrase and her trademarks in a mirror he'd dragged from a nearby guest room. The four bottles of water on the table beside him only served to remind him how very tiny his new bladder had become, and the two slices missing from the large pizza testified to the shrunken status of his stomach. He still, remarkably, felt full even though he'd eaten several hours ago. And he discovered much to his chagrin that he'd smoked a whole pack of the long, feminine cigarettes, as well, after finding a carton of them in the walk-in pantry off the kitchen. He seemed to suffer no ill effects, thankfully, from the smoking, other than a mildly scratchy throat. He had found a fat little baggie of cocaine in Ashlyn's purse, tucked under the pressed powder in her makeup compact and a slew of prescription medications in the cabinet in the master bathroom, and decided against throwing them out. Although he did not plan to touch any of them, he felt it best to keep the trappings of Ashlyn's life in place in case someone noticed she wasn't acting quite herself.

The websites on her pink Macintosh laptop led him no closer to the source of the mysterious amulet that had launched this wild adventure, but there were several books about witchcraft and spells, New Age philosophy and spirit migration on her shelves, dogeared and well-handled to prove they were not just for show. Several of them had price-tags still attached, with the title "Questing Spirits Bookstore" scribed above the computerized bar-codes. A quick consult of the Yellow Pages online showed the store to be only a short drive away.

Still, as promising as the lead was, Walters opted to maintain his sister's morning routine – or at least what he imagined that routine to be. He started with a brisk, hour-long workout with heavy cardio (to offset the cigarettes, he told himself) and flexibility work, and low-weight high-repetition resistance training to keep his tone and condition. He admitted grudgingly that it was a pleasure, indeed, to be in control of such a supple and exquisitely conditioned body. He hadn't *enjoyed* a physical workout like that in a very long time, since his days of high-school football as a teenager. Next, Walters determined, would be a good bath and as dedicated a stab at skin- and hair-care as he could manage with his limited knowledge. The shower and dressing table in the master bath contained a pharmacopeia of products, everything from leave-in conditioners and exfoliants to deep root moisturizers and rejuvenators. He couldn't begin to guess at what they all did, opting instead for the bottles and tubes that looked the most-used. He was reading labels and directions, waiting for the sunken garden tub to fill with lavender-scented bubbles, when the phone rang, making him jump and desperately hope that his Ashlyn impersonation was polished enough to be convincing...

SUMMARY: A doctor is called into the emergency room only to find his dying twin sister who he touches which leads to an instant switch with him in his sister's body, and his old male self now dead.

EN FEMME

Part Two

by Valerie Hope

ASHTON WALTERS PICKED UP THE ringing cellphone – the tone was some techno, thumping-bass tune he didn't recognize – in trembling fingers, wondering just who the "Kerri" that popped up on the caller ID could be to his sister. He pressed the "Send" button with a thumb and pressed the receiver to his ear, still unused to the soft *click* of the handset against the stud in his earlobe.

"Hello?"

"Wassup, bitch?" a perky, drunken-sounding voice queried loudly, the sounds of loud music thumping in the background. "I heard you were in a wreck, are you okay?"

Walters tried to sound like his sister, what he'd gained from her personality from the behind-the-scenes featurettes of some of her porn movies. He couldn't keep his voice from shaking. "Hey, mama," he tried to chirp in the unintelligent-sounding, upbeat cadence he'd heard. "No, I'm totally good. Just a couple, like, bumps and bruises and stuff."

"You sure you're okay, lil' mama? You sound – I dunno – *weird* or something."

Because I'm trying to sound like a bimbo using only cues I got from porn DVD extras, I have no idea who the fuck you are, lady, and I'm stuck in the body of my dead twin sister, he thought angrily. You'd sound – I dunno – weird or something, too.

But he forced himself to say, "I'm still on some pretty fuckin' major painkillers, sweetie. I guess I'm still kinda fucked up."

Kerri seemed to take that as a viable explanation, because she changed the subject straight away. "So, um... did you decide already, or what?"

"Decide what?" Walters chirped, playing 'clueless' to the hilt.

"OhmyGawd, you're such a fuckin' tard sometimes, bitch," Kerri laughed. "Decide about my cousin, mama! Do you want to, like, hire her as your assistant or what?"

Walters tried to work the 'diva' angle to forestall any discussions like this. "Baby, I seriously can't fuckin' handle this right now," he said, trying hard to pepper his speech with f-bombs and extraneous words the way he'd heard his sister do on the videos, but not *overdo* it. "Gimme, like, a week or some shit and let me get back to you."

"Oh, come *on*, Ashlyn!" Kerri complained. "You said you'd fuckin' hire her two weeks ago. Look, baby, I just don't want her havin' to strip like we did to make her money, okay? She can fuckin' type and answer phones and shit as good as anybody, she'll probably eat your pussy every once in a while if you ask her... what the fuck else do you need?"

Oh, God. It's charity nepotism, he thought, but at least now he had a little piece of Ashlyn's history. He could dimly hear "Please welcome to the main stage, the lovely..." booming out of a cheap set of PA speakers behind Kerri's conversation, telling Walters his friend had called from work. Probably the first place Ashlyn had worked after dropping out of college, where she'd met her friend Kerri and probably launched her career in porn. And now he'd promised to hire this woman's cousin, in a desperate attempt to keep her from the skin industry. As if being Girl Friday to a porn starlet was going to protect her at all – she'd still be going to the parties, meeting the people... eventually, the cousin was going to wind up with her clothes off and *someone* paying her for it. But Kerri-the-stripper just saw a cushy desk job.

"Okay, okay," he breathed. "I'll hire her. She can start – I dunno – next week. Tell her to come by a week from Monday."

"OhmyGawd, are you fuckin' serious?" Kerri squealed. "Mama, you are the fuckin' *bomb!* Thank you so fuckin' much, you're, like, my fuckin' hero and shit! I'm gonna call her right now! You *rock*, mama, you fuckin' *rock*. Thank you thank you thank you! I will so eat your pussy the next time I see you!"

"It's cool, baby, seriously. Totally cool. Tell her to call me next week and we'll, like, set everything up. She's gonna have to file forms and stuff with the IRS, that kind of stuff."

"Oh, God, totally! I'll tell her, she's gonna *shit* herself! This is so awesome, baby..."

"Hey, Kerri, I gotta go. I'm... uh... late for an appointment. Can I call you later?"

"Huh? Oh, sure, baby, no prob! Thank you so much!" Kerri squealed. "Hey, come by the club later, I'll buy you a drink. I'll buy you six drinks. Love ya!"

"Ciao," he mumbled, and pressed 'End.' *Dear God*, he thought, looking at the phone as if it were to blame for his newest acquisition of a personal assistant he'd never met. *This is the life she lived? Strippers and porn stars and cocaine and no one with a brain larger than a walnut? She was such a bright little girl, before Mom died. How did she wind up here?*

Walters hung up the phone and lowered his new, nubile body inch-by-inch into the bubbles, feeling the warmth creep up the smooth, hairless legs inch by delicious inch, then caressing every little fold and crevice of his unexplored sex, making him gasp a little. Unbidden, thoughts of himself, heavily made up, hair in an elaborate up-do, flooded his brain, lounging in a luxurious pampering bubble bath with a fluted glass of expensive champagne and an imported cigar, perhaps talking to a lover on a brass-trimmed, white enamel French phone.

He sighed luxuriantly when the buoyancy of the water took some of the oppressive weight of his breasts from his chest, leaving just the prominent pink nipples breaking the surface of the water beneath the foamy bubbles. One adorable shimmy later, he made himself utterly comfortable and sat back, resting his head on the pillow, silken softness of his new blonde hair, closed his eyes and soaked, trying to take it all in.

Okay, Walters, I guess we're past trying to deny this or say it's impossible, even though it is, he thought. *We just have to deal with the matter at hand. First, we have to figure out what, exactly, happened and how to possibly reverse it. I'll start with that bookstore, and maybe go through the bedroom and study and look for a journal or diary. Maybe I can find out a little more about Ashlyn while I'm at it. Next is to keep studying, to try to act and present myself as much like Ashlyn did as possible, so no one thinks I'm anything other than what my sister was. If anyone*

suspects the truth, I'll be put away and have to stay like this forever – especially with a history of drug abuse. They'd stick me in some rehab clinic and gork me out on so many antipsychotics I'd never get out.

Walters drifted to sleep for a while – the anxiety of his situation took a heavy toll, despite his enforced calm and rationality – and didn't wake until the water began to get cold. With the huge doses of moisturizers in the bubble-bath and bath oils he'd added to the water, his skin didn't even get pruny from the long immersion. Hoping he was doing everything right, he drained the tub and turned on a warm shower – his new, super-sensitive skin couldn't handle the steaming, near-painful heat of the showers he'd taken in his male form – and rinsed his hair, shampooed it twice with a protein-enriched salon shampoo and then finger-combed a generous dollop of leave-in conditioner from the roots all the way to the ends. He blotted himself dry and applied an additional moisturizer, then a floral-scented powder. Walters decided he had waited long enough – it was hard, after years as a physician, not to stay concerned and cognizant of things like this – and lit another of the long cigarettes to enjoy as he perched, ankles crossed (the way he'd seen Ashlyn do in the videos), on his velvet-cushioned dressing stool, and brushed his hair dry while looking out over his verdant lawn.

Next door, a young man glistened with sweat in the sunshine, trimming the hedges of the similarly-ostentatious status home on the lot next to Ashlyn's. Walters sucked absently on the cigarette, hair-brushing forgotten, and he looked down to find stiff nipples and detect a warm, musky smell arising from his crotch.

Just how like Ashlyn do I expect myself to be? he wondered, shocked. *I don't want to feel this way every time I see a guy with biceps. I can't believe my sister walked around this horny, day in and day out. How the hell did she even function?*

Instead of trying to get the feeling under control, however, Walters – safe in the privacy of the home – uncrossed his smooth legs, instead, and casually set aside the hairbrush and let the slender fingers of the free hand drift down his flat belly towards the agonizingly sensitive taper between his legs while he continued to take absentminded drags from the long cigarette. The sunlight played teasingly against the smooth, sunburnt skin of the young gardener outside, and Walters sunk deeper into watching the interplay of light and shadow across the lean, sculpted muscles of his back, the way they tapered to points all along the tight body, and even the non-inconsiderable bulge which lay tight against the left leg of his torn, thrift-store jeans. These thoughts mesmerized him, kept him from preparing himself for the first feather-light touch of his index finger against the heavy, moist folds of his sex.

Walters jumped, almost dropping his cigarette, and looked down between the deep valley of his artificial cleavage in shock and something akin to dismay. *Jesus*, he thought, a little breathless. *How could anything feel that intense?*

Prepared now, he let his finger explore a little more, and this time the contact elicited only a sharp hissing intake of breath. White-hot, tingling creepers of pure ecstasy shot from the point of contact up and down his body, and an insistent, wet *absence* expanded firmly in his midsection. A hole, an emptiness, and Walters' mind boggled briefly at the thought of just what he might do in order to fill that void up again.

He let his fingers explore, each touch bringing more and more of the sensual overload to more and different areas of his body, and he bit his bottom lip softly and stifled a throaty moan, smoke escaping from his lips and nose. His body demanded a harder touch, now, then softer,

then wild and insistent, then slow and languorous – he responded to every demand immediately, and began massaging his tingling nipples and the soft flesh around them with the other hand, pausing only for more drags from the smoldering white cigarette.

An unknown amount of time passed before Walters came to the hard realization – *I need something inside. I have to have something inside* – and he set the tip of his slender middle finger against the wet, pouting opening nestled deep within the folds of his female sex, bringing his warm palm to rest over the epicenter of his entire existence, the hard little bud of incredibly sensitive and demanding tissue which barely peeked from beneath the pink hood that protected it, hungry for more pressure.

"Oh, *God*," he moaned in the husky soprano voice he now identified as his own. "Oh, *Jesus*."

He sank his finger in to the knuckle, feeling the warm damp velvet of his insides for the first time and nearly crying out with the mindbending, all-encompassing pleasure of it all. He slid it in and out slowly, at first, then wormed his ring finger inside to partner it, his index and pinky laying stiff and hard to dimple the soft flesh of his asscheeks. His body demanded more, so he pumped them in and out more quickly and with more force, making himself gasp and grunt around the filter of the cigarette that now dangled from his augmented, plump bottom lip as his now-free other hand joined the first and massaged the rampant clitoris beneath his palm in quick, frantic circles – first clockwise, then counterclockwise, then back again. A dense cloud of cigarette smoke billowed softly around his head as he submerged beneath the feeling of a huge, boiling crucible deep within his body filling, brimming and then exploding.

He screamed – not an unpleasant sound, actually – and bucked against his fingers, his plump ass bouncing up and down on the now-sodden velvet cushion. Hot, thickly cloying musk and juice boiled out of him to run down his fingers and the crack of his widespread ass as the screamed subsided to whimpers and then to panting breathlessness as he sagged, boneless, against the dressing table.

He expelled a deep lungful of smoke and took the cigarette from his mouth, setting it in an enameled ashtray. The profound after-orgasm lethargy he expected on the heels of such a powerful sexual release never took hold, however. Instead, he felt a warm rush of renewed energy and a resetting of the insistent sensitivity in his clitoris and nipples. Within seconds of feeling utterly drained and spent, Walters surged now with a swell of energy and motion, ready to go, ready to do it all again.

"Wow," he breathed, still a little out-of-breath. "This is *great*."

Deciding against another round of masturbation – grudgingly – Walters opted instead to light another cigarette and finish brushing his lustrous hair dry, then stare helplessly at the huge assortments of high-dollar makeup spread out on the dressing table in front of him, knowing that an attempt at the very least was necessary if he was to go out in public. After long moments of consideration and examination, Walters bounded into the other room and retrieved the expensive laptop, using Google to search a few sites until he found one that gave a detailed video step-by-step of makeup application. With liberal use of the pause button, several frustrated resets using the makeup remover towelettes in a dispenser on the desk, a lot of muttered curses, three poked eyes and eight of the long, 120mm cigarettes smoked all the way down to the filters, Walters finally found a light, airy look that didn't look whorish or clown-like and would be suitable for going out. He kept the liner heavy – apparently, Ashlyn's signature look from all the candid snapshots he'd found in a "Pictures" folder on her computer

– and heavy mascara, but used only a light pink shadow on his eyelids, minimal blush and a pale pink lipgloss. His own complexion needed very little in the way of augmentation – Ashlyn had kept her skin as flawless as a painting, free of the slightest imperfection, blemish or variation in shade – so Walters interfered very little with the makeup.

He checked the schedule on the phone and saw nothing for today, other than mundane things – a workout in the home gym at 1:00 pm, with a reminder to focus on lower body and butt, a session of meditation and then the deadline for an exam for a class he was taking online. Nothing that necessitated leaving the house. Walters decided to dedicate the morning to searching for the bookstore he'd uncovered and then spend the rest of the day just acclimating to his sister's life, doing more study of her ways and mannerisms, and make a stab at trying to find out *why* she might have done something like this to him, much less *how*.

He hadn't spoken to Ashlyn since they were both sixteen. She'd moved out suddenly, without a word to anyone, even her twin brother whom she'd claimed was closer to her than anyone else alive, and stopped returning calls and emails. He tried to find her, for a little while after high school, concerned that she'd dropped out and wondering if she was okay, but she seemed to actively avoid him. His mother and stepfather eventually stopped trying, and once he immersed himself in the collegiate world and began his studies, he gradually quit as well. Not because he stopped wanting to know, but his life and his studies dominated his existence for the next eight years, and he operated under the assumption that it was Ashlyn who didn't want to see *him* any more, not that she was waiting for his call.

Now, more than a decade later, a deeper and more profound intimacy with his sister dominated his life than any he'd ever known before, but they were still strangers. And he was faced with the daunting prospect of trying to reacquaint himself with the smallest little details of her, now, in a very compressed span of time. The frustration he felt from every swing and jiggle of the huge, altered breasts, the mincing little walk, the dense fall of hair that threatened to obscure his vision and tangle his wrists every alternate second made it difficult not to cry – and Walters knew that the altered hormones flooding the receptors in his brain might make crying a very difficult thing to resist. No, best to use the discipline built and tempered in the long, merciless hours of medical school and residency to keep himself on an even keel and try to keep focused on figuring everything out.

Walters busied his hands – more to keep them off of his still-throbbing pussy than anything else – transferring his day-to-day necessities from the little Chanel clutch into a roomier, cream-and-brown leather hobo bag with a designer "LV" logo embossed. The keys, wallet, makeup and tampons, the cigarettes and lighter and a hairbrush all went into the new bag – one of several Walters had selected from the staggering assortment he'd found in the closet. Next he slipped into a pair of filmy pink lace panties with a thong back that nestled a bit uncomfortably into the cleft between his rounded cheeks and seemed to barely cover him, and he wormed his way with considerable difficulty into a matching pink bra that, once he got it secured behind his back and the straps untwisted over his narrow shoulders, took away a great deal of the pendulous, swaying weight dragging at his chest and gave him a feeling of control and security he'd never before gotten from an item of clothing. Over this he wore a pair of faded denim blue-jean shorts with a wide, white leather belt threaded through the loops, studded all over with pink and red rhinestone hearts. The silver buckle pushed coldly against his flat belly as he bent smoothly – his sister's body maintained a remarkable, easy and painless degree of flexibility, Walters had the distinct impression that he could put his legs behind his head with no discomfort – to fasten the 'gladiator' straps around his slender,

shapely calves of the trendy designer sandals she'd chosen, the lowest wedge heels he found in the capacious walk-in closet at around three inches. Lastly he pulled on a viciously tight pink belly-shirt with hot pink mesh sleeves and black newsprint – something reminiscent of a 19th-century era fashion page – silkscreened over it. Looking carefully at the paparazzi shots of celebrities shown on the *Us* magazine website, he strove to duplicate the trendy, high-fashion looks of the latest celebrities, thinking that his sister must have paid rapt attention to the latest trends and styles, given the copies of *Vogue*, *Elle*, *Allure*, *Glamour* and *InStyle* spread around the house. Being a fashion plate carried its own degree of difficulty, he thought as he struggled to thread the posts of four-inch, heavy silver hoops through the lowest set of piercings in his earlobes. Tossing the hobo bag over one shoulder and setting a white fedora with pink pinstripes over his thick fall of platinum blonde – just like the one Angelina Jolie was wearing out to Starbucks' coffee in the pages of *Us Weekly* – he jingled his keys against his slender palm – making the large cluster of pink-and-white plastic bracelets he'd put there clatter – and checked to make sure nothing was out of place. The heavy crystal heart ring on his index finger clicked softly against the keyring as he walked slowly back-and-forth across his marble-tiled foyer for about half an hour, practicing the difficult art of walking in high heels until he walked with a sexy strutting sway without a single totter, misstep or the slightest windmilling of his arms. The stride he'd chosen caused him to jut his chest out proudly, displaying his huge breasts brazenly, but he didn't have time to adjust anything. It would just have to do. Locking the door behind him, he sashayed across the flagstones to the red Mercedes two-seated convertible and slid onto the warm leather of the seats, remembering to keep his knees together and squat onto the seat before rotating his legs around.

The electronic dance music over the high-end speakers assaulted his ears once the key was turned in the ignition and he lunged at the push-button control to turn it down. Sliding the seatbelt across his body – negotiating the huge breasts with a great deal of difficulty and muttered swearing – and adjusting the seat and mirrors incrementally until he felt comfortable, he slid a pair of silver-rimmed aviators onto his slender nose and put the car into first gear, let off the brake and let out the clutch while giving it some gas.

In heels.

The tires chirped loudly in protest and white-smoked before the performance car shot out of the driveway and onto the manicured grass, tearing some long dark ruts, before Walters could get it back under control and maneuver it back onto the pavement and out into the shady street beyond. The heels felt like driving with his tiptoes, but a bit of trial-and-error gave him control of the vehicle in short order and he called up the in-dash GPS to direct him through town towards the Questing Spirits Bookstore on Davis Avenue. Ignoring the damage it would do to his lipgloss, Walters hung another of the long, slender white "ladies" cigarettes from his lips and touched it alight with the dash lighter. The plumes of smoke and long, floating streamers of blonde hair flowed like liquid behind him as he drove with the top down on a cloudless sunny day, feeling young and attractive and free in a way he never had before. He even engaged in a little innocent flirting at a stoplight with a harried-looking fortysomething in a BMW who exuded gratitude and appreciation at the momentary attention. Walters laughed throatily as he drove away, losing the sight of the man in his rearview mirror. Rather than being uncomfortable, degrading or humiliating the way he'd originally imagined, the subtle flirtation had been *fun*, and at no point did he ever feel that he wasn't completely in control of the exchange. Three more stoplights and he'd practiced three more times, with an awkward-

looking teenage pizza delivery boy, a scruffy and dangerous-looking construction worker and a middle-aged man of indeterminate occupation in a polo shirt. None of them had given her the same reaction – the teenager was all blushing self-consciousness, the construction worker was entitled self-satisfaction and the polo shirt was astonished disbelief – but every instance had been equally as fun and naughty as the last.

By the time he pulled into a metered spot on the sidewalk a block from Questing Spirits, Ashton Walters had become an incurable flirt, even wishing momentarily that he'd chosen a top for the day's outing that showed a bit more cleavage than the one he was wearing. He used his new, swishing stride to hustle up the sidewalk to the little grimy storefront of the bookstore, pushing through the flaking-paint door with a cheerful *tinkle* of a hidden bell.

The inside of the establishment reeked of musty books and incense, of gathered dust and aging leather, the way a secondhand bookstore should, in Walters' mind. He pulled off the sunglasses, perching them above the brim of the trendy little fedora, and perused the titles on the faded spines of the books on the nearest shelf for a while before a sunny, feminine voice said, "Can I help you?" and made him jump back to alertness in a bouncing jiggle of silicone and even wider, guileless eyes.

"Oh, God, you scared me," he panted, pressing a hand against the fluttering in his chest. He dug out one of the more mystical-looking texts he'd found on his sister's shelf from his purse and passed it across the counter. "A friend of mine gave me this for my birthday and I totally loved it. I was wondering if you had anything else like it," he told the amply-figured, "Mother Earth" hippie woman with the graying blonde hair to her waist and the easy, half-moon-eyed smile. Wrinkles around her mouth and eyes betrayed her age at late fifties, but instead of detracting from her beauty they added a new layer. Walters wished he knew the stories that led to each of the lines on that expressive face.

"Nice try, sweetheart," she said sweetly, taking the book. "The amulet worked, then?"

The wide eyes got even wider. "You know?"

"Dr. Walters, I presume?"

"Yes," he said. "What..? How..?"

"Relax," the woman said. "I'll explain what I can. Come into the back. I'll make us some tea."

* * *

"Poor Ashlyn," the woman – who'd introduced herself as Lana – said as she sat down heavily in one of the cane chairs across a low Moroccan table and poured two cups of steaming, fragrant tea. "She was such a lost soul, you know. Very confused and very scared."

"How long did you know her?" I asked, holding up my pack of cigarettes with a cocked eyebrow by way of permission. She nodded and set a little battered tin ashtray in the shape of a toy soldier from the side table in front of me and I lit a cigarette gratefully, blowing the smoke towards the ceiling.

"She first came in here, I guess, about nine months ago," Lana said, blowing on her tea to cool it before taking a cautious sip. "She was looking for books on reincarnation and the afterlife. Between that, and the look in her eyes, she struck me as a potential suicide right away. So one

day I invited her back here, just like I did with you, and we sat her and drank tea and talked about why she wanted to die.

"It was your stepfather, she finally told me," Lana went on. "He left you alone, for the most part, but he molested her horribly. She left, according to her story, so suddenly because she turned up pregnant from one of the times he'd raped her."

"Oh my God," Walters breathed. "I never suspected. She never said a thing."

"He was good to your mother, she told me. That's why she didn't want to say anything. 'I didn't want to fuck it up for Mom,' she said. Apparently, it had been the first time since your father had left that she hadn't had to work three jobs just to make ends meet, and even though he was a child-molesting monster he never beat any of you, kept you fed and clothed and cared for. He'd even put some money aside for your college, and Ashlyn couldn't bring her self to jeopardize that. So she ran away."

"I can't believe she never told me."

"She said she tried, honey, over and over," Lana said, patting my hand. "But she said she knew, down deep, that you'd go into his room one night and stab him to death."

"She's damn right I would've," Walters half-growled.

"And then you would never have gone to college, gotten into med school, any of it. You'd've gone to prison, instead. You'd probably still be inside," Lana said. "Ashlyn wasn't about to let that happen. She was so proud of you, Dr. Walters. She showed me the scrapbook she kept of you. She was even at your graduation from Tech, did you know that? She took a job waiting tables at the Faculty Club just so she could see you walk across the stage."

"No," Walters breathed. "No, I never knew that. She never spoke to me again, even after Joe died."

"Now that, I can't explain. Maybe she was embarrassed," Lana said. "It was six visits before she ever told me what she did for a living. I think she may have been ashamed for you to see what she'd had to do to get by."

"Maybe," Walters said. "But I wish she'd taken the chance. I missed her."

"It's all very sad," Lana said. "She'd bought every book in the store about the migration of souls from body to body, even taken trips to India and China – I think she even got into Tibet – to study. She came back from India with that amulet, there. She said a holy man living in the hills near Shangtung province had given it to her, saying that it moved souls from body to body when it came in contact with their blood. I thought it was a bunch of hokey, to be honest, but Ashlyn was completely convinced. She said she'd seen you – I thought she meant in person, but I guess she was talking about more spying on you – and said you were miserable. Your job sucked, your life was desolate and lonesome, and all the life had gone from your eyes. She said she wanted you to have a happy life, a life you deserved."

"I didn't know what she was talking about until she rented that car," Lana finished sadly, "and by then it was too late. I talked to a friend of mine who works at police headquarters after I got the news. The report said that Ashlyn hit that concrete guardrail at about a hundred or a hundred and ten miles per hour. No seatbelt and the airbag disconnected."

Lana wiped a fat tear from her eye. "She was such a sweet girl," she lamented. "I wish I'd been able to help her more."

"It sounds like you helped her plenty," Walters told her. "It sounds like you were a good friend to her when she needed one the most. Besides, you could never talk Ashlyn out of anything once she had her mind made up. She'd decided to do what she did months ago."

Lana smiled tearfully. "I guess you're right," she said.

"And I guess it was sweet of her to think of me the way she did, even though it was a little misguided," Walters continued. "She's dropped me into the middle of this life, with all these friends and business associates that I've never even met before, much less I'm having to figure out how to be a girl with no experience whatsoever. Not just any girl, either. A damned porn star. She's kicked me into the deep end of the pool to see if I can swim."

"Yeah, I doubted she'd really thought this through," Lana said. "I hate to say it, Dr. Walters, but your sister was a bit of a bubblehead."

Walters giggled, and it shocked him how *bubbleheaded* it actually sounded. "Yeah, I guess she was," he said. "But I'm stuck in this life, with no idea how to live it, and Ashlyn never thought to check if I actually *wanted* this. I have to find a way to get back."

"I'm not sure I can even begin to help you," Lana said. "But I'll try. You still have the necklace, I'm assuming?"

He patted the purse next to him. "Right here."

"Well, I know you'll need that and your corpse," she told him. "There has to be some of your old blood, for certain, and I expect there's some kind of ritual involved, which more than likely your sister has written down someplace."

"I've just started looking around the house," he told the woman, "and I haven't even checked into anything like an online data storage place or a safety deposit box."

"Well, you'd better get busy," Lana said. "I don't know how long you can wait."

Walters struggled to dismiss images of his old body, decomposing and rotting in some morgue freezer, much less dissected and sewn together haphazardly after a post-mortem. He had no idea if the ritual Lana had described would even work, if a soul could occupy such a place, if he let it go much longer.

"I can try and have the body released to me," he mused. "Maybe it's not too badly damaged."

"We can only hope. Unless you have another, more viable candidate in mind."

"I can't think of anyone I could do that to," Walters said honestly. "All Ashlyn's good intentions aside – it's a bit of an intrusion, pushing your way into another person's life. And I'd still be faced with the same problems I have now – relearning an entire history, an entire body of friends and colleagues and a brand new body, all from scratch. I don't even know the PIN number for my ATM."

"And Ashlyn wasn't exactly the sort of person to write all that information down for you, someplace convenient," Lana said with a rueful chuckle. "I'll offer you what help I can, of

course, but I don't know how much good I'd be. Maybe the best I can offer you is just to keep you company."

"That's more than I had yesterday," Walters admitted.

She passed him a handwritten piece of paper. "Here are my numbers," she told him. "Home and office. I don't have a cell, I don't believe in the damned things. If there's anything I can do for you, give me a call. I'll do what research I can, here, and see if I can help you figure a way out of it."

"I appreciate it," he told her, shaking her hand warmly as they both stood. "It's good to have someone. I was scared to death anyone I told would think I was completely crazy."

"Well, I can barely believe she pulled it off," Lana confided, "but I'm fairly certain that you're not crazy. You couldn't be more unlike her."

"Well, I'm working really hard to change that," Walters explained. "I have to live her life, at least for the time being. I can't afford to have anyone getting suspicious. The last thing I need is to be committed to a psych floor in the big middle of this."

"I agree," she said. "There might be someplace I can definitely help you. Come back here, about nine o'clock tonight. I should have something for you by then."

"Great," Walters said. "I really appreciate it."

"What are you going to do now?" Lana asked, guiding him gently towards the front door by the small of his back.

"Go home and keep digging," Walters told her. "Also, she had it on her schedule to work out today, and I'm going to keep her schedule. I owe her that much, at least."

"That's a kind thought," Lana said. "And generous. Ashlyn took a lot of pride in her body. It's good that you're committed to keeping it in good shape."

"I have to admit, I haven't felt this good in years," Walters admitted. "And I've never been in this good a shape. I'm looking forward, a little, to going into the gym and taking this body out for a spin."

"I had a body like that, once, if you can believe it," Lana laughed, opening the door for him. "I remember how much work and effort it used to take to exhaust it. You should have fun."

"That's what I'm hoping," Walters said as he went back outside into the bright sunlight, slipping the aviators back over his nose and slipping back into the sexy, wiggling strut on his way back to the car.

* * *

Walters arrived home for a late lunch – he riffled through the bumper crop of take-out and delivery menus stuck to the refrigerator until he came across something that looked appetizing and ordered it – and a change of clothes, this time yoga pants with flared cuffs and stretchy enough to hug the bubbled roundness of his new backside and a camisole shirt with spaghetti straps and the word 'Spoiled' picked out in pink rhinestones across the breasts. He put his long, barely-manageable hair up in two long pigtails and smoked another cigarette – he was fast approaching his first pack of the day – while waiting for his food to arrive. He'd given a hefty tip to the delivery boy, who probably would have been more than satisfied if Walters had just

popped one of his heavy breasts free of the low-cut exercise top and let him stare at it, and at the grilled chicken salad with a balsamic vinaigrette unhurriedly, washing it down with a truly delightful Napa Valley sauvignon blanc he'd found in the rack beneath the counter. Then he slipped on a pair of Reebok sneakers with crushed-down pink socks and moved into his well-appointed home gym. There was, of course, no record of a 'typical' workout, but he did find a few yoga DVDs beneath the LCD television mounted on the wall. He amused himself for nearly an hour, contorting his limber body into the complicated postures on the advanced disc with not even a twinge of discomfort. Then, he followed his sister's wishes by concentrating on lower body. Forty-five minutes on the stair-climber and another forty-five on the stationary bicycle, falling into the target rhythm set up by the thumping, infectious techno "jock jams" he'd found in the CD player mounted into the mirrored wall. A glistening sheen of sweat coated him, making him look even more attractive and causing some of the white-blond hair to mat against his forehead and cheeks in dark, heavy ringlets. He did three sets of squats and three more of calf-raises, worked his adductors and abductors until they burned, did four sets of lunges with weights in his hands – whatever he could think of from the gym membership and personal trainer sessions just before his residency – that would work out the lower body and glutes. And as Lana had said, the body would get pleasantly tired and sore, but the prospect of actually exhausting it seemed impossible. There was always another reserve of energy beneath the one he'd just spent, and a few moments' breathless rest always restored him back to a level where he could find one more set of repetitions, five more minutes' cardio, something. Walters spent three solid hours in the gym, far more than the hour-and-a-half he'd allotted, and still retained enough energy to seriously entertain the idea of going out for the night – dinner and drinks, maybe even some dancing in one of the slinky sequined dresses he'd spied on the hangers in Ashlyn's cavernous closet. But by the time he'd toweled off, changed into a dry shirt and smoked yet another of the long, skinny cigarettes, all thoughts of going out for the evening were forgotten. One the one hand, the memory of how carried away he'd gotten watching the gardener from the window this morning still burned in his mind with no small amount of shame – who knows what he might wind up doing if he suffered an attack of horniness and desire while he was outside the safe walls of the house – and on the second hand, he lacked the confidence in his mastery of Ashlyn's personality to play her convincingly in public. Especially if he had a few drinks, which would only increase the likelihood he would say or do something which would give him away as not-Ashlyn, or in the worst case, come across as undeniably male. He didn't even know who his friends were, or if his sister had any enemies out there in the adult-entertainment industry. There existed simply too many unknowns to risk social interaction right now.

Walters opened a bottle of wine and a fresh pack of cigarettes and began his difficult navigation of the books found on Ashlyn's shelves – particularly anything that might appear handwritten. He found some notebooks, but they only contained notes for some kind of economics class. Probably the online exam he'd discovered. The material didn't seem very hard – and he'd taken a few economics classes as an undergrad, he had a basic working knowledge – so he decided to take a swing at the exam later tonight. Besides, even if he wrecked his sister's GPA, it would barely dent the karmic debt she'd amassed at this point.

Walters discovered nothing noteworthy in either of the bedrooms or the computer room-*cum*-study, and nothing stashed away in any of the hatboxes or secret-looking places in the closet. He took a break long enough to take the exam – at least Ashlyn had left the login username and password written in one of her spiral-bound notebooks – and make a handy B+ without too much effort, his remembrances from Econ 101, his sophomore year, serving well. The

homepage he'd logged into at the online university showed Ashlyn as about twelve semester hours away from a business degree, with a GED on file. Walters felt a surge and swell of pride that his sister returned to school and finished, and was in process of gaining a higher degree. The discovery added to the regretful wishes that he'd known her when she was still alive. This would have been something that made him extremely happy.

By the time he finished the exam, Walters stubbed out the cigarette he'd been smoking and rose to change clothes yet again – *this will be the fourth time today*, he thought abashedly – into a tight pink plaid miniskirt with three chain belts laying crookedly across the hips, a black fishnet top with a tight black sleeveless turtleneck sweater over it, black fishnet opaque knee-high stockings and knee-length black leather 'pirate' boots with gold chains threaded around the ankles and beneath the four-inch stiletto heel. A black knit newsboy cap – worn to the side, the way he'd seen in the magazines – and a freshening of the makeup he'd worn down through the punishing workout finished out the look. He slipped on two garishly tacky rhinestone rings over his index fingers, fastened a gaudy rhinestone cross around his slender neck to lay against the black turtleneck, and dangled a set of 'chandelier' silver-and-diamond earrings from his lobes, transferred his belongings into a black tote shoulderbag with a Gucci label and went back outside, taking the flashy car out – ready for the heels, this time – into town, back to the bookstore at nine o'clock straight up. The sign read 'Closed,' so he ground out the latest of many, many cigarettes – *I think I'm about two packs a day*, he thought grumpily – beneath the pointed toe of the designer boot, and tapped on the door softly. The curtain inside parted, revealing Lana's kind eye, and then he heard the clicks and slides of deadbolts and chains being drawn.

"Hi," Walters said cheerfully. "How was the rest of your day?"

"Busy," Lana said, ushering him inside and locking the door behind him. "But I think I've figured out a way to help you 'fit in' a little better to Ashlyn's life. Maybe take a little of that work off of your shoulders."

Walters allowed himself to be led through the bookstore into the back room where they'd talked before, and took the same seat he'd occupied during their previous conversation. "How did you manage that?" he asked, nodding at her tacit offer of tea.

She poured two cups and set them between herself and Walters on the low table. "I figure it's safe to assume that you're not a big believer in witchcraft or the occult," she said. "But I am. I've been a practicing Wiccan for twenty years, and believe me when I tell you I've seen things worked by my sisters that you could only describe as miracles."

"I didn't used to believe any of it," Walters confessed, "but recent events have sort of forced me to retract my former views. Go on."

Lana chuckled, deep in her throat. "I can see where that would make you reassess," she said. "Anyway, I just did the math. Your soul left your body and went into Ashlyn's. There is currently no soul in your old body, and if we assume bodies and souls are paired, then Ashlyn's soul is still out there, somewhere."

"Where?"

"I have no idea," Lana confessed. "All I can tell you is that I believe that it's close by. Metaphysically speaking, of course. That soul, at least as I understand it, is not just the

emotions and characteristics that made Ashlyn herself, but also echoes of the experiences and sensations which led to its development. A piece of her life, so to speak."

"Okay, I follow," Walters said. "What does that mean for me?"

"If I'm correct, then I think I can draw on that part of Ashlyn's soul, bring it back to her body," Lana said. "Bring it back for you to use, to draw from, so you can have a little more to draw from in your quest to live your sister's life. Now, keep in mind, I have no idea what this is going to entail. I've never even attempted something like this in all my years with the Craft."

"But you're confident it will work?"

"I'm confident it will work," Lana said plainly, "but I'm not confident *how* it will work."

"Anything is better than nothing at this stage," Walters said.

"What are your plans, anyway, if you wind up having to stay Ashlyn?" Lana asked. "Assuming you don't find a way back."

"I haven't given it much thought," Walters said. "But I can't live her life indefinitely. Eventually, I'm going to have to go back to a place where I'm more comfortable. Quit her job, first and foremost. Maybe have the breast implants removed, play down the 'bombshell' look, try to get a medical license and go back into practice. Make new friends, carve out a life that I *do* understand, one where I'm comfortable and a little more in control of my circumstances. Maybe find a way to lay Ashlyn to rest, finally, and hope that she has some peace."

Lana sighed. "I'm glad to hear you say the last part," she said. "It's been hard, today, not thinking of what's going to happen to Ashlyn in all of this. She was my friend. And, as hard as it is to say, doctor, I barely know you at all."

"I was thinking that same thing, on the way over here," Walters said. "I'm glad that you're the person you are. Otherwise, I could be in a lot of trouble."

Lana changed the subject, becoming brisk and businesslike. "So, are we gonna do this thing, or aren't we?"

Walters stood easily on the four-inch heels, testament to his practice in the hallway and said brightly, "Sure. What do you need me to do?"

"I'll need either a few strands of your hair, or a drop of your blood," Lana said. "Then I just need you to sit here, put your hands inside the circle I've drawn, and concentrate as hard as you can on your sister. I'll do the rest."

Walters hissed sharply as he yanked out a few strands of long, blonde hair near the scalp and passed them over to Lana, who coiled them quickly around one finger and dropped them into a brazier resting over low coals on the table. He sat where she'd indicated, placing his slender fingers inside the chalk ring of symbols not unlike the ones on the amulet that had begun this whole mess, and closed his eyes. The sharp smell of charring hair assaulted his nostrils, making his nose wrinkle, but was soon overlaid with a strong, acrid herbal scent and the pop and hiss of things being added to heat. Lana began to sing, in a soft voice, using a sibilant language that Walters could not recognize.

He forced his mind to think only of Ashlyn as he remembered her, a boisterous and energetic girl of sixteen, with a mouth full of braces and long, coltish limbs that held only the promise of

the lush, ripe curves of the present day. The glistening, athletic glow of her in her soccer or cheerleading uniforms, the pride in her eyes when she overcame her difficulties with study and made a good grade or academic achievement, the easy laugh and the unerring ability to cheer me up out of any depth of stress, frustration or sadness. And, now that he knew, he clearly saw the hidden pain behind her eyes, the shame and self-abhorrence put there by their monster of a stepfather, which cheapened and degraded the act of sex to the point that she used it to make her living. He even remembered the last time he'd ever seen her – through the window of his upstairs bedroom, watching her climb into a cab with a heavy suitcase in her hands. Did he actually remember, or was it just the power of suggestion, the telltale swelling in his sister's trim, athletic belly?

Walters' concentration wavered a little when he felt the sensation of floating, and a feeling of something like wisps of cold cloud spiraling around his body like he was the eye of some strange hurricane.

"Keep concentrating," Lana bade him softly. "You're calling to her. It's working."

He brought his mind back to bear on his sister, his imaginings of her in their time apart, comforted by knowing that she thought of him as often as he'd thought about her. He imagined her moving into her first apartment, going back for her GED and enrolling in college, following her twin brother's achievements through whatever media accessible. Maybe she had even written as many unmailed letters to him as he had to her, every Christmas and birthday that passed, saying what was happening in her life and wishing things could be different, how much she missed him.

And how much he wished he could have replied to those letters, saying all was forgiven, just come back to me and let's be a family again.

"What the... wait. Something... something's wrong. That's not supposed to happen..."

Walters' eyes snapped open suddenly at the alarm he detected in Lana's voice, and saw that dense clouds of strange-smelling dark smoke poured from the small brass brazier on the table, and the sky outside was pitch black even though Walters distinctly remembered the amber glow of streetlights just outside. The table shook and he wanted to pull his hands away, but his fingers remained stuck there as if by glue.

Cold chills racked the slender body, causing Walters to convulse and cough. Every hair on his head stood on end and gooseflesh crawled up and down his length, and the eerie, slimy feeling of something *soaking* into him pervaded his every sense.

He fought the urge to scream, and lost. The hoarse, shrill cry torn from his throat seemed to disappear into the billowing black smoke which he breathed, unavoidably, into his lungs.

"Lana," he coughed, "what's... what's..."

"Dr. Walters? Dr. Walters!" her voice responded from what seemed like miles away.

He screamed again, and passed out as he heard Lana's voice rise into a desperate counter-spell as the last shreds of consciousness fled his mind.

To be continued...



SUMMARY: A doctor is called into the emergency room only to find his dying twin sister who he touches which leads to an instant switch with him in his sister's body, and his old male self now dead.

EN FEMME

Part Three

by Valerie Hope

"DR. WALTERS, PLEASE. WAKE UP;" the voice said from the darkness. He groaned.

"Oh, thank the Goddess," the voice said again. Harsh slaps flashed through the comforting darkness, against his cheek, and consciousness clawed its way to the forefront of his brain, unbidden and unwelcome. He fought it, but it was irresistible. His eyelids fluttered and eye-scorching light flickered in through slitted vision.

Hands from the blackness took his shoulders and forced him to a seated position. Soft, ticklish hair fell around his face and he fought the urge to retch. The cold rim of a cup wormed its insistent way between his soft lips.

"Drink this," the voice – *Lana?* – urged, and the hands tipped his head back and warm liquid splashed down his throat and down his chin. He spluttered and coughed.

"What happened?" he whispered.

"I don't know," Lana said. "Nothing that was *supposed* to. I felt your sister's soul – she came when we called – but after that, I don't know what happened. Something – a presence – came *through* with her. Something bad, something strong. Your sister seemed to fight against it, I think, but it was very powerful."

"Come here," Walters bade, and did a quick once-over to check Lana for medical problems. Pulse elevated, but that was to be expected. Blood pressure was probably through the roof, too. Breathing a little labored, but deep and regular. Pupils round and equal, reactive to light. A little bit of trembling, but more likely from fear than anything neurological. Shaken, but fine.

"How do *you* feel?" Lana asked.

"A little woozy," Walters answered honestly. "But I can't feel anything wrong. Like my head is stuffed with cotton wool, more than anything. It's hard to concentrate."

"I broke the circle," Lana said. "The backlash would have come straight through you. I'm so sorry, Dr. Walters. It wasn't supposed to happen that way."

"I wish you'd call me Ashlyn," he said.

"Call you what?" Lana asked, a little taken aback.

"Ashlyn," he repeated. "You know, my name?"

"Spell it," Lana urged.

"A-s-h-l-y-n. Ashlyn Nicolette Walters," he said.

"Holy shit," Lana breathed. "Maybe it *did* work, after all."

"What are you talking about?" Walters demanded, concerned. "Maybe *what* worked?"

"The spell," Lana said. "You just told me your name was Ashlyn."

"Because it *is*," he replied, a little hotly. "It's always been my name."

"Do you remember being male? A doctor, who worked in a hospital?"

"Of course," he said.

"And the name that was on your lab coat? What would that have been?"

He sighed in frustration. "Just what I told you, dammit. Dr. Ashlyn Walters, MD."

"You never remember having another name? Like Ashton, maybe?"

Realization struck Walters like a hammer. "Oh my *God*," he breathed. "You're right! I should remember that as my name – Ashton Nicholas Walters – but I can't make it *stick* to my life, if that makes any sense. The only name that fits – the only one that has any ring of recognition to it at all – is Ashlyn Nicolette. It rings in my gut, Lana. That's 100%, unmistakably *my* name."

"Try something else," Lana instructed.

"Like what?"

"I dunno. Dancing, maybe. Ashlyn – the old Ashlyn, I mean – was a professional, trained dancer. Put on some music and try to dance."

"Okay," he said, standing effortlessly and walking over to Lana's dusty stereo.

"Oh, wow," Lana breathed. "Look at yourself, Ashlyn. It's *her walk*. Just like hers."

Walters' attention jolted to stance and stride, and he noticed with a jerk that the overdone, mincing little sashay he'd adopted in an attempt to master high heels had gone, replaced by a slinky, tits-and-ass catwalk strut that exuded sex appeal and grace.

"Your purse," Lana said. "What kind is it? What about your sweater and skirt? The boots?"

Without an instant's pause, he answered, "The purse is Gucci, but it's last season. The top and skirt are Ralph Lauren, and the boots are Elie Tahari. I probably should've gone with something a little less dressy for a bag, probably the pink Prada I bought, but what the hell. It works for this look."

His eyes widened with shock. "Ten minutes ago, I would've answered 'what kind of purse is that' with 'a black one.' I've never even heard of half of those names I just told you."

"The dancing," she urged. "Try the dancing."

Walters tuned the radio to a Top 40 station and something with a danceable, driving beat – *Ke\$ha's 'Tik Tok' sprang unbidden to mind, and he knew it was the artist and title with no doubt* – and he took a moment to let his body acclimatize to the beat before launching effortlessly into a hip-swaying, liquid-boned shimmy that any man would have pitched one-

dollar bills at by the handful if it had been done topless, on a stage with a brass pole. His long blonde hair swung and floated around him in a soft, rippling fan, and never once wound up in his mouth or eyes – the instinctual ability to maneuver his head in such a way as to accommodate the long, flowing hair added to the package of knowledge and abilities that Ashlyn's disembodied spirit had delivered.

"And you don't feel anything else?" Lana asked. "Nothing dark, or sinister?"

"Nope," he replied, still dancing just for the sheer joy – and sexual gratification, he admitted – of it. "It feels completely natural. I barely even have to think about it."

"We should probably get out of this room," Lana suggested. "There could be some residual negative energy in here, and both of our resistances are down. I need time to do a proper cleansing."

"You're the expert," Walters said, ending his hyper-sexual dance with a slight pout of regret and shutting off the music. He allowed the older woman to lead him out into the bookstore.

"Are you sure you're okay?" Lana asked, looking deeply into his eyes.

"I actually feel pretty great," Walters told her.

She picked up the telephone beside the register and dialed it quickly. "I'm calling one of the sisters in my coven," she explained while she waited for an answer. "Maybe she knows something that I don't."

Walters browsed through the shelves distractedly while Lana spoke into the phone. "Hey, Christie, it's Lana. You're the expert on contacting the spirit world. I have a question for you."

A pause, then: "If I was attempting a simple communion, what would cause something *else* to come through? What even *could* come through?"

"Yes, the departed was a suicide."

"Oh. Oh, *dear*," Lana said, and Walters' attention snapped away from the dusty books in an instant. "And how could we know that for sure?"

"Okay. Sounds easy enough," Lana said. "As of right now, he's fine. Matter of fact, I was about to send him home."

Walters interrupted, balking at the foreign word. "Lana. That doesn't feel right any more. I think I'm a *her* now. A *she*."

Lana looked at him – *her* – strangely for a moment, then spoke back into the phone. "Can I use your place, then? I need to cleanse mine, and I'd like to get right on this."

"Thanks so much, Christie. I really appreciate it," she said, and replaced the receiver.

"So?" Ashlyn asked.

"Suicides run counter to the natural order," Lana explained. "Souls that depart that way, they tend to pick up, shall we say, 'hitchhikers.' The dark things in the cosmos tend to gravitate towards them."

"Dark things?"

"Don't freak out when I say this, okay?" Lana prefaced. "*Demons*."

"Demons. You think I got possessed by a demon."

"No, I don't think you're possessed. I told you, Ashlyn's soul *fought* this thing. I don't think she let it have you. But it did touch you, sweetheart. And nobody can be touched by demonic energy and not be changed by it, honey. We have to figure out what it was, first, and then what it did to you."

"And there's no chance it could be something beneficial," Ashlyn said.

"I did mention *demon*, right?" Lana replied sarcastically.

Ashlyn sighed, her large breasts heaving. "Okay," she said at length. "So I should probably keep out of sight, then, until we know what we're dealing with."

"That would be best," Lana said. "I'm sorry."

"Don't be," Ashlyn told her, giving her upper arm a reassuring squeeze. "You did your best, and you've still done more for me than anyone else could have. Look, I'm gonna stay local and wait for your call. Hit me on my cell, any hour, day or night, the minute you know something."

"*Hit you on your cell?*" Lana said. "You're picking up her turns of phrase, too."

"I guess I am," Ashlyn said. "But then, I guess that was the point of the exercise. Question is, should I trust all this new information I have? How do we know the demon didn't corrupt it, somehow?"

"We don't," Lana said, unlocking and opening the door for her. "We have no idea. But I can tell you this much – for the last twenty minutes, I could swear that I've been standing here talking to the Ashlyn I knew nine months ago. If I hadn't known differently, I would *swear* you're her. And she wasn't an evil person, doctor, believe me. Confused, yes, and impulsive, but not an evil bone in her body. No, I don't think the demon was able to touch anything your sister's spirit gave you."

"For what it's worth, Lana – if the way I feel was the way my sister felt, and I think it was – she loved you very much," Ashlyn told her. "And because of what she gave me, so do I."

Lana kissed her soft cheek. "I love you too, sweetheart. I'm gonna fix this, I promise."

"I trust you," Ashlyn said, then slipped out the door into the warm night.

* * *

Ashlyn drove aimlessly for a while, just up and down the garishly-lit roads, not particularly wanting to go home and be by herself just then. She was dressed to thrill, for one thing, and bored and lonesome for another. She wanted to be where people were, and music and drinks and conversation. Without even realizing she'd done it, she'd pulled off of the freeway near the airport and pulled the lipstick-red Mercedes into the parking lot of the garishly-lit *Candy Shop*, the booming bass of the strip-club music vibrating through the thin walls into the outside. The parking lot was full – *for a Wednesday night, this is a great crowd*, she found herself thinking, more knowledge given to her by her departed sister, a kind of 'stripper sense' borne from years of working in the industry – and she decided against the valet and parked it herself, the *click-clack* of her heels on the pavement and the hungry looks she was getting from the patrons headed toward the front door as well suffusing her with a glow of sexual satisfaction. The

undeniable feeling of *God, I look hot* wrapped her like a cloak – she found herself adding a little extra wiggle to her strut just to draw more eyes, more thoughts of *God, tell me she works here and will be out on the floor by the time I get a table* in the men she passed.

She gave the doorman a peck on his stubbled cheek and tipped him twenty, paid the cover charge at the door and walked into the darkness and noise. Islands of light dotted the press of sweaty bodies and cheap perfume, where here and there a statuesque young girl gave a pulse-pounding lap dance to some paying customer, letting him rent five minutes of being the sexiest guy in the room at a time, for twenty dollars a pop. Waitresses in tuxedo shirts and tailcoats over booty-baring short shorts and fishnet hose weaved in and out of the crowd, avoiding groping hands and gyrating dancers alike with heaped trays of beer bottles and mixed drinks, their movements through the crowded darkness practiced and graceful as any dancer on the main stage. Above the people, more girls pranced and spun around brass poles, hair whipping and skyscraper platform heels clacking loudly against the cheap parquet of the stage, wiggling on hands and knees to the brass rail at stage edge to accept ones and fives and rub their tits teasingly in the faces of the men crowding there for attention.

The thumping beat infected Ashlyn and she began to dance along, subtly, as a waitress met her near the entrance and asked her if she wanted a table.

"Yeah," Ashlyn answered, "bring me a shot of Patrón, chilled and dressed, a glass of Bollinger and then go tell Kerri – I think she still dances under the name 'Anastasia' – that Ashlyn's here, okay?" She slipped another twenty onto the waitress' tray to buy a little acquiescence.

"Sure, Mama," the waitress said, pocketing the tip. She led Ashlyn to a table near the upper section and dropped a name card on the tabletop – staking her claim to the high tipper – and hustled off to put the drink order in at the busy bar before scooting away quickly to the back, and the cramped dressing rooms.

Twenty minutes elapsed – leaving Ashlyn time to admire the tall brunette on the stage nearest her, her boob job still recent enough to place her mammoth jugs high on her chest – before the waitress returned with the drinks.

"Anastasia's on her way, Mama," she yelled over the music, and Ashlyn paid for the round and dropped another twenty-dollar tip on the tray. She poured the acrid tequila – once, her drink of choice in this club, when she first started – down her throat in a smooth, rehearsed motion and chased it with a sip of the chilly champagne. The waitress gave her a friendly peck on the cheek – they got better tips when they flirted, Ashlyn knew, and she was probably giving off a heavy lesbian vibe just by being inside the club, much less the appraising once-over-lightly she'd given the curvaceous waitress once or twice during their brief association – and went back to her other tables, promising to check back quickly. Ashlyn sipped her champagne with relish – *I've always loved bubbly*, she remembered in detail from a life she'd never really lived – and let her eyes wander, drinking in the garish sexual spectacle laid out in front of her, until something hit her hard from behind, gathering her into a tight hug, one hand slipping down to squeeze one of Ashlyn's larger-than-life breasts firmly enough to bring a hint of wetness to her barely-there thong panties.

"I'm so fuckin' glad you came!" Kerri/Anastasia squealed loudly, plopping unceremoniously into the chair opposite Ashlyn and dropping a little pink train-case she used for a purse onto the table. With the friendly affability of one stripper to another, she pulled a wad of assorted currency out of the garter around her ankle and started counting it. Kerri wore a form-fitting

tube dress of large pink sequins and had her thick brunette hair styled in a 1960's "Mod" look set off with a wide pink headband. Huge pink-and-white striped 'dinner plate' earrings dangled against her slender, kissable neck.

"You look so hot, baby," Ashlyn said, hiding her surprise at how easily the airy, 'bimbo' tone of voice and mannerisms took over thanks to Lana's spell. "I love that dress."

"Shut up, bitch," Kerri said teasingly, "sitting there in all your fuckin' label. Like you don't look like the cover of fuckin' *Vogue* right now. I called my cousin, baby, and she, like, shit herself she's so fuckin' excited. I just know she's gonna do, like, an awesome fuckin' job for you, Mama. You're not gonna be sorry."

Ashlyn waved a dismissive hand. "Whatever," she said. "It's totally cool, Mama. Y'know, anything to help out a friend 'n' stuff. How's your shift going?"

"Doin' a double," she said grumpily, "and it's just now startin' to pick up. I been playing the fuckin' trivia game at the bar most of the afternoon. At least now bitch can start tryin' to get her ass paid, y'know?"

"Looks like it's jumpin'," Ashlyn agreed. "I totally don't wanna keep you, sweetie, just wanted to come by and let you buy me that drink you promised before I go out."

"You clubbing tonight?"

"I dunno, maybe," she said, twirling a lock of hair around one finger. "I was thinkin' about it. I totally fuckin' destroyed myself in the gym today. Probably just go have a couple drinks 'n' stuff then head home."

"That sucks," Kerri said. "Still, maybe we can go out together later this week. Go, like, tear the place up 'n' shit."

"Shit, yeah," Ashlyn agreed, "we haven't done that in, like, forever."

Kerri signaled the waitress and ordered another round, which she brought quickly, hungry for more heavy tips. Kerri slid a twenty out of the roll in her train-case purse – *I remember carrying one of those*, Ashlyn thought – and paid for the drinks, and Ashlyn added another twenty to the tray for a tip. They clinked the tiny shot-glasses of chilled tequila together and downed them – strippers were nothing if not hard-drinking – and then sipped champagne while Ashlyn lit a long cigarette with a match from the book in the table's ashtray.

"You still smoke those long girly things?" Kerri asked. "My fuckin' grandma smoked those."

"Like you're not gonna ask me to bum one in, like, two seconds," Ashlyn teased, then offered the pack. Kerri took one gratefully in her long fingernails and used the matchbook to light it, blowing the smoke upwards through her bangs to billow softly around the high-intensity lights pointed at the stage.

"Besides, they're sexy as shit and you know it," Ashlyn added. "Every fuckin' guy in here is staring at us, sucking on these long things. Gets your ass noticed."

Ashlyn knew without looking that she was right – the girls on the stages got less and less attention as more eyes gravitated to the two gorgeous, glamorous women sitting together at the table.

"I probably better make a lap, try to make some money," Kerri said. "You gonna hang for a while, or what?"

"No, baby, I probably better take off," she replied. "But listen, least I can do is double your money for the night."

Ashlyn downed her champagne in a single gulp, set the glass aside and leaned across the table, flattening her breasts on the cheap formica, and grabbed her friend behind the neck, pulling her in for a tongue-grappling, open-mouthed kiss. Ashlyn's hands drifted down, beneath the hem of the tube dress, and fondled her friend's breasts until her nipples poked prominently through the stretchy fabric.

The kiss continued, bringing a near-uncomfortable wetness to Ashlyn's crotch, as she drew her friend into her lap and made out with her like a horny teenager for the better part of ten minutes. With a final, loving caress to Kerri's face and some little baby-kisses to her long neck, she put her friend back on her own two feet and took a long final drag of her cigarette. Every single male eye in the club held them in sharp focus, and more than one patron squirmed uncomfortably in trousers that no longer fit as well as they had earlier.

Kerri didn't make it more than five feet into the crowd before a customer flagged her down for a table dance. Others nearby watched hungrily, waiting their turn. Ashlyn stubbed her cigarette, left another twenty-dollar tip on the table and slinked her way from the dark club, out into the outside air and towards her car.

"Hey," a deep-sounding voice said from nearby, and Ashlyn turned to see a scruffy-looking, 'bad boy' biker-type with full-sleeve tattoos on both arms and a lean-muscle body that Ashlyn's new sexual senses fixated upon instantly.

"Quite a show you put on in there," he said, lounging against his Harley. "So, you into just girls, or what?"

Ashlyn struck a stroke-magazine cover pose unconsciously, one hand on her hip and a sexy pout on her bee-stung lips, and gave him an appraising look. "I'm kinda in a girl place, right now," she purred, "but it's possible I could let myself get distracted. What did you have in mind?"

He grinned. "Wanna go get a drink someplace?" he asked.

"Maybe so," she replied. "I'm not really into partying on a weeknight, baby, I got work and stuff. Maybe if we kept it short."

"Sure, baby, whatever you say," he told her. "I'm Danny, by the way."

"Ashlyn," she replied.

He straddled the bike in one easy, practiced motion and kicked it to growling, coughing life. "Follow me, Ashlyn," he said. "I know just the place."

* * *

'Just the place' turned out to be the hotel bar below the room where he was staying, in town for a custom chopper show at the convention center. They took seats at the bar – the place was packed with biker-types who eyed her hungrily, just feeding the low-grade fire of sexual self-image and squirming desire inside her – and he bought her another shot of tequila and a glass

of champagne to wash it down. He did a shot of Jack Daniels with her and nodded respect at this girl who could drink as hard as he could.

They wasted time in useless, 'so what do you do' banter with neither of them being particularly interested in the other's answers to the banal questions. Ashlyn found herself growing bored with Daniel's refusal to make a direct move, and she started shooting covert glances at her watch, wondering how much longer he was going to take.

The bartender cleared away the third set of empty shot glasses and champagne flutes and Daniel made ready to order another when Ashlyn grabbed his wrist. "Look, honey, you probably think you have to get me drunk or something," she said, "but it's not like that. I'm into you, okay? All you gotta do is ask, baby, and I'm probably gonna say 'yes.' I wasn't lying about needing to go home kinda early. I actually *do* have work tomorrow."

He took a few long seconds to regain his composure – it was probably his first exposure to directness on that level, particularly from a hot girl who would normally have made him go through all the motions – and said, simply, "Do you wanna come up to my room?"

Ashlyn grabbed her purse and put out her cigarette. "About fuckin' time," she muttered, taking his hand.

* * *

Ashlyn only just recovered from the unexpected spike of relief that she'd transferred the condoms she carried in her purse into the Gucci bag she carried tonight when he pushed her roughly against the wall and pressed a rough, hungry kiss onto her soft lips. His unshaven chin scratched her and he was too rough for the contact to be truly pleasurable straight off the bat with no warm-up, but she did like his desire for her. Grabby hands quested for her tits, and she had to take his wrist and instruct him to be more gentle before he bruised her.

"Easy, baby," she whispered, running her fingers through his short hair, "you gotta warm me up a little. I don't go from zero to sixty as fast as you do, 'kay?"

He chuckled, deep in his throat, and murmured, "You sure ain't shy about what you want, are you, baby?"

"Don't have time to be shy," she replied, kneading the firm lean muscles of his back through his t-shirt. "Besides, that shit is for virgins on prom night."

He resumed the kiss – more gently this time, thankfully – and spent a little time on her bare shoulders. Even his groping attempts at her breasts seemed more gentle. Finally, after some patient coaching, Ashlyn felt the tingling flush of her 'motor' starting to get running, and her own touches and caresses began to get rougher and more insistent.

She wasn't entirely on conscious control – some strange amalgam of his own memories, and those of his departed sister, and something else entirely that Ashlyn couldn't identify drove her actions now, as she stripped her chosen lover of his shirt and kissed her way down his flat, well-muscled belly, pausing only to pull her own tight turtleneck off and leave herself kneeling in just boots, skirt and bra. She unbuttoned the fly of his torn, faded jeans and reached inside to seize the stiff, throbbing heat she found in her small, delicate hand, and drew it out where she could get a look at it.

Unbidden memories flashed through her mind, of an endless assortment of cocks she'd seen from this particular angle, every shape and size and color, circumcised and not. She knew enough now to rate this particular long, skinny and somewhat crooked example of male genitalia at around a 5 on her scale of 1 to 10. Shrugging a little and thinking, *if you can't be with the one you love...* she caressed his pliable balls in one warm hand and gripped the base of his cock with the other, gently, and guided the purplish tip between her soft lips and onto her waiting tongue.

His flavor pleased her at the same time it shocked her, warm and musky and salty, nothing like what her formerly-male mind expected it to be. Mixed with the perfumed, cloying taste of her lipstick and the sharp tang of the tequila and cigarettes, the tastes combined into an intoxicating blend which she thrust down her throat hungrily, pistoning her hand back and forth in counterpoint to the up-and-down motion of her head and making her lover moan and gasp deliciously at her ministrations. His long, thick fingers tangled in her soft hair and pulled her down, forcing himself incrementally deeper into her throat.

So that's what the oropharyngeal ablation I read about in her medical records was for, she thought, wondering why anyone would elect to have a portion of the back of her throat burned and cauterized surgically. Her complete and total lack of a gag reflex as the head of Danny's cock slid past her tonsils and into her throat answered that question handily. Probably an outright bonus in her particular line of work, she noted as she withdrew her hand from his cock due to lack of room and felt his warm, hairy balls come to rest against her delicate chin.

"Holy shit," he groaned, "you sucked it all the way down."

She slid her wide mouth off of his cock in one motion, connected to the purplish head by a shimmering streamer of saliva which attached to the back of her upper teeth, and gave him a happy smile. "You never been deep-throated before, baby?"

"Nope, first time," he panted.

"Cool," she said. "I love busting cherries. Lean back, honey, and enjoy the fuckin' ride."

Opening her throat wide like she was yawning, she face-fucked him, engulfing his entire length into her tight throat with every stroke, enjoying the comical tickle of his pubic hair against her nose at every downstroke. He bucked and groaned, tangling his fingers in her hair to the point of pain. Ashlyn loved the power she felt, her ability to reduce him to a panting, grunting animal using just her body. It filled her head like a drug, intoxicating her and affecting her reason and mood, making her euphorically, gigglingly happier than she'd ever felt before. She pulled him out of her throat, gasping a little for breath, and stuck out her tongue invitingly as she stroked him, tapping a finger against her tongue to show him exactly where she wanted it. He moaned loudly and hot, thick jets shot over her tongue and onto her face, making her laugh in pure delight as she swallowed it down, then scraped what had splashed onto her upturned face off with her fingers to lick them clean.

"Holy fuck, girl, you swallow, too?" he asked in disbelief. "You're, like, the perfect woman."

She giggled throatily and stood, slipping the short skirt and panties around her ankles and reaching behind her to unhook her bra – nothing like the ordeal it had been before Lana's spell – then walked to the bed wearing just her boots, fishnet stockings, newsboy cap and jewelry. She lay back on the bed, beckoning to him with a crooked finger, as she used her other hand to

stroke the moist, flowered-open folds of her keenly-aroused pussy. He walked over and knelt, giving a few unpracticed and inexperienced licks which made her push him away in frustration.

"You're not very good at that," she said. "Besides, if I was gonna let you keep going I'd make you go shave. It's like you're going at me with fuckin' sandpaper down there."

He looked a little hurt, but I didn't care. "Gimme that cock, baby," she told him, holding out her hand. "Play with my tits while I get that shit all hard again."

She pulled his limp member into her warm mouth and laved it extravagantly with her tongue, licking away the last remnants of the salty cum which clung to the head while she massaged him with her throat and mouth, coaxing another erection from him while his fingers and hands massaged and squeezed her breasts and pinched her nipples. The blowjob aroused her enough that his rough touches now excited her instead of putting her off, and she soon detected the scent of her own excitement wafting up from between her smooth legs, clinging to the fingers she'd never taken away. It seemed an eternity before the soft warmth in her mouth took on a rigidity and a length, forcing its way back down her open throat with incremental little pushes.

She popped him out and stroked him, just above her forehead and the lush pillow of her hair. "Now get down there and fuck me," she growled, pausing just long enough to take a condom from her designer purse, tear the foil and roll the latex down his shaft. She hoped it would deaden him enough to where he'd last a while. As turned on as she was, she needed several orgasms to put her right again, and she doubted whether this inexperienced young thing could deliver the goods.

He nudged at her folds with the latex-wrapped tip of his skinny cock, butting against the insides of her thighs to make room for himself. Sighing and thinking *my God, he can't even find the hole by himself*, she spread her lips wide with two fingers and used her other hand to guide him in.

Using her new memories, Ashlyn determined that he gave an enthusiastic but rather unimaginative fuck, barely varying his rhythm or depth. Ashlyn had left her fingers down there purposefully, able to use his mechanical thrusting and her own skill to bring herself off four times – turns out she was a moaner, but she could fake being a screamer incredibly well from her years in the porn business – before Danny stiffened and drove deeply into her, shooting his load noisily into the little reservoir tip of the Trojan she'd fitted him with. He sagged atop her, flattening her tits, and she rolled him off of her with a bit of effort. She rolled onto her side, nestled neatly into the crook of his arm, and her hair fell like a curtain over both their faces, shading the amber light of the cheap bedside lamp into a shimmery, vanilla glow.

"I really enjoyed myself, honey," she whispered, lying effortlessly to his face as she traced little circles on his chest with her index finger. "But I really gotta go."

He looked at her strangely. "You're bailing? Just like that?" he asked.

"I told you, baby, I got work tomorrow."

"You want my number or something?" he asked.

Ashlyn paused in the middle of re-clasping her bra and fixed him with a level stare. "Oh, honey," she said compassionately. "What did you think happened here tonight?"

"I dunno," he muttered, fighting against his post-coital lethargy by propping his head up on one arm and rolling onto his side.

"Baby, I had an itch and you scratched it. I don't want a boyfriend out of the deal. You go your way, and I go mine. That's the way I wanted it, like, right from the start and stuff."

"You're not like other girls," he said.

Ashlyn pulled her sweater down and pulled her hair from the neck with a two-handed flourish, then fastened the crucifix back around her neck beneath the silken cascade of her hair. "Damn right I'm not," she affirmed. "I'm *better*, baby."

He smiled. "I had fun," he said.

"Hell yeah," Ashlyn said. "Me, too."

She perched the newsboy back on her lustrous hair and ducked out the door, blowing him a playful kiss before letting it shut behind her, wondering how long it would be before he started telling all his biker friends downstairs how he'd rocked her world to its foundations. She laughed to herself all the way back to her car.

* * *

Ashlyn sipped one more glass of the white wine she'd discovered earlier that day, smoking a lazy cigarette as she watched a little television in her comfortable Pjs from the other night. The skincare regimen came effortlessly now, the proper combinations of moisturizers and makeup removers and rejuvenating creams, some for just under the eyes and other for her body, others for just her face, but all leading to the continuance of her perfect, flawless complexion. She suspected that applying makeup would be infinitely more easy, now, as well, and styling her hair. She decided to let herself go a little bit wild with her look tomorrow, just to see what kinds of knowledge resided in her head. The thought excited her, quite a bit.

Ashlyn usually watched the news and weather before bed, before the spell took hold, but now she dug into TiVo'ed episodes of *Girls Next Door*, *Kardashians* and *Jersey Shore*. She also found herself wanting to call or text one of her friends – friends that she didn't actually *know* – while she watched and share gossip.

Time passed, and she sank further and further into a comfortable lethargy, eyelids drooping. Slowly, inexorably, she felt her defenses lower and her guard drop, and something angry and hot seemed to flash behind her eyes.

Get dressed and go back out, a voice seemed to growl behind her eyes. *Go back out!*

But I'm tired, Ashlyn whined in response.

Do a couple lines of coke, you'll be wide awake. Go back to the hotel with the bikers. One of them probably has a dick big enough to satisfy us.

Wait. Us?

Yes, us, the voice insisted. *You and me. Together.*

Who are you? Ashlyn asked.

I don't have a name, really. Just a concept.

Concept? Ashlyn asked. *What kind of concept?*

That woman called me evil, the voice said, but I'm not. I'm not evil, I don't want to hurt anybody. I just want.

Want what?

Everything, the voice purred silkenly. All the time. I want more champagne. More tequila. Cocaine. More cigarettes. More cocks. More makeup and more clothes and food and I want to go shopping. I want more clothes and more jewelry. I want, I want, I want!

I think I should call Lana, Ashlyn thought.

I think we should call Kerri, the voice responded. Tell her to come over and get high with us, and then fuck us. I want to get high and get fucked! And drunk! I want to get drunk again!

Ashlyn lit another cigarette, enough to quiet the insistent voice a little, and dialed her phone. A sleepy-sounding voice answered the other end with a muzzy "Hello?"

"Lana, sweetheart, it's Ashlyn," she said hurriedly, pouring another glass of wine so that the voice – and the wild, hedonistic desire it was starting to ignite in her – stilled and quieted a little more, dampening the demanding chant of *call your surgeon, let's get our tits bigger!* repeating over and over in her skull. "Listen, I'm, like, totally sure I just found our demon."

"You did?" Lana asked, a touch of fear in her voice.

"Yeah," Ashlyn replied. "It's some kind of spirit of excess or some shit. The minute I got sleepy, it was, like, *bam*. Fuckin' going on and on in my head about going and getting high, and fucking, and buying shit and getting drunk. And the more it talks, Lana, the more I, like, want to go *do* all that shit. I don't know if I can hold out all night long."

"You can," Lana said. "I'm coming over. Just hang in there until I can make it."

* * *

Ashlyn pushed herself to go faster, pumping her legs up and down despite the painful jouncing of her huge breasts, the rhythmic thumping of her Reeboks against the deck of the treadmill picking up speed. The ringing of the doorbell interrupted her and she dropped herself back onto the floor, running to the front door and opening it quickly to admit Lana.

"Honey, you're pouring sweat," Lana said. "Are you okay?"

"Yeah," she said breathlessly. "I'm good. I was losing it, listening to that voice, so I figured maybe if I could just get myself, y'know, alert and shit again I could get control again. So I gave in and did, like, four fat fuckin' lines of coke in the bathroom, and it just made it all worse. So I fuckin' talked the voice into thinking we were getting fat, and nobody was gonna want to fuck us 'cause we're, like, such a fuckin' heifer. So I've been on the treadmill for, like, an hour. I feel like I'm 'bout to fuckin' pass out, Lana, no shit."

"Sit down, honey, before you fall down," Lana cautioned, leading her back into the open, airy living room. "The reason it took me so long to get here was looking up your demon. There's a lot of demons out there who are all about excess, but only a few that use women as vessels. I think yours is a critter named Asvardel."

No! Don't say that name! Please, don't say that name! I'll be quiet, I promise! the voice begged, the shivering edge of panic present in its communication.

"Are they supposed to be, like, frightened of their names?" Ashlyn asked.

"Terrified," Lana said. "It lets us control them."

"So, how the fuck do we get it out?" Ashlyn asked, clutching Lana's arm.

"We can't, sweetheart," Lana said sadly. "It's completely intertwined in you, now. I couldn't begin to try and remove it without killing you, or ripping your soul out of your body."

Fat, bitter tears appeared at the corners of Ashlyn's huge eyes, and Asvardel leapt at the opportunity. *Yes! That feels so good, we should cry some more! We should cry all night!*

Shut up! Ashlyn screamed mentally at the demon, and it subsided for a moment.

"I can't get it out, Ashlyn," Lana explained. "The best I can do is graft it to you. Make it so much a part of you, so much a part of your soul, that it becomes you. Subject to the same things you are: self-control, fatigue, embarrassment, common sense, all of it."

"So I'll walk around constantly wanting everything, all the time, but I'll be able to control it?" Ashlyn asked.

"I'm sorry, honey. It's the best I can do," Lana said.

Ashlyn didn't waste time on regret. "Did you bring all the stuff you need?"

* * *

Her friends didn't really see much of a change in her, to be honest, except that her sex scenes seemed a lot hotter, and she was much more open to the extremes in what she was willing to do on camera: Ashlynn Brooks now did anal, bondage, spanking and gangbangs, and even seemed open to the idea of watersports and some of the more out-there BDSM stuff. She did a lot more coke, drank a lot more heavily and smoked nearly constantly, but none of them minded that their sexy, buxom friend partied so much harder than she had before. She also talked about getting another boob job, elevating herself from the 38DDs she wore now into the extreme fetish range, a 40 or 42 F or double-F cup which would completely overbalance her slender, lushly-muscled frame. She hadn't committed to it – not yet, at least – but everyone could tell the thought delighted her.

Her life revolved around fun and desire, now – her hot young assistant, Kassadi, followed her around constantly scheduling parties and social events, as many as she scheduled interviews and photo shoots and new movies. Ashlyn went through about ten scripts a month, now, her body of work becoming scarily prolific, just enough to support her burgeoning coke habit and the crazy binge shopping she indulged in almost weekly, buying thousands and thousands of dollars in designer clothes, shoes, purses and jewelry.

But it wasn't all bad – she didn't go shopping when she was low on cash, for instance, and she didn't engage in wild, uninhibited sex when she was on her period or had to work the next day. She'd really born down and concentrated on her studies, as well, finishing her bachelors' degree in a few short weeks and enrolling in an online MBA program shortly afterward. She planned to finish that degree early, as well, but not before she filed the paperwork she needed and incorporated her own production company, En Femme Productions, and hired a few of her

porn-starlet colleagues as producers. She had no shortage of talent – Kerri and some of her old friends from the strip clubs around town flocked to her banner – and the scripts poured in, sometimes eight and nine a week. She planned to buy a few of those strip clubs, as well, to supplement her income and to incubate new talent. Her first million was planned for the end of the year, and appeared to be less and less of a dream and more and more of a reality in the offing. Ashlyn hoped she could settle down with the booze, the coke and the smoking long enough to have a baby soon, as well – the thought had popped unbidden into her head a few months after Lana's grafting, and it had never really gone away.

She never really talked to Lana again, after that – Lana could do little else to help her, and her constant harping on Ashlyn to settle down, to be satisfied with less and less, became a real drag that Ashlyn just didn't want to be around. She suspected that Lana didn't mind the loss, either, being faced constantly with her failure and the deep repercussions on the life she'd attempted to restore.

But she couldn't keep from smiling as she lugged in the first of her boxes into the new offices of En Femme Productions, and its luridly-posed female silhouette that was her new corporate logo. Sure, she'd fallen a long way, at least in society's eyes: from a successful, if burned-out, surgeon whose work had once saved lives to a huge-breasted porn slut, coked out of her mind most times and more interested in designer clothes and styling her mane of glossy white-blonde hair than in actually helping her fellow man, sucking down cigarettes and champagne before compulsively exercising in a weird, dichotomous relationship with her own body. But Ashlyn didn't feel that way. She didn't feel like she'd fallen at all.

In fact, she was closer to her twin sister than she'd ever been, and spent most of her waking hours helping to satisfy the desperate hollowness in her hungry, abused soul.

Sometimes, she even got the distinct impression that she succeeded, that her sister's wayward soul did finally get something that it so desperately wanted, and got a respite from the horrible *wanting* that dominated her existence.

And that made her happy.

The end...