

Made in Taiwan

TG Tale by ds1000



41 Illustrations

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When young Grant Gale travels to Asia at the request of his father, he thinks he's in for a year of life changing experiences. Well, he gets that, and a lot more as slowly gets railroaded into the crazy schemes of Simona, a girl he meets on his Chinese course.

After a series of unfortunate and thoughtless decisions, Grant finds himself in a situation he doesn't want to be in, forced to live Simona's life as she takes over his.

This tale is told by Grant as he narrates his experiences as he looks back over the mistakes he made and the life he now finds himself in.

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INTRO

Some people might think it's a bit old fashioned keeping a journal, and to be honest, as the years have passed, I've kind of lost interest, finding myself writing in it less and less, but looking back now, I'm glad I wrote down my experiences as these words are the only real link, I have to who I used to be.

Not many people know my story and the few people I have told, never truly believed me, thinking it to be more fiction than fact, but every word I'm about to tell you is true, it really happened, this is my story.

So, where to begin, I guess I'll start with my name, Grant Gale, or at least it used to be, nobody ever calls me that anymore.

Back before all the craziness started, I used to think my life was pretty boring, just a typical guy living in the city of Chester, northwest England. You see, from an early age, my life had been all mapped out for me, but looking back now, I realise that was probably not such a bad thing, and if truth be told, I'd probably do just about anything to turn back the clock and go back to it.

After finishing school at eighteen, I had my heart set on going to university but my overbearing and controlling father, William Gale, had other ideas. Having spent his entire life building up a reasonably successful business, I was destined to learn the ropes and eventually take over after he retired.

The problem was, knowing this from a young age had left me soft and lazy, never really putting much effort into my schoolwork, I just scraped by with minimal effort, after all, what did it really matter?

Three years after leaving school, I was battling depression, every morning I would wake up and just go through the motions, wishing away the days and living for the

weekend. Every day was a dull mundane affair, I guess, the family faucet business just didn't really get my juices flowing. But things changed around mid-May of that year when just after lunch on a typical day, bored out of my mind, my father called me into his office where he had something important to discuss with me.

Taiwan, where the hell is that? I remember saying, stunned after he'd explained his proposal. He wanted me to spend a year out there, an island off the coast of China, learning Mandarin Chinese in the hope that it would open up doors and future avenues for the business.

I listened silently as he went on to explain that Taiwan was responsible for manufacturing the vast majority of all the faucets sold around the world, your bathroom tap, kitchen sink, all of them were most likely made in Taiwan, he announced in his arrogant tone. He wanted to get in on the action, cut costs and maximise profits.

It took a moment for the idea to sink in but then it hit me, it was my way out, well for a year at least. It would be a year of adventure, meeting new people, discovering a part of the world I never even knew existed, and best of all, not having to listen to the old man drone on about taps all day long.

I jumped at the chance and two months later I found myself, after a small farewell party to say goodbye to my friends, at Manchester airport marching through the departure gate, having just waved goodbye to my teary-eyed mother. In my mind, freedom and adventure lay ahead, not knowing at the time that the next time I stepped foot on English soil, I would be a completely different person, a person that not even my overemotional mother would recognise.

I guess you could say I made some pretty poor decisions in the months ahead, letting my life get away from me. But I'm probably getting too far ahead of myself again, to really understand what happened to me, we have to back to the beginning, back to where it all started.

Day 1

Dragging my small suitcase out of the cool airconditioned terminal building at Taizhong international airport, a waft of sticky hot humid air hit me like a bucket of water. It was the end of July, and the weather was nothing like I'd ever experienced before.

Looking around to get my bearings, my head felt groggy as I struggled to work out what time it was. It was seven o'clock in the morning but having taken a sixteen-hour flight with a short stop off in Dubai and also adding in the fact that Taiwan was eight hours ahead of the UK, time had lost all meaning.

Wiping the sweat from my brow, I located a taxi and somehow after explaining to the driver who spoke very little English that I wanted to go into Taipei city centre, I jumped in and was off ready to begin my new life.

I remember dosing in and out of consciousness as the taxi sped down the highway on its forty-five-minute journey into the city, the fascinating mountainous scenery occasionally snapping me back awake as I drank it all in.

Awoken abruptly by the driver nudging me, I slowly opened my eyes to see that the rugged rural scenery had changed drastically. I was now in the middle of a concrete jungle, tall buildings stood all around me as people scurried about on either side of the car. Taking out a 1000NT note, I paid the driver and received no change but too

tired to argue, I retrieved my suitcase from the back of the car and once again ventured out to be assaulted by the humid sticky climate.

After wandering around for a few minutes, shocked by all the sounds and smells of the completely alien culture, I stumbled upon my hotel and checked in with little issue.

The place was nothing to write home about, a small room with a window that looked out onto the wall of the adjacent building, but it was cheap and at least had air conditioning. It would do for a few days until I found somewhere more permanent to live but finding somewhere to live was the last thing on my mind at that moment, I needed to sleep! Almost falling onto the bed, I was out for the count before my head even hit the pillow.

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It took me a few moments to get my bearings after finally waking up and after locating my phone, I found it to be five-thirty in the evening. Stumbling to the bathroom to empty my bladder, I felt my stomach rumble and realising I hadn't eaten in over 24 hours, I made the decision to venture out to explore my new surroundings and get something to eat.

After brushing my teeth, splashing some water on my face, and changing into a more weather appropriate outfit, the reality of my situation finally hit me. I was on the other side of the world where I didn't speak the language or know a single person. I remember feeling a mixture of nervousness and excitement thinking about lay waiting for me once I ventured out of my pokey little hotel room and into the sprawling city beyond.

What actually awaited me was sensory overload, cars and motorcycles whizzing past on a busy two-lane road, honking their horns, and revving their engines. On either side below of the road, beneath the grey overcast sky, I looked up to see a row of tall grey buildings covered in Chinese writing, full of what I guessed to be shops and restaurants, a stark contrast to the old stone buildings of Chester.

Joining the stampede of pedestrians rushing along the pavement, full of optimism and anticipation, I set off in a random direction, ready to explore and experience all that the city had to offer. I knew the next year was definitely going to be eventful, I just didn't know at the time, quite how much it would change my life forever.



Day 4

After getting somewhat accustomed to my new surroundings, I was feeling a little more comfortable in my new environment. I had extensively explored the area around my hotel, finding all sorts of interesting things.

Waking up early, still feeling the effects of the jetlag, I had set off for a walk-up Roosevelt Road. Breakfast was found shortly after from a roadside vendor selling fried eggs inside some sort of crispy pancake thing. He called it a “dan bing”, something I will definitely be going back for again. Finding a step, I wolfed it down, savouring every bite of the rich umami flavour of the slightly spicy sauce covering the perfectly cooked fried egg before washing it down with an iced coffee bought from the seven-eleven next door.

Ten minutes up the road, I stumbled across a marvellous sight. A huge temple-like complex called Chiang Kai Shek memorial hall. I had been trying to read up online about some of the history of Taiwan over the last few days, learning about how after the Chinese civil war in the forties, the ruling party headed up by Chiang Kai Shek, had fled the mainland to escape Mao and his communist regime sweeping through the country.

I now found myself wandering around his memorial, a huge white round structure with a large bronze statue guarded by two statuesque soldiers in full uniform. The grounds surrounding the hall were extensive and filled with exquisite gardens and pathways to explore. I also found out that the other buildings in the complex were often frequented by musicians playing music concerts and world-famous artists displaying their art, it was quite the find, I would definitely be back.

Mid-morning, I returned to my hotel room to take a cold shower and freshen up before going to view what I hoped would be my new home. I had been looking online for local properties to rent and had come across what looked like the perfect place. It was a rooftop apartment with what looked like a large outside patio area, the rent was affordable and after exchanging a few emails with the landlord, who spoke really good English, he had agreed to show me around that afternoon.

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Mr Wang turned out to be a friendly old Taiwanese gentleman who had spent a few years in London in his thirties. He asked me a lot of questions about why I had come to Taiwan and about my family.

He must have liked my answers because after learning about the family business and my mission to master his language, he was more than happy to let me stay in his property, he even agreed to drop the listed rent price with very little haggling. My new landlord did insist that I stump up two months' rent upfront though and put down a further month's rent as a deposit, but with the money my father had lent me to get set up, that wasn't going to be a problem. I had found my new home.

I informed the hotel that evening, that I would be checking out the next day and spent the rest of the evening exploring Shi-Da night market, wandering amongst the crowds and sampling some of the mysterious food on offer.

Day 6

Waking up in my new apartment in the Gong-Guan region of Taipei city, I jumped out of bed, my jetlag had finally subsided, and I was ready for more exploring.

After a quick shower, I skipped down the five flights of stairs to the street below, there was no lift in the old building, one of the downsides of renting an old building but at least I'd be keeping fit. My plan for the day was to wander over and check out Tai-Da university, where I would be studying Chinese for the next year of my life. The course didn't start for another week or so but with the campus only a five-minute walk from my new digs, I was curious to see what it looked like.

I stopped off for breakfast in a local breakfast shop, where a smiley old lady cooked me up a “pa-gan san-ming-zi”, the Taiwanese version of a bacon sandwich.

Stood around with everyone staring at the only white guy in the place, it all felt so surreal being in a foreign Asian country, as the old woman in front of the hot plate blabbered on at me in Chinese even though she must have known I didn't speak a word.

I couldn't wait to start picking up a few words but as I was realising, a smile and a nod of agreement went a long way with the locals here who were an amazingly friendly and helpful bunch of people.

I didn't get very far into the university, stopped on the gate by a guard who asked me what my business there was. I told him I was going to be a student there but with no university ID and with the school still closed for the summer, I was sent packing. At least I got to see the place and it definitely left an impression. The complex was filled

with large red brick buildings with Japanese architecture. It definitely looked grand, and I wondered if I was going to fit in in such a place.

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I returned to my new apartment early evening, tired after a long day of walking around, having discovered Da-an park and spending a few hours walking around and relaxing in its peaceful environment, a little oasis in the middle of the city amongst all the hustle and bustle.

At the top of the stairs, I took out my keys to open the door that let me through into my outside patio area, my actual apartment door was separate as the building had been built as its own atop the roof. I later found it was quite common for landlords who owned the top floor of a building to build these types of structures in the late nineties, they were illegal as they were constructed without the proper planning permission, but it seemed to be some sort of loophole in the system, where no new ones were allowed to be built but the one's already there were allowed to remain.

Opening the door, I was hit with the strong smell of marijuana. Confused I closed the door and rounded the corner to see where the strong pungent smell was coming from. That's where I met Jamal for the first time. A tall muscular mixed-race man with no top on.

It was a surprise, to say the least, I mean I knew moving in, that my home on the roof had been divided into two separate apartments, most likely to get twice the rent, but I just hadn't realised my new neighbour was another foreigner.

I must have looked like quite the fool, stood there with a stupid look slapped on my face as Jamal turned around to look me up and down.



The instant he saw me, a huge smile appeared across his face before he quickly introduced himself and asked me to join him on the patio. We ended up spending the whole evening chatting and getting to know each other where I quickly took a liking to his quick wit and laid-back attitude.

Jamal as it turned out was also from England, the city of Brighton on the south coast, but he hadn't been home in quite some time. He had been in the country for almost ten years playing basketball for the Taipei team once upon a time, that was

before a knee injury had convinced him to quit. With the money he had made from playing, he had decided to stay in the country, liking the Taiwanese lifestyle and all it had to offer.

As the sun was setting over the rectangular blocky buildings of the city, Jamal cracked open a can of Taiwan beer, which I had just run out to purchase from the Familymart down the street.

Placing the beer next to the leg of his plastic chair, he reached into his shorts pocket and took out a tin. I watched a little shocked, not sure how to react as he wrenched open the lid, took out a little green bag and started to roll up a spliff.

Like an idiot, I asked him if it was legal. I remember seeing the smile appear on his face before he made a joke about how nice it would be if it was. He then continued to roll as he informed me that, in fact, it was very illegal in Taiwan and if caught, even in possession, you could be prosecuted and given jail time. Jamal, being the character that he was, just laughed at my reaction to the news, saying that as a foreigner, he would be deported at most, and he wouldn't mind checking out Thailand if that ever happened.

After taking a few drags, filling the air with the potent smell of weed, Jamal passed the spliff my way. I'm not sure why but I accepted it. I had never taken any sort of drugs before in my life, perhaps it was the new environment or the fact I was making a new friend, something I had always struggled to do back home.

Inhaling a large drag, I started to cough my guts up, leaning forward to catch my breath, "Woah, easy, dude", Jamal said, reaching over to take back the joint, laughing at me in the process.

After recovering from my coughing fit, Jamal passed the spliff back over. I took another hit, this time inhaling the thick smoke much more slowly.

My actions that evening were completely out of character for me, but something changed in me that night as I sat with Jamal on the roof, a calmness washed over me. For the first time in my life, I felt at peace with myself and the world, I felt alive.

That night would be the first of many nights sat out on the patio, smoking, and hanging out with Jamal as I started to fall in love with my new life and the city of Taipei.

Day 22

It was now the middle of September and having finally started my Chinese language course at Tai-Da university, I was feeling completely lost. Mandarin as it turns out is much more complex than I had ever imagined. I mean, I knew learning a new language was going to be tough, having struggled to learn even the basics of French in school, but I still wasn't prepared for what I was about to face.

I'd only been at it for four days, but I was already doubting my ability to ever get to grips with this mindboggling language. As I had recently learnt, Mandarin is a tonal language consisting of four distinct tones. What that means, in reality, is you could essentially learn a word or phrase but unless each syllable is delivered in the correct tone, it will come out as a confusing illegible mess.

To make matters worse, if the tongue-twisting pronunciation wasn't bad enough, there was also the reading and writing to contend with. A mammoth task lay ahead

of me to try and memorise thousands of characters and somehow not only be able to recall them but also somehow be capable of writing them out in the right stroke order. The year ahead was going to be a challenging one, definitely no walk in the park.

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Around ten in the morning, unbeknown to me at the time, my world was about change forever. Sat around in a large circle with all my fellow students, having just butchered the sentence I was trying to repeat back to the teacher, Miss Li, there was a loud banging sound towards the back of the room.

Everyone turned, even Ms Li, who took a momentary break from shaking her head at me with a look of disgust written all over her face, a look I was quickly becoming accustomed to.

The heavy wooden door, at the top of the entrance stairs, hit the wall with a bang before a silhouette of a girl started walking carefully making her way down the steps in her ramped footwear. As she approached the bottom of the staircase, everyone in the group stared, transfixed on the striking-looking girl with her long lilac hair, wearing a tight white top and a tiny, checked pink skirt.



You could hear a pin drop as she sauntered across the silent room, everyone present mesmerized by her aura, and the hypnotic rhythmic clumping sound of her high cork sandals each time the sole met the polished wooden floor beneath.

Reaching the group, the girl turned to Ms Li and in perfect Chinese seemed to apologise for being late. Strangely, Ms Li didn't seem particularly upset which shocked me. I had been five minutes late on the second day and got a scolding, this girl was two hours late, having missed the first four days of the course and received a friendly smile.

The lilac-haired girl took up a seat opposite me and after arranging her skirt beneath her, looked over in my direction to catch me staring. Our eyes locked and my heart quickened in my chest. She smiled, it was a warm friendly smile that said be a man and ask me out on a date, big boy. Well, that's what my twisted logic interpreted it as anyway, she was more than likely just being friendly. Flashing her a quick smile back, I looked away hoping she couldn't see that I was blushing.

Throughout the rest of the day, I could feel her eyes on me as the class went on. I tried to avoid looking whenever possible as this girl made me feel nervous. But there was also something about her that intrigued me, something that made me want to learn everything about her.

Not that it was likely that a girl like her would go for a guy like me. Back home in Chester, I had never been what you would call a lady's man, with only a few short-term relationships that always seemed to fizzle out after a few weeks. I would always get dumped, later to find out the girl was seeing was with someone else, as the rumours of how negative and miserable I was spread throughout my small friend group.

There was also the fact that I was a little short and it seemed girls, where I come from, don't like to date guys shorter than them. This is something that had always

annoyed me, especially given I wasn't even that short, a little less than average at best and if the girls around the northwest of England stopped wearing those ridiculous sky-scraper heels that seem to be all the rage these days, I would be taller than most of them, or at least on par with them.

I didn't learn much Chinese that day, but I did learn a few things about the mystery girl. Her name was Simona and she and Ms Li knew each other well. Her Chinese, from what I could tell, was also fluent which begged the question. why was she on a course for beginners? But perhaps the weirdest thing was the feeling I got from her. It seemed the longer I spent in her presence, the more I felt as though we had met before, something about her just seemed so familiar.

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I spent the evening, doing the thing I did most nights, sitting on the patio outside my little apartment, smoking and chatting with Jamal.

We talked about what I had learned that day in class and I tried to recall some of the random sentences I had been forced to recite about stationary. "Wo you yi zhi bi" (I have one pen) I said aloud, which was pretty much the only thing I could remember. Jamal laughed at my pronunciation and made a joke about how useful that would be when looking for the bathroom or ordering food. I had to agree, it didn't seem like the most useful thing to be learning at this stage. To be fair to Jamal though, who could speak Chinese effortlessly, having lived in the country for so long, he made fun of me but was always encouraging and helping me out.

After a while, the conversation moved on to the enigma that was Simona. Jamal didn't seem to find her entrance strange and instead just wanted to know if she was

hot. I nodded my head, she was definitely attractive but at the same time, for some reason, I felt strange saying it, something just felt a bit off.

All in all, it was a good day, I was now well and truly settled into my new routine and feeling very comfortable in my new life. All I had to do now was focus a bit more on my studies, but there was plenty of time for that, right?

Day 29

Another week had passed by with Miss Li was still giving me a hard time about not studying enough. If you ask me, I was definitely making some progress in class, even if it wasn't up to the standards of the impossible to please Miss Li.

After her entrance last Friday, Simona had started to come to class more often, if twice this week could be considered that. I still wasn't sure why I was so fascinated with this girl; I just couldn't stop thinking about her, and today was the first time we actually spoke to each other.

It was lunchtime and I was sat outside on a wall, eating a Taiwanese style bento box with some of my other classmates, when she wandered up. With a smile on her face, she said hello to everyone before taking up a seat next to me, so close I could feel the skin of our bare legs touching.

To try and make conversation, I asked her what she was eating for lunch. She replied by saying she didn't eat during the day as it was too hot. Smiling, I went back to eating my lunch, but I was so nervous by her presence, it seemed, I had completely forgotten how to use my chopsticks.

Watching me struggling, Simona reached over and took a hold of my hand.

Manoeuvring her long sparkly nails around my shaking fingers, she repositioned my grip on my chopsticks and urged me to try again. The guy sitting to my right, Carlos, made a joke about me being uncoordinated and how I needed to be shown how to eat.

Another guy called Harry piped up to also poke fun at me, saying Simona could even do it with two-inch nails. The group laughed and to ease the tension I made a comment about her nails, saying I didn't know how she could do anything with her nails that long. Simona paused for a minute, looked down at her hands before saying they were easy once you got used to them. The next thing she said surprised me, looking me in the eyes, she said, "if you're curious, I could do yours for you just like mine".

Almost choking on a mouthful of rice, the group erupted in laughter, all but Simona. "Why's that funny"? she asked, "Grant here looks like an open-minded guy, someone not to let the outdated conventions of society determine how he lives his life, am I right"? she added before placing her hand on my knee.

I didn't even know she knew my name, and now with her fingers gently tapping on my kneecap, I could hardly think straight. Everyone in the group just stared at her before suddenly she let out a cute little giggle, "only kidding", she said breaking the tension, "oh, by the way, you guys look like you know how to have a good time".

In unison, the whole group nodded and agreed. Simona then went into her purse and took out some leaflets, saying she did some work promoting events and tonight there was going to be a big party in the Xinyi area.

After handing out the leaflets, she stood up, said goodbye, and sashayed away. All the guys in the group were mesmerized by her backside gently rocking from side to side squeezed into her tight shorts, we all watched her until she was out of sight before making plans to attend the event later that evening.

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Having returned home from school, I found Jamal in his usual spot and after presenting him with the leaflet, I asked if he wanted to go. He wasn't keen at first, seeing the theme, all guests having to dress completely in white, but after a little persuasion and letting slip who had invited me, he agreed to join me.

We arrived around nine o'clock and the place was already packed. Hundreds of people, both local and foreign all decked out in their white clothes, dancing, and drinking. We wandered over to get a drink, and after pushing our way through the crowd of people mingling by the bar, ordered two beers.

For the next hour or so, we stood around and chatted, neither of us really into dancing, until I looked up and saw Simona. Dressed in a tiny white dress and perched atop an impossibly tall pair of platform pumps, she was talking to a group of Taiwanese men about ten feet in front of us. I almost didn't recognise her at first, all made up with long red hair, not that the hair was surprising, every time I saw her, she was sporting a different colour and style.

Seeing me suddenly zone out in the middle of one of his stories, Jamal stopped to see what I was looking at, "don't tell me that's your, girl", he said chuckling.

Feeling quite defensive, I turned to him to say she wasn't my girl before asking him what was so funny. He turned to me and said he knew her. At first, I thought, he was

joking, but then he explained how a friend of his, who had now left Taiwan to go back to Canada, tried to date her almost a year ago. It turns out the ex-pat community in Taipei was as Jamal always said, he had told me on more than one occasion, if you stayed around long enough, you'd eventually bump into everyone. I asked about the details of his friend's relationship with Simona, and he explained how he didn't get very far with her, the rumour was she was a bit crazy. Curious as to what happened, I asked for more details. He didn't know the ins and outs of what happened but advised me I'd be better off not getting involved.

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As usual, I drank too much that night. After the conversation with Jamal earlier, I had decided to try and forget about Simona, it wasn't good for me to fixate on her, and besides as Jamal had pointed out many times, there were many more beautiful women around.

Stood outside the club, I lit up a cigarette and took a long drag, a recent bad habit I'd picked up, thanks to all the nights smoking out on the patio with Jamal. Looking around at the crowd of people with the same idea, I smiled to myself, thinking life was definitely better than it had been just a month ago.

That's when she appeared, strutting out of the club on her tall heels like a catwalk model, I couldn't help but stare. I guess she saw me looking as she turned in my direction, gave me a little wave and made a beeline for my position.



“Mind if I have one”, she asked looking down at me from atop her tall platforms and pointing at my cigarette. Reaching into my pocket, I took one out and lit her up. She thanked me by leaning in close, placing her hand on my shoulder and planting a kiss on my cheek.

I tried to act cool, but inside my heart was racing. With her sweet-smelling perfume filling my nostrils, I told her it was no problem.

“I’m really glad you came tonight”, she said, “great outfit”. I looked down at what I was wearing, a white collared shirt and a pair of Jamal’s shorts that were way too big for me, to be honest, I thought I looked a little stupid.

I asked her how Chinese class was going and she seemed bored with the question before dodging it. There were a few seconds of awkward silence as she just stared at me smiling before I tried again, asking how she got so good at Chinese.

“Practice, a lot of practice”, she said touching the top of my arm once more, “but that’s not what you really want to ask me now is it”? She added leaning in and whispering into my ear. Shocked by how forward this girl was, I just stood there, mouth open looking like a fool.

“I’ve seen the way you look at me”, she said flashing me her beautiful smile, “so, are you going to ask me out or not”?

“Yes”, I blurted out, slightly intimidated but also majorly turned on.

“Go on then”, she replied, stepping back slightly.

I mumbled something about getting lunch sometime and she laughed. I thought for a moment I had blown my chance with her by saying something so dumb. That's

before she suddenly delved into my pocket and fished out my phone and told me to unlock it. I did as she asked before watching in awe as she proceeded to store her number inside. Her nimble fingers moving like lightning, her long nails not hindering her at all.

“Call me in the morning”, she said passing it back to me, “we can meet up for a late lunch or something”, she added with a wink before dropping her cigarette to the ground.

Placing the tip of her tall stiletto heel on top of the fallen but, she twisted her sexy foot and stamped it out, “see you tomorrow, Grant Gale, I'm looking forward to it”.

I stood there shellshocked as I watched her trot away, pinching myself to try and convince myself that the conversation had really happened.

Day 30

I woke up still in my clothes from the night before, feeling like death warmed up. I really needed to stop mixing my drinks, it also probably wasn't the best idea, staying up drinking and smoking with Jamal until the sun came up.

I jumped in the shower, which helped a little before crawling back to lay on my bed for a little longer. Waking up a second time, it was two in the afternoon. Rolling out of bed still feeling rough, I suddenly remembered a vague recollection of Simona wanting to go on a date with me. For a second, I thought I might have dreamed it up but looking in my phone, I found her number and smiled.

I debated for a few minutes, whether or not to call her, but then thought, what the hell, what's the worst that can happen? So, with bated breath, I dialled her number and waited to see if she would answer.

"Hello, her sweet chirpy voice rang out, "who is this"?

"Err... hi Simona, it's Grant", I replied suddenly feeling nervous, "I was just wondering if you still wanted to meet up today"? I added quickly before I chickened out.

"Oh, hey, Grant, I was starting to think you wouldn't call", she replied, "sure how about we meet in Ximending station, exit 6, say about 4ish"?

I eagerly agreed and after a few pleasantries, she hung up. Wow, I thought to myself, I guess I've got myself a date.

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She was late, but I didn't mind. I found a place to sit on a nearby wall and looked around at all the colourful buildings, lit up with neon lights. Ximending was sometimes referred to like little Shibuya, having been modelled on the popular part of Tokyo, and I could definitely see why.

Thirty minutes later, she finally arrived, sauntering up the street in front of me looking as fashionable as ever. As she approached, I remember worrying about how I would greet her, a handshake was too awkward, a kiss, too forward, a hug could work if I just went for it. As it happens, I needn't have worried as she almost lept on top of me, gripping me tightly and instantly putting me at ease.

I complimented her on her outfit, which was much more casual than the previous evening, but in a little vest top with a plunging neckline, daisy duke shorts, and a pair of cork wedge sandals, she still looked great.

She played off the compliment, saying she had just thrown it on before she took my hand and ask where I was taking her. I must have pulled a face because she rolled her eyes in a comical over the top way before sighing the word, "men".

In my defence, I had never been to the Ximen area or many dates for that matter, and with other things on my mind on the way over, I hadn't really considered what we'd do once we arrived.

She told me not to worry before asking if I was hungry. I wasn't and told her so, still feeling the effects of the night before. I don't know what I was expecting her to say, but her answer, "no problem, let's just walk around for a while", surprised me.

Simona albeit appearing like a high maintenance girly girl type was surprisingly easy-going.

We set off into the shopping area hand in hand with me doing most of the chatting. She wasn't much of a talker but seemed to listen to everything I said.

Struggling for something to say, terrified of an awkward silence, I started commenting on the people and the environment, surprised by how quiet the area seemed, having heard how busy and lively the place usually was. This made Simona chuckle before she turned to look at me. She called me cute before making me feel like an idiot by telling me that it was probably because of the Typhoon about to hit, she then raised an eyebrow and asked if I ever follow the news.

Doubling down on my stupid comments, I asked her if it was safe to be out if there was a tropical storm about to hit the island. Again, she laughed at me before explaining how she had lived through dozens of typhoons. She described it as a wet windy day and said most people just used it as an excuse to hang out with friends and family.

With my mind at ease, I changed the topic, asking her if she wanted to perhaps get a drink and sit down for a bit. "Sure", she replied, "I know just the place".

The place she chose surprised me once more, the place was a really cool bar, themed around classic rock music, there was even a jukebox where you could select songs to put on for free. With each passing moment, I was starting to like this girl more and more

Over the next few hours, I started to relax, probably thanks to the alcohol, hair of the dog always being the best cure for a hangover. The only downside being, after only a few drinks, I was already starting to feel a bit tipsy.

Simona seemed to liven up too with a few drinks in her. She started to talk more about things she liked to do but oddly dodged any question about her past.

Around eight o'clock, encouraged by the alcohol, I made my move. Reaching over, I did the classic fake stretch thing before bringing my arm down around her shoulders.

It was my go-to move on the few dates I'd been on, and in the past, I had seen a variety of reactions, Simona's was a new one. Turning she tilted her head towards me before smashing her plump lips into mine. For the next few minutes, I forgot that

I was in a public place, I didn't care. Her lips felt like heaven as I explored her mouth with my tongue.

I let my hands wander and in return felt her hands trace up the inside of my thigh before grabbing hold of my fully erect member through my shorts. I gasped and pulled back. Smiling at me, she leaned in and whispered in my ear, "do you want to come back to my place? I only live around the corner".

Never had I been asked an easier question in my life. I nodded while staring into her dark black eyes and she responded by taking my hand.

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She was right about her place being close, barely five minutes later after a trip through a series of maze-like alleyways, I was stepping in through her front door, and it wasn't what I was expecting. To be honest I hadn't really given it too much consideration on the way over but from the impression I had gotten from her, I had expected her to be living somewhere a little larger and more luxurious.

Don't get me wrong, the place was fine, probably nicer than my apartment in fact, but it was just a typical old-style Taiwanese apartment on the fourth floor. There were two rooms, a living room slash kitchen, and a bedroom, which opened up onto a very well-kept balcony.

My thoughts suddenly turned back to the reason why I was there as Simona took my hand once more, gave me a quick tour of the place, that didn't take long before she led me out onto her balcony to wait while she made us some drinks.

Stood outside admiring the impressively well-kept balcony area, a sudden strong gust of wind blew in, rustling the branches and bushes surrounding me.

Thinking back now, I perhaps shouldn't have taken the approaching typhoon so lightly, but at that moment, I only had one thing on my mind.

Startled slightly, I turned to see Simona standing in the doorway with a small glass, of what I guessed to be whisky, in each hand.



Without a word, she walked up and handed me a glass. We chinked them together in a toast of sorts before I brought the hard liquor to my lips, feeling it burn as I took a large gulp.

When I looked back up, Simona opened the palm of her hand and surprised me again by revealed two small white tablets.

She must have seen the shocked look on my face because she stepped forward and kissed me full on the lips, “just something to relax us”, she said purring, “I mean, you don’t have to, I just thought you were an open-minded guy, that’s all”.

In truth, the thought of taking some unknown substance terrified me. But then again, it was the year for new experiences, and I was currently standing next to a beautiful woman from what it seemed, wanted to have sex with me.

Not wanting to blow my chances and reasoning that a month ago, I had never even smoked a joint whereas now I was smoking most days and loving it. I nodded my head and saw her smile once more, a heart-warming smile that made me melt a little inside.

I watched as she placed one tablet on her tongue, before washing it down with a swig of whisky. “Your turn”, she said, “come and get it, big boy”, before placing the second tablet on the tip of her tongue.

She probably never said the big boy comment, in fact, I'm pretty sure she didn't, but my memory of the evening is pretty hazy, especially after stepping forward to kiss her fully on the mouth and having the mysterious tablet pushed down my throat.

From that moment on, it was pure euphoria, even before whatever she had given me kicked in. Right there on that balcony as we ripped each other's clothes off, wildly exploring each other's bodies, time lost all meaning, the only thing that mattered was the moment.

I've mentioned once before that I wasn't very experienced in the ways of women, having only ever had sex a few times. This experience far surpassed them all.

Whatever the pill had done made my body tingle all over, everywhere suddenly felt so sensitive, so in tune with my surroundings, and with my mind on autopilot, my neurotic thoughts quietened, pure lust took a hold of me.

Looking back, it was probably the best night of my life, but as they say, there's always a calm before the storm.

Day 31

Slowly opening my eyes, I didn't recognise my surroundings. The bright morning light was streaming through a gap in an unfamiliar pair of curtains and I could feel the presence of someone next to me, breathing lightly on my neck.

Turning over to get some relief from the blinding light and to see who I was with, I felt pain and discomfort all over my body but especially my head, which felt as though someone was trying to hammer their way out.

Suddenly a flood of memories came rushing back to me, the date with Simona in Ximen, the drinking, the amazing sex, and the mysterious pill.

As the silhouette of the person sleeping beside me slowly came into focus, I gasped so loud I must have woken her up. She opened her eyes and looked at me oddly.

“Your hair”! I gasped once more, “it’s gone”!

Simona smiled, propping herself up onto one elbow and scratched the top of her shaved head, “yeah, I chopped it all off for cancer research about a month ago, I raised quite a bit of money, besides, wigs are much more fun anyway”.

With my mouth wide open, I just stared at her, not knowing what to say, what could I say? It wasn't as though she looked ugly or anything, I was just surprised, but I guess it did explain all the different hairstyles and colours she was always sporting.

Ignoring the ridiculous face, I was pulling, Simona asked if I wanted a coffee. I nodded my head to indicate I did before she trotted off to the kitchen to put the kettle on.

Adjusting my body into a sitting position, I discovered I was completely naked as even more of the previous evenings' events came back to me. I couldn't remember how I'd made it into the bed, I now found myself in, but I did remember the hours of pleasure out on the balcony beforehand. The mysterious pill had somehow made me the world's best lover, not only had it relaxed me to the point where animal instinct had kicked in, but it had also made me rock hard all night long. No matter how many times we had done it, my little soldier was instantly ready and prepared to go again.

After a few moments, Simona returned with the two cups of coffee. I thanked her, consciously trying not to stare at her short haircut, and took a sip. The bitter coffee taste was a welcome one as I again felt my head pounding, knowing it was going to be a rough start to the day after two days of straight binge drinking.

“Well, last night was fun and all but once you’ve drunk that, you’ll need to get dressed and leave, I have a lunch date with a girlfriend”, Simona suddenly announced while sitting down to join me on the bed.

I nodded but with the memory of our epic lovemaking session still fresh on my mind, I was feeling bold and asked if she wanted to meet up again sometime.

She smirked before looking away, “maybe”, was the reply, “I’m going to make you work for it though”.

I reached over and placed my hand on her bare thigh, “your wish is my command”, I replied while stroking up towards the top of her leg.

“Interesting”, she replied with a wry smile on her face, “I’ll remember that”.

She then moved her hand down and removed mine from her leg, “there’s no time for this now”, she said playfully, “I told you, I have to go out, if you want a shower, go now, it might wake you up a bit”.

As soon as she mentioned it, it seemed like the best idea in the world, it was just what I needed to clear the cobwebs away. After asking her to join me and getting rejected for a second time in under a minute, I wandered off in the direction that she pointed, realising that my wobbly legs were just as sore as the rest of my body.

The shower helped but re-entering her bedroom with a fluffy pink towel wrapped around my waist, I suddenly realized I had no idea where my clothes were. Seeing the odd expression on my face, Simona asked what was wrong. I told her and she said to check the balcony.

It made sense, where else would they be. Walking towards the door that led out onto the balcony, I couldn't help but smile remembering the pure pleasure I had experienced out there just a few hours earlier.

However, as I slid back the curtain, my carefree smile vanished in an instant as a look of absolute horror appeared across my face. The previously pristine-looking balcony now looked more like a warzone. The plants and trees had been ripped from the ground as bits of random wood and metal lay strewn across the area.

I brought my hand up to my forehead and shouted, "what the fuck"! Simona seeing my reaction jumped up to see what was going on, "oh my god", she shrieked, "my garden".

"Fuck your garden, what about my clothes"? I replied loudly.

She didn't like my reaction and pulled an angry-looking face that let me know.

Slowly, I opened the door to see the aftermath of the typhoon first-hand, not quite believing I had slept through it, those pills had really done a number on me.

Rushing about as Simona just stood in the doorway in shock, I moved a few branches and bits of wood, hoping that my shorts would be underneath. My luck wasn't in as it soon became apparent, they were long gone along with the contents of my pockets, my wallet, phone, and apartment keys.

Turning back to Simona, I asked her why she hadn't brought my clothes back inside. She again seemed annoyed snapping at me, saying that she wasn't my mother before asking why I hadn't brought them in.

Seeing how annoyed she looked I apologised and walked over to give her a hug. She shrugged me off and walked back inside.

I followed her inside went over to the bed, where I sat for the next few minutes with my head in my hands, feeling completely lost, trying to think of a way to get home.

Looking up at Simona who didn't look quite as angry anymore, I asked a stupid question, her answer wasn't surprising but was still devastating to hear, "why would I have any men's clothes here"? She replied pulling a face.

Suddenly an idea hit me, "can you go out and buy me a pair of shorts and a T-shirt"? I asked hopefully, "I'll pay you back".

She thought about the question for a minute before walking over to join me on the bed, "no can do, I'm afraid", she replied, "for one, I can't be late for my meeting and secondly, do you really think any shops will be open today? You've seen it out there".

"Well, what am I going to do then"? I moaned.

She smiled and looked at me with a glint in her eye like she had just had an idea, "just borrow some of my clothes", she said, like it was a completely normal suggestion.

I looked at her like she was crazy, "I can't do that", I stated, "I'll look ridiculous".

"Maybe", she replied with a smile, "but what other choice do you have, I doubt you'll make it far without getting arrested walking home with no clothes on, you'll probably make the evening news". I knew she was right, I couldn't leave naked, I needed to cover myself up somehow.

After a few minutes of deep thought, thinking through any and all alternatives, I turned to her and said, “ok but will you help me”?

She seemed more excited by my reply than I had expected, jumping to her feet before disappearing through a large door, I had previously not noticed.

She wasn't in, what I later found out to be her walk-in closet for long, returning with a pile of white garments covered in strands of black hair.

“Try these”, she said, holding out a piece of white elasticated material.

Taking the item of clothing, I unfolded it to see it was the bottom of a bikini, “I can't wear these”, I stated firmly.

“Oh, come on, Grant”, she replied sounding slightly annoyed, “you can't walk around Taipei with your bits pushing through the front of your skirt now can you”?

“Skirt”? I gasped, “don't you have a pair of jeans”?

Simona looked annoyed again, “I'm trying to help here, you know, if you don't want my help, you're free to leave whenever you want”.

“No, I do”, I quickly replied, “I just don't want to wear a skirt”.

“Sorry, but the only jeans I own are bright pink and like all my shorts, there is no way they'll fit you”, she said having calmed down, “so are you going to try what I brought you, or take your chances in your birthday suit”?

Trapped between a rock and a hard place, I let her dress me without further complaint. I didn't utter a word as she snapped the tight bikini bottoms around my waist or even when she painfully pulled my manhood back between my legs to make

me look flat in the front. I even stayed quiet as she slipped a thin white top over my head and lifted a long flowing skirt up my legs.

Before helping me to my feet, she took the long black wig, that she had brought out earlier and plonked it on my head.

“There, hmm... not too bad, I guess”, Simona said, sounding unconvinced, standing behind me as I stared in horror at my reflection in the mirror.

I had no words, I looked ridiculous. No one was going to mistake me for a woman. From my bulky shape, stubble covered face, caterpillar eyebrows, and hairy hobbit feet sticking out from the bottom of my skirt, I was obviously a man in women’s clothes.

Simona seeing my look of horror led me back to the bed, where she sat me down.

“Let’s see if we can tweak your look a little”, she said before rushing off to the bathroom.

She returned a few moments later with a bowl of water, some shaving foam, and her pink lady shave razor. I asked her what she was going to do, and she rolled her eyes, “shave that fuzz off your face, duh, what do you think”.

I let her work and five minutes later, I once again had a smooth face. The beard I’d been trying to grow for the past few weeks was now long gone, along with it the edges of my eyebrows that I’d let her start tidying, before stopping her, worried she was going to shave too much.

Taking the bottle of shaving foam once more, she placed another dollop on her hand and moved towards my ankle, “woah, no not my legs”, I stated loudly pulling back.

The thought of walking around with girly looking legs scared me, I'd have no way to cover them later, Taiwan was way too hot to wear jeans this time of year.

“I was only going to do your ankles where the hair shows”, Simona replied amused, “but suit yourself”, she added before washing the shaving foam off her hand and moving the bowl of water to one side. Telling me that she needed to get ready herself, she then disappeared into the bathroom to take a shower.

I can't remember what thoughts were going through my mind as I sat there waiting for what seemed like a lifetime as she washed, dressed and did her makeup, but one thing I know, I felt terrified.

When she was finally done and back to looking like her glamorous self, she walked over and dropped a pair of glittery pink slip-on shoes by my feet, “now before you complain, these are the only flat shoes I own, I sometimes wear them around the house, but you can have them”.

“Thanks”, I mumbled before slipping my feet into the girly looking shoes, which were flat as she said but also sported a platform sole that lifted them at least two inches off the ground.

Choosing to ignore my sarcastic response, Simona produced a handbag and opened it up, “here, I've put a few things inside that you'll need”, she said before showing me an mrt card(metro card), “this still has a few dollars on it and will get you home”.

I nodded and she produced the next item, “this is my old phone, I don't use it anymore, I've stored my number in it so you can call me if you get into any trouble”.

For the first time since I'd opened the curtains to see the destruction outside, I smiled, "thank you", I said, sincerely, "I thought you couldn't wait to get rid of me".

She pulled a face before leaning down and surprising me with a kiss on the lips, "of course not, silly, I may have been a bit grumpy earlier, but I think it's really cool that you're willing to dress like this. I mean, who says a man can't wear a skirt, I just hate all these preconceived bullshit stereotypes we all have to conform to, besides, that's one of my favourite handbags, and I want it back".

I smiled again and got to my feet as she told me it was time to leave. Shuffling my way to the door, I was a nervous wreck as every bone in my body and fibre of my being was telling me not to step outside. Passing a mirror by the door, I caught a glimpse of my reflection once again, suddenly noticing my lips shining, probably due to when Simona kissed me a moment ago.

I went to rub it off with the back of my hand, but she stopped me, "wait", she said delving into her handbag, "it will help you blend in".

I didn't resist as I watched her unscrew the top of a long tube, or as she revealed an odd-looking brush and carefully coated my lips the same shiny colour as hers.

The sticky feeling now coating my lips felt strange especially when they started to tingle. I mentioned the feeling to Simona, and she laughed it off, saying it was a lip plumper and that the tingling would stop in few moments.

With no fight left in me, I let her place a pair of her pink sunglasses on my face and drag me out the door.

The click of the lock as the main building door closed behind us, after carefully traversing the stairs on my unfamiliar footwear, was perhaps to this day, one of the most terrifying sounds I'd ever heard. I was now outside in Taipei city crossdressed and with a long trip home ahead of me.

We shuffled through the alleyways towards the mrt station, well I was shuffling, Simona was gliding along on a pair of high wedge sandals. Looking around at the debris left behind by the typhoon, I was shocked by the destruction, taking my mind of the way I was dressed at least for a moment. That is until we reached the mrt station.

Heading in different directions, Simona said goodbye and just like that I was alone, and unlike the streets which had been deserted, I was now surrounded by people staring at me.

I quickly got moving, trying to tell myself they were just looking because I was a foreigner and not because I was some freak dressed in women's clothing. Whatever the reason, I received many more stares as I waited for and boarded the train before plodding slowly through the carriages trying to find a place to hide away from the prying eyes.



The humbling and ego-crushing trip home will be one I'll never forget, the only saving grace, finding the spare key where Mr Wang had shown me. On top of everything else, I had worried all the way back, that it might have blown away in the typhoon, leaving me to make the impossible decision of buzzing either Mr Wang or Jerome to let me in. Luckily, I never had to make that choice, not that it made the whole experience any less humiliating.

Day 34

To get Sunday's ordeal out of my mind, I started the week by focussing on my Chinese studies. For the first time since I began, I had completed my homework every day this week, Miss Li even smiled at me today when I presented it to her.

But forgetting what happened was easier said than done, I still hadn't spoken to Simona with her being absent from class this week and me to chicken to text or call her, I just didn't know what to say. That changed this afternoon when after lunch, she finally graced us with her presence for the afternoon classes.

Strolling in calm and relaxed, she took up her usual seat opposite me and flashed me a smile. Every lesson after that went completely over my head. The only thing I could focus on was Simona and what I was going to say to her after class.

At three thirty, we were done for the day. I made sure to get out before her and took up a position leaning on the wall outside. I called her as she emerged, she saw me and strolled over.

“How are you, sweetie”? she announced stopping in front of me, “you didn’t call, so I guess you made it home ok the other day”.

I tried to play it cool, but felt myself going red in the face, thinking about Sunday’s trip through the city wearing her clothes. “Oh hey, yeah, not something I ever want to do again but I guess I made it back ok”.

“Oh, I see, that’s a shame”, she announced looking disappointed, “well, see ya then”.

Turning to walk away, I stopped her, “wait! I didn’t mean it like that”, I stammered, “I mean, I want to see you again”.

Simona turned but continued walking slowly away, “well, I’m pretty busy at the moment, Grant”, she said almost dismissively.

“I still need to return your clothes”, I blurted out, “perhaps I could bring them around one night”?

Simona stopped, “ok, why don’t you bring them around on Saturday around lunchtime”, she said with a smile, “but I’m only letting you in if you’re wearing them”, she added with a giggle.

“What”! I exclaimed loudly, not quite believing what I’d heard.

“Up to you, Grant, I wouldn’t want you to do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable”, she said starting to walk away once more, “perhaps I’ll see you Saturday, but remember no boy clothes, see ya”.

Left completely deflated, I slumped back against the wall. I couldn't travel back across the city again in that outfit, the thought made me feel sick. but I needed to see her again, perhaps I could? No, there was no way I could, unless?

Day 37

In a quiet alleyway just around the corner from Simona's apartment, I stood shaking. I still couldn't believe what I was about to do, having gone back and forth on my crazy idea for the last few days. The thought of being seen out in those clothes again was a terrifying prospect but with the memory of the high from the pill and the mind-blowing sex constantly on my mind, I had bit the bullet and gone for it.

The plan was simple, I had her outfit in my backpack and all I had to do was slip it on, store my clothes in a safe place, and change back when I left.

Sticking my head out of the alleyway for the third time in under a minute to check if the coast was clear, I knew it was now or never. Running back over to my hiding spot behind the bins, I quickly stripped down completely naked before opening my backpack.

Shaking with adrenaline and petrified that someone was about to walk up, I grabbed the tight elastic bikini bottoms and slipped them on, remembering to tuck my penis away like she had shown me. Within seconds I was once again dressed in the girly outfit and straightening the wig on my head.

Shoving my male clothes into the bag, I zipped it up. Then, just as I'd finished placing it behind some cardboard boxes, a door suddenly opened further down the alley. Without wanting to wait around and see who it was, I jumped up and set off in the opposite direction. Unfortunately for me, it was the wrong way meaning I'd have to take a detour around the block.

With my head low and my feet shuffling along, I eventually made it to her door where I pressed the buzzer and waited. There was no reply. Looking around nervously with my heart beating out of my chest, I pressed it again. This time she answered.

“Hello, who’s there”? Simona’s voice called out over the intercom system.

“It’s me, Grant”, I whispered, “can you open the door”?

“Grant, you came”, she replied sounding surprised, “what are you wearing”?

“I’m wearing the same clothes, I left here in last week”, I hurriedly said. “Please, let me in”.

“I want to check”, Simona announced, “take a few steps back, so I can see”.

“What do you mean”? I replied aghast but the intercom had already cut off.

Looking out into the street and seeing no one about, I walked back about five meters and stood with my head down.

“Hey up here”, Simona shouted from above.

Looking up, I saw her on her balcony waving down at me, embarrassed beyond belief, I gave her a little wave back, and just like that she disappeared.

Confused and scared, I again looked around, this time seeing an elderly couple walking towards me. My first instinct was to run but just as I was about to set off, I heard a heavy click and saw the thick metal door to Simona’s apartment open slightly.

Like a shot, I was through the opening and inside. Clicking the door shut behind me before leaning back on the door and breathing a heavy sigh of relief.

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A few minutes later after plodding slowly up the four flights of stairs in my sparkly pink shoes, Simona met me at the door.

“I can’t believe you actually came”, Simona said hugging me tightly.

As we broke apart, I looked at her oddly, “really, then what is all this”? I said motioning down at my maxi skirts fluttering around my legs, “so, this is what? Some kind of joke”?

Simona laughed, “no, no joke, most men are just so boring, too fragile about their masculinity, but I can see you’re different, I like different, please come in”, she said taking my hand.

Revealed to be in the safety of her apartment and happy to see the smile on her face, I leaned over to give her a kiss. To my surprise, she pulled back.

“Err... sorry”, I said embarrassed, “I just thought...”

“Simona tilted her head to one side, “what did you think”?

“That perhaps, you had invited me around to... to... you know... like last week”, I mumbled feeling completely humiliated stood there in her clothes.

“Oh, I see”, Simona stated, “well, I guess that could be fun, but I seem to remember you saying you were prepared to work for it, is that still true”?

The words were comforting as the memory of last weekend's lovemaking session came rushing back to me, smiling I nodded my head.

"Great", Simona squealed, "in that case, I going to set you a task, if you complete it, for the rest of the day and all night if you want, I'm yours to do with as you wish".

I couldn't hide my smile as the words sank in, imagining the fun I was going to have, but then as I noticed her staring at me with a big old grin on her face, I started to worry, "what's the task"? I asked.

"Oh, it's easy, if we're going to be in all day, we need some drinks and snacks, there's a 7-11 a few blocks down the street, you just need to go there and buy us some".

When she first said it, it sounded easy enough, until I suddenly remembered how I was dressed, "but, I don't have any clothes", I announced loudly.

Simona pulled a face, "what's wrong with what you're wearing? Didn't you just wear them over here"?

Dam, she had me, I knew I'd have to be careful what I said next, "yeah I did, it's just so many people were looking at me, they knew I was a man, it was so embarrassing", I said before looking down, hoping she would take pity on me.

Simona nodded and thought for a moment, "so, the problem is you look like a man in women's clothes, is that right"?

"Erm... yeah, I guess so", I replied confused.

"So, if you didn't look like a man in women's clothes, there would be no problem, right"?

"Err... I guess so", I answered still confused.

“Ok, well let's sort that out then”, she announced excitedly.

“Sort what out? You don't mean”? I said horrified as the penny dropped.

“Your look of course”, Simona announced, “with a little magic from me and some makeup, no one will look twice at you”.

“No, I can't”, I stated, finally putting my foot down.

The smile on Simona's face dissipated, “well, I guess you're no fun, after all, Grant Gale”, she huffed, “you know where the door is, don't bother calling again”.

“No, wait, I don't want to leave”, I said panicked, “I'm just new to all this, I feel a bit nervous”.

And just like that, angry Simona became calm Simona again, “ok, wait here a moment”, she said before rushing off into the bedroom. She returned a moment later with a white pill in her hand.

“Isn't that the sex pill, I had last week? How is that going to help”? I asked thinking about the six-hour erection it had given me the week before.

Simona pouted, “it wasn't a sex pill; besides, this is different, it will relax you”. She said placing the pill in my hand.

I know now, that was the moment, the moment, I should have run out the door and never looked back. Instead, I looked down at the feminine outfit I was wearing and up at Simona's beautiful face. I had come too far to back out now. With the thought of the erotic night of pleasure that awaited me, I popped the pill in my mouth and swallowed.

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As I became aware of my surroundings and my thoughts once again became my own, a pair of smooth tanned feminine looking legs came into vision, extending out from beneath a pair of tight white shorts.

Still a bit light-headed, I felt something heavy, restricting my feet. I tried to move my leg, but instead, watched confused as the sexy feminine legs extended out in front of me. I wiggled my foot as my mouth dropped open in horror and a shiver ran down my spine. The legs in front of me were mine, now hair free and shining in the light, reaching down to a pair of clumpy pink wedges strapped to my feet.

I slowly lifted my head and gasped, coming face to face with a nightmarish image in the mirror in front of me.



“Oh hey”, Simona said from behind me, “you were really out of it for a while there”.

Not that I heard a word with my mind firmly focused on my new look, “what did you do to me”? I muttered, my lips feeling a little rubbery and numb.

Approaching from behind, Simona placed her hands on my shoulders, “what you said you wanted, I’ve made you look a little more like a typical Taiwanese girl, so you can blend in”.

The room started to spin before I looked down only to notice my shiny pink manicure that I had somehow missed the first time, “shit, this is too much, fuck Simona, how am I supposed to look like me again later, I’ve got pink nails and girly looking legs”.

“Oh, calm down, Grant, nail polish is quick and easy to remove, and I’ve just used a tinted moisturiser on your skin, after a couple of showers it will wash away, which is a shame if you ask me, you look good with a little colour”.

“What about the hair”? I asked running my hand down my silky-smooth leg and shivering once more.

Simona giggled before smiling at me, “well, yeah, that’s gone, but it’s for the best, in this weather, you’ll be so much more comfortable, besides, I like men who are hairless, and your legs look spectacular”.

“But I don’t want spectacular looking legs, people will think, I’m weird or gay or something, there’s no way I can hide them in this heat”, I stated sounding annoyed and frustrated.

“Hey”, Simona shouted, shaking the chair I was sat on, “who cares what people think, let them think you’re weird or gay or whatever, I just told you I like your look, if that’s not enough for you, perhaps you should just leave”, she added pointing towards the door and looking incredibly angry.

“I’m sorry”, I said bowing my head, the angry outburst, and the threat of being thrown out as I was, making me act uncharacteristically submissive, “I’m just a bit shocked by how extreme you went with this”.

“Extreme”, Simona replied raising an eyebrow, “what’s extreme about it”?

Looking back into the mirror, it was my turn to look surprised, “Well, all this stuff on my face for starters”.

“A little makeup, that will wash straight off”.

“My lips, they look larger than usual and feel weird”.

“That’s just the effect of my lip plumping gloss, that will fade back to normal soon, to be honest, I’m a little jealous, I’ve never seen anyone’s lips react so well to a lip plumper before”.

“Ok, but what about my eyebrows? You’ve definitely done something to them”.

“A little plucking to tidy them up a bit, but listen, Grant, this is all getting a bit tiresome now, this is supposed to be fun remember”, Simona said stepping back, “after a shower, you’ll be back to looking like your boring old self again, minus a few hairs, that I reckon, once you get used to, you’re going to like. So, what’s it to be? Complete my task and get your reward or just give up and go home”?

Through the mirror, I could see her stood with her hands on her hips, waiting for an answer. Examining my reflection once more, I took a deep breath. Ok, this was a bit weird, but If I took a shower before I left and got her to remove the nail polish, I had my clothes outside to put on later.

With a plan of sorts forming, I once again felt in control of the situation. Turning slowly on my chair to face her, I nodded my head and told her I'd complete the task.

In an instant, Simona's mood changed to be giggly and excitable once more, which looking back should have been a major red flag.

"Goodie, you are fun, after all, now let's get you finished off, hands up", She said, bounding towards me.

Doing as she requested, I raised my arms and, in a shot, the purple hoodie I had been wearing was being tossed across the room, leaving me looking down at a bright pink spaghetti strap top with two little bumps poking out.

"I'm going out wearing this"? I mumbled in surprise, lifting my hand up to poke one of the protrusions in the front of the top and discovering that I was now wearing a bra stuffed with something soft.

"This is the perfect outfit for a day like today, it's humid as hell out there, I only put the hoodie on you because you were shivering under the air conditioning in here", Simona stated, while picking up a long black wig.

She placed it on my head, messed about with the edges for a few seconds to make sure it was straight, before proceeding to brush it through a few times. When finished, I watched as an odd look appeared on her face.

“What is it”? I asked nervously.

“See for yourself”, she replied motioning for me to spin around and look at myself.

Swivelling my legs, which felt heavy and cold, my whole body turned to face the mirror once again. This time there was less of a reaction as I just gazed at the impossible sight in front of me.

“Hang on, watch this”, Simona announced, ducking out of sight before returning a few seconds later, having replaced the blond wig she had been wearing with a black one that looked a lot like the one currently on my head, “look, we could be twins”!

After all the bizarre and frightening things that had happened lately, a simple statement like that shouldn't have affected me much, but as I gazed at our two heads, side by side, something clicked.

Starting to hyperventilate, I thought back to the time where I first saw her and the strange feeling of familiarity I'd experienced. Then there was the jokey comment Jerome had made while stoned one evening, telling me that chasing Simona was like chasing my own sister, I'd laughed it off at the time, but I wasn't laughing now, the resemblance was undeniable.

Simona was right, we looked a lot alike. Not identical, there were differences, my shoulders and arms were larger, and her face was a little thinner. Her eyelashes and lips were also thicker than mine and her eyebrows thinner and more defined, but no matter how much I wanted to deny it, we definitely could be sisters.

“Wow, I never expected this, I mean, I knew you’d look good, but you actually could pass for me, this is crazy”, Simona announced, wrapping her arm around me, looking rather excited, “ok, time to introduce you to the world”.

Frozen in place, I watched the reflection of her buzzing about the room behind me, transferring the things from the bag I’d brought, over to a newer larger one.

“Ok, let’s go, GG”, she announced, placing the bag over my right shoulder.

“GG”? I said looking up at her confused.

“Yeah, GG, like short for Grant Gale, but much cuter”, she replied, taking a hold of my hands, and pulling me up to my angled feet.

Grabbing me around the waist, she stabilised and stopped me from falling, the bright pink wedges on my feet not only heavy but also much higher than I’d expected, “Woah, Simona, I’m not sure I...”.

She cut me off, “of course you can, they’re like one of my most comfortable pairs, if I can walk in them, so can you”, she announced taking a few steps back, “now walk to me”.

Feeling my lower leg muscles stretched, I took a wobbly step forward. “stop”, Simona screamed, “you’re walking like a boy”.

She then walked back towards me and placed her hands on my bare shoulders, “loosen up a bit”, she said, “move your arms like this”, she added moving my limp arms to demonstrate.

“Now watch me”, she announced before turning and in slow motion, walked to the other side of the room, rolling her hips, and describing her actions the whole way.

When she reached the other side of the room, she told me to try again. Trying to remember everything she had just said and done, I lifted my right foot, and watched the strange sight of my elevated pink-clad foot, move a few inches in front of me before coming down directly in front of the other.

Remembering to move my arms and roll my hips, I continued on towards the smiling Simona who was shouting advice and words of encouragement.

Stupid as it sounds, arriving on the other side of the room and being rewarded with a smile and a kiss on the lips, I felt a real sense of achievement, even if the words that came out of her mouth straight after made me feel very emasculated.

“You’re a natural, GG, we’ll have to try you in a pair of my stilettos later, but first, do it again but this time at normal walking speed”.

=====

After another five minutes of practice, Simona had announced me ready. I didn’t feel ready, I felt anything but ready, however, it was too late for thoughts like that now as I stood looking at the thick metal front door to her apartment building.

Stopping for a moment to catch my breath, and rest my already sore legs, after somehow traversing the four flights of stairs in my new ankle-breaking footwear.

I took the opportunity to open the bag Simona had given me and look inside. It was mostly empty, apart from the new wallet I had just bought, my newly cut house keys, and the phone Simona had given me. But that was the idea, more space to fill with drinks. I’d been instructed to buy whatever I wanted, but as I stood there shaking, all I really wanted to do was go home.

The thought was tempting, but with no way to remove the makeup or pink nail varnish, I chose the lesser of two evils, a short stroll to the local seven-eleven.

With my heart in my throat, I pressed the little button on the back of the door and heard a loud click as the metal door popped open an inch. Spreading my legs to get the required leverage, I pulled open the heavy door and instantly regretted not asking for a pair of sunglasses. For a moment, I considered going back up to ask for a pair, but with my legs already sore, I just couldn't face another trip up and back down.

The heavy thud of the door locking as I pulled it shut, made me jump a little. Still shaking, I looked down at my feminine outfit and disturbingly sexy legs, realising that I was once again out in public dressed as a woman, only this time, it was much worse.

With Simona's vague directions in my head, I turned left and set off mincing through the little alleyways, doing my best to imitate the walk Simona had shown me and trying not to think about what I was doing.

Reaching the end of the alleyways and arriving at a bigger road, I had gained a new appreciation for girls like Simona who constantly walked around in heels and made it look easy. I can tell you, high heels are no joke, especially after walking continuously for a few minutes along uneven surfaces in almost 100% humidity.

After just a short walk, I was already sweating all over and felt as though I'd just run a marathon but suddenly, I had other worries.

Stopping dead on my ramped pink wedges, I caught the eye of a middle-aged Taiwanese woman walking on the other side of the street, wearing a coat that had no business being worn on a hot day like today. She looked me up and down with a

disgusted look plastered across her face before quickly looking away to continue on her way. The experience was terrifying, but at the same time, strangely thrilling. I had just been judged, and although the woman had obviously not taken a liking to the way I was dressed, I was pretty sure, she hadn't guessed my true gender.



Startled by a deep gruff voice, I almost pissed my panties, “xiaojie, guolai”. Knowing enough Chinese to know the words meant, “come here, miss”, my head shot around to see a sweaty looking older man, sat on the back of a scooter. The sight wasn't a

pleasant one, with his white stained vest top rolled up to show off his large hairy belly.

Extending his arm, holding an almost empty three-litre bottle of rice wine, the man repeated himself before grinning, showing me his two missing front teeth, and looking me up and down.

With no intention to stop and talk, I pushed back the hair that had fallen across my face, turned, and tottered off as fast as I could manage down the street to the backdrop of the man screaming at me in Chinese.

By this point, I was really feeling out of my element, walking along the crowded street with my feet really starting to hurt. Just as I was considering taking a short rest, I saw my destination. The rainbow-coloured décor of 7-11 with a large Open Chan statue out front.

The air conditioning was a godsend, as I almost stumbled in through the automatic door to the sound of a little jingle and the woman behind the counter welcoming me. At this point, I was soaked in sweat and the cold air on my exposed skin was very welcome.

Shuffling over to a refrigerator at the back, I found the beer section. Stood there taking a few deep breaths of cool refreshing air, I remember feeling conflicted. Part of me just wanted to get back to Simona's apartment as quickly as possible to end the ordeal, but with the sweltering heat and humiliating walk in my painful shoes separating me from my destination, part of me just wanted to take a seat in the small seating area and take a break.

My decision was made easier by the arrival of a group of young men wandering over to stand by the fridges. One saw me and made a comment that I didn't understand before the others started looking me up and down and commenting. Opening the fridge, I went for the first beer I saw, filling my bag with ten or so cans.

With the men still standing around and talking about me, I avoided eye contact and headed straight for the till to pay. Luckily, there was no queue, but it still seemed to take an eternity to get all the beers back out of my bag, scan them, pay, and repack.

After paying, I was straight back out into the heat and on my way back to Simona's. Feeling a little calmer about people seeing me, having had a few interactions, the trip back wasn't as quite nerve-wracking, just more tiring thanks to my screaming feet and heavy bag of beers digging into my shoulder.

=====

Seeing Simona's smiling face as she opened the door to welcome me back into the safety of her apartment, was an indescribable feeling. The short trip had left me, tired and shaking but also exhilarated and full of energy.

As soon as the door closed, she leaned in and kissed me passionately. Panting and out of breath, I just stood there, but the kiss wasn't unwelcome.

"So, you got the drinks"? She said breaking the kiss.

Still breathing heavily, I nodded, slid the bag from my shoulder and handed it to her. She made a comment about my choice of beer but didn't seem upset before trotting off to the kitchen at the far side of the room to put the drinks in the fridge. She

returned a few seconds later, dumped the bag on the sofa before handing me one of the beers she was holding.

We opened the beers together. “Cheers, GG”, she said, raising her can and taking a sip. Following her lead, I raised my can myself before glugging down a few mouthfuls to quench my thirst. The moment I lowered the can, Simona took it from me and placed it on the table, “you deserve a reward”, she said giving me a suggestive look.

Before I even had time to respond, she was on her knees. She made short work of the button and zip holding up my tiny pair of shorts, and in a flash, they were around my ankles along with my silky panties.

I’m not sure why, I was aroused at that moment, perhaps it was the endorphins coursing through my body after the walk, the beautiful girl in front of me, or her commanding presence. All, I knew, was as soon as she untucked me, I was at full mast, and as her pouty lips parted and took me in, I moaned loudly and almost collapsed with my knees threatening to buckle as I wobbled around atop my pink wedge shoes.

Suckling and tickling, it didn’t take long for me to come to climax, exploding into her mouth before watching her smile and swallow it down. At this point, I was starting to think the trip out was worth it, imagining the amazing day I was about to have, unfortunately, I couldn’t have been more wrong.

As I was fiddling around with the little button at the top of my shorts, and about to sit down and take off my uncomfortable footwear, Simona’s phone rang.

She answered and didn't seem to say much, not that I would have understood anyway with the conversation being in Chinese, but I did catch a name, "Long Bo". Hanging up the phone, I could tell from her face, she was about to say something I wouldn't like, "Err... GG, I have to go out", she said apologetically, "I'm really sorry but you have to leave".

"Is Long Bo, your boyfriend"? I asked slightly annoyed.

"How do you know that name"? She shot back at me.

"I heard you say it on the phone, so is he"? I replied, pouting unintentionally.

"No, I don't have a boyfriend, but I do need to go".

"So, who is he"? I asked intrigued.

"It's complicated", Simona replied, actually looking nervous for once, "at some point, I might explain things to you, but right now, you have to trust me, if I don't go, it will be bad".

Not happy, I sighed loudly, but accepted what she was saying, "ok, will you help me with this makeup and nail polish"?

"There's no time, I'm afraid", Simona quickly replied, "besides, it will help you blend in on the way back home". Stunned I just stared at her as she turned and ran into the bedroom.

Returning a few minutes later, she had changed into a short skirt, low cut top, and a pair of towering heels. Her makeup looked a little heavier around the eyes and her lips were now bright red. "Here", she said showing me the two bottles in her hand,

“makeup remover and this one is for your nails”, she said before placing them in my bag, “don’t mix them up, ok”? I didn’t laugh at her obvious joke, I just felt numb.

“Listen”, Simona said, giving me a little kiss and a hug, “I’ll make this up to you, I promise”.

=====

Shaking like a leaf, I closed the door at the bottom of my apartment building and breathed deeply. It had been one hell of a journey, back from Ximen on the MRT, dressed in my skimpy little outfit, not quite sure if I passed as a woman.

Yes, I was still dressed in the outfit Simona put me in, I had planned to change back into my boy clothes before finding a bathroom to scrub off the makeup, but fate had other ideas.

After walking to the station with Simona, gathering quite a few stares on the way, we said our goodbyes. After standing there for a few seconds feeling very self-conscious amongst all the people, I waited for her to go out of sight. Turning, quickly with my head down, I rushed out of the station, retracing our steps to retrieve the bag I’d hidden earlier.

As you may have guessed by now, it wasn’t there, who knows what happened to it, but it was gone, along with the last pair of shorts I owned, having only packed two pairs when I came out to Taiwan.

Slowly, I plodded up to my rooftop apartment, feeling stupid for going along with Simona’s idea, wishing, I’d just spent the day chillin or perhaps studying Chinese.

Exhausted but mighty relieved to be home, I made it to the top of the staircase. But little did I know, my embarrassing ordeal that day was far from over. I tried to close the door quietly but failed due to the big metal lock clicking. I also tried to walk quietly to my door, again failing due to my tired legs and clumpy footwear. With my keys in my hand, mere feet from my apartment door, I looked up as a voice startled me, “uhm, hi”, Jerome said as he poked his head around the corner with a surprised look on his face. Panicked I froze on the spot like a statue.



“Simona, right? I’m Jerome”, he said extending his hand, “we’ve met before, a while back, if you’re here to see Grant, I think he went out”.

For a moment, I just looked at my friend, trying to tell if he was being serious. There was a strong smell of marijuana in the air, but surely, he hadn't really mistaken me for Simona.

Quivering, I placed my pink nailed hand in his much larger paw, “umm... I have his key, Grant told me to wait for him inside”, I replied, in the most ridiculous high falsetto voice, almost like I'd inhaled helium gas.

But somehow, he bought it, “oh, yeah, no problem”, Jerome said, releasing my hand, "I didn't realise you guys were seeing each other now"?

"Looking down at the ground, I wanted it to swallow me, "It's still pretty new", I replied quietly.

“You know if you wanted to? you could wait with me, it’s lovely on the patio today”, Jerome said with a smile, "we could chill until Grant gets back, get to know each other better"?

It felt very wrong to have Jerome flirting with me. Firstly, because the guy was supposed to be my friend, he shouldn't have been hitting on a girl I'd invited around. Secondly, and probably the more obvious reason, at that moment, I was beet red in the face, forced to pretend to be that girl.

I can’t remember what I said next, but I somehow managed to repel Jerome’s persistent advances before taking a few steps forward. Trying not to look him in the

eye, I awkwardly fiddled with my keys, trying to open my door as he stood there watching me.

With my heart going at a million beats per minute, as I ducked inside my room, slamming the door behind me. Tottering over to my bed, I collapsed on top. It had been a nightmare of a day but at the same time, strangely thrilling.

Day 39

Arriving at the university on Monday morning, my mind was all over the place. After Jerome seeing me crossdressed and mistaking me for Simona, I'd stayed in my room all day Saturday and avoided him.

Sunday, I had to venture out, for one I had no food in the apartment and was starving but I also knew I couldn't avoid Jerome forever. Waking up early, much too early for Jerome to be up, I headed out to get some breakfast from a little shop up the road before stopping in Wellcome supermarket on the way back to pick up a few supplies.

Forced to wear my jeans and trainers, I arrived back at the apartment a sweaty mess and went straight for a cold shower. I really needed to pick up some new shorts, but that left me with another problem, how was I going to explain my hairless legs.

I spent part of the evening hanging out with Jerome who had plenty of questions. I dodged a lot of them feeling awkward knowing it was all lies, not to mention the constant niggling feeling I had that perhaps I hadn't scrubbed my face clean enough.

Every time he looked at me, I thought perhaps I still had some residue eye makeup or perhaps my lips were still a bit red.

=====

Taking my usual seat in class, Simona in for once on a Monday morning, smiled at me. I ignored her and tried not to look back in that direction again. I had decided during the painstaking process of removing my nail polish to cut ties with her and move on. The thing is, she had other ideas.

Walking out of the room at lunchtime, she came bounding up behind me, “GG, why are you ignoring me? I’m really sorry about how things turned out of Saturday”.

“Erm... it’s fine, can we talk about this later”, I whispered, looking around and seeing some of our classmate in close proximity, listening in.

“It’s not fine, I can tell”, She said pouting, “was there a problem going home”?

“I told you, I’m fine, just leave it”, I said, feeling annoyed.

“Come with me”, she said, grabbing my hand before leading us away from the group and into the men’s bathroom.

“I’m not sure you should be in here”, I announced nervously as she bundled me into stall and locked the door, “they’ll probably kick you off the course if they catch you”.

“Oh, let them try”, Simona replied smiling, “has anyone ever told you, you worry too much”? She added before kissing me passionately.

As I felt her soft lips and smelled her sweet-smelling perfume all me resolve I had built up dissolved especially after she’d dropped to her knees and undone my jeans.

She had reeled me back in, I entered the university building that morning determined to ignore her, but I left having arranged to go shopping with her for some new shorts.

Day 51

Strolling through the streets of Ximen, I was feeling good. University was out for the weekend, and I'd just found a delicious new street stall stand, where I'd eaten breakfast.

The place was busy as always, people rushing about at a million miles per hour, somehow avoiding each other, seemingly lost in their thoughts.

Crossing a road, I noticed a beautiful looking Taiwanese woman standing on the curb. I looked at her and she waved. I smiled and waved back only to see her take a few steps to her left and look straight past me awkwardly.

Looking over my shoulder, I noticed a taxi and realised my mistake. Embarrassed, I quickened my pace.



I was on my way over to Simona's to meet her. She had said something about going shopping with her and needing my opinion. I wasn't really keen on the idea but after her helping me to pick out some new clothes a week prior, I felt almost obliged to agree.

I had been spending quite a lot of time over at her place the last week or so. Keen to make things up to me, she had invited me over, every other day, where we would typically go out to eat at some delicious restaurant nearby, before heading back to hers for a drug induced night of passion.

Weird as Simona was, I just couldn't get enough, the high, the sex, it all just felt too amazing, and with the bizarre crossdressing stuff seeming behind us, it was something I was not too keen to give up.

=====

"What about this one"? Simona asked holding up a dress for me to see.

"Yeah, it's nice, I guess", I replied sounding bored. We had been shopping around Ximen for a few hours now and it was a question I'd heard hundreds of times.

Pulling the dress back on the rack, Simona pouted, "you said you were going to help me, is something wrong"?

"No", I quickly replied, shaking my head, "it's just, we've been at this for hours, and you haven't bought anything yet", I added with a sigh, "it might help if you told me what the occasion was".

“I told you a work thing”, she answered sounding frustrated, “what would you have me do? Just pick up the first one I see and buy it”? Leaning down, I watched as she pulled a short white Aztec print dress of the rack in front of her.

Looking at the dress, I actually thought it would look good on her, forcing me to say something stupid. “I like that one, you should try it on”.

I saw her eyes close slightly and her lip curl. Knowing I’d said something wrong; I was preparing myself to be screamed at. But suddenly, her whole demeanour changed, “ok, let’s try it on”, she said taking my hand before leading me to the changing rooms.

Entering she looked around and found the place empty, “come”, she announced, pulling me into a stall and closing the door.

As soon as the door closed, she pounced on me, grabbing my crotch, and kissing me passionately. Within seconds, my shorts and underwear were on the floor, joining the T-shirt, she had ripped from my upper body.

Kneeling down in front of me, Simona looked up into my eyes before taking my engorged manhood between her swollen lips. Gripping the wall, I moaned away in ecstasy as she bobbed back and forward like a pro, massaging my sack with her long acrylic nails.

It didn’t take long before I was ready to explode, but somehow knowing this, Simona suddenly stopped, “oh, my leg is cramping up, you don’t if we stop there do you”?

“What”! I gasped, dumfounded, “you stopping, you can’t stop there”!

“I tell you what, how about we take a break for a second and see how this dress looks, then we’ll see about carrying on”, she said with a wicked smile, grabbing the dress from the bench, “lift your arms, GG”.

“What me”? I gasped again, “you want me to wear it”?

“Of course, you were the one who liked it, and I want to see what it looks like”, she said while rolling up the dress and finding the arm holes, “why do you get to have all the fun”?

I should have said no, the last thing I wanted to do was put on a dress in a public changing room, but I guess, at that time I wasn’t thinking with my brain.

I lifted my arms and closed my arms, feeling the tight stretchy material being tugged down, compressing my upper body. When it reached my crotch, Simona pushed me back on to the bench and kneeled down once more, “good boy”, she said, before once again taking me into her mouth.

I closed my eyes and groaned deeply not even noticing as she took off my flip flops. The feeling of ecstasy once again took over as the world around me melted away. Until suddenly, feeling my right foot adjusted into an oddly stretched position, my eyes shot open, “Are you putting, your shoes on my feet”? I gasped realising what she was doing.

“I thought I’d rest my feet for a second and see how they look with that dress”, she said after releasing me from her mouth, “is that a problem”? she added with an innocent look.

I remember thinking, “what the hell, I’m already in a dress”, not really wanting her colourful towering wedge shoes on my feet, but also, at that moment, wanting to climax more than anything.

Just over a minute later, my whole body spasmed as I filled her mouth with my salty load which she swallowed down. Leaning back, I felt her licking me clean before suddenly, yanking my member back between my legs and tucking away my ball. A pair of panties that had somehow magically appeared around my ankles, were pulled up to secure the tuck job before the stretch skirt of the dress was pulled down to conceal it.

“Up you get”, Simona announced, taking my hands, and helping me up.

“Woah”, I said wobbling feeling my calf muscles strain and the straps dig into my feet, “these shoes are crazy, how did you walk here in them”?

“With practice”, she replied running her hands down the sides of the minidress, I was now wearing, “you remember what I taught you, right”?

Realising what she was hinting at, I took a step back, “No, I can’t go outside, like this, what if someone comes in”?

“They’ll see a customer, trying on an item of clothing, and who cares anyway”.

“I can’t”, I mumbled, “I look ridiculous”.

“Oh, come on you little drama queen, you look great, come out and see”, she announced before grabbing my clothes from the floor, and running out the door with my flip flops now on her feet, “You’ve got ten seconds then I’m leaving with your clothes”, she shouted from outside giggling.

Backed into a corner, I closed my eyes, knowing I'd somehow got myself into another ridiculous situation. Hearing her slowly counting down from ten, I took a deep breath, opened the door, and waddled out into the bright light of the changing room.



Seeing the phone in Simona's hand, I tried to turn my back. I was too slow as a bright light flashed in my face, almost blinding me.

"Nice pose, GG", She said smiling.

"I wasn't posing"! I stated in a serious-sounding voice, "can you please, delete that"?

"What the picture"? Simona replied innocently, "why"?

I looked at her like she was crazy, "so no one sees it, of course"!

"Aww... but you look so cute", Simona cooed", "tell you what, if you finish our shopping trip dressed like that, I'll delete it".

"And if I say, no"? I replied, looking down at the skin-tight patterned dress which had moulded itself to my body.

"Hmm, you won't, coz, I'll make it worth your while when we get back to mine, but if you want, I guess I could threaten to show your classmates or something", she said with a giggle.

I felt my legs begin to shake, "you wouldn't really show them, would you"?

"Probably not, maybe, who knows", Simona said in a ditzzy voice, "So, shall we just get going? Then we don't need to find out".

"Simona, please, can I just have my clothes back", I pleaded, "I can't go outside looking like a man in a dress".

"GG, you still care too much what people think about you, huh"? Simona stated, tutting, before walking towards me, "you really need to get over that or you'll never be happy".

Now, standing in front of me smiling, she reached up and peeled off the wig from on top of her head, “here”, she said placing it on my head, “a disguise”.

“You’re not going to back down are you”? I said with a sigh, looking over and seeing my emasculated reflection in the floor to ceiling mirror on the wall behind Simona.

“I’m just helping you blossom, little duckling”, she replied, giving me a kiss on the cheek, “now, makeup or no makeup, up to you”.

=====

Back on the streets of Ximen, it suddenly felt as though every eye was on me, which might have actually been true. There weren’t many other couples on the street, showing as much skin as we were. Add to that, Simona’s shaved head, me now sporting bright pink hair and struggling to walk on my new eye-catching footwear. You get the picture, we stood out.



With the clothes, I wore out earlier now neatly folded up in the pink shopping bag, swinging to and fro in my right hand. I focussed on the placement of my aching feet, trying not to fall flat on my painted face. At least it distracted me from the thoughts

of all the people looking at me or the awkward interaction with the salesgirl in the store moments earlier.

If it wasn't for my face being caked with makeup, she would have seen it was bright red with embarrassment as we approached the front of the store to pay. The interaction was short with Simona helping me explain in Chinese that I would be wearing the dress out of the store.

Having seen us enter earlier, there was no doubt the girl behind the counter knew my true gender. But as uncomfortable as I'd felt, to her credit, she never mentioned it. This helped me relax a little, I mean, as much as anyone could shuffling around wearing those ridiculously tall 6-inch wedge sandals.

For the next hour on my aching feet, we continued our shopping trips, moving from store to store, until Simona found a suitable dress for her mystery occasion.

By this point, I felt much more comfortable, having had a few interactions, with nothing but a few stares, the result. I'd also been testing out something Simona mentioned. She told me to imagine that I was her and she was me. As crazy as it sounded at the time, I have to hand it to her, it actually helped. If I was Simona, I wasn't walking around the streets of Ximending crossdressed, meaning I had nothing to be ashamed about. It was a strange chain of logic, but with every passing glance or double take, my confidence grew.

The pill, Simona gave me before leaving changing room, starting to kick in, probably helped too as my body relaxed and all my worries just melted away.

Day 56

The day kicked off with Miss Li dropping a bombshell. Informing the class that after the half-term break, we would be sitting our first big assessment. This came as a surprise to no one, including me, as it was clearly stated in the calendar given out at the start of the course. What was a revelation though, was the news that anyone who failed would be asked to leave the course!

Alarm bells went off in my head as she explained the format of the paper. All answers would need to be written in Chinese; answers written in pinyin (a phonetic system of writing Chinese words) would be ignored.

Panic set in, what was I going to do? I wasn't ready for a test, especially one this important. After starting out reasonably strong, I'd let my old slacker ways creep back in. Between the nights smoking with Jerome and the evenings high as a kite around Simona's, I had done very little work lately, having even convinced Simona to do my writing homework for me.

Sat there in deep thought, watching Miss Li lips move but not hearing a word, I cursed my stupidity. I'd felt pretty smug about myself after convincing Simona to do my homework as some kind of payback or compensation for all the humiliating situations she had put me in, now I just felt like an idiot. Well, I say convinced, it didn't take much more than suggesting it really, as Simona didn't seem to care. To her it was child's play, taking her two to three minutes tops to complete.

I knew failing this assessment was not an option. If I failed, I would be thrown off the course, have my visa revoked, and need to leave the country. In that moment, I decided to change my ways, knuckle down and study. I would only have around two

and a half weeks to prepare, but if I put all my energy into it, cutting out all distractions, there was a chance I could scrape through.

Day 57

“So, how about we spend the weekend, naked and in bed”? Simona announced, sitting down opposite me on the bench outside the university and giving me a suggestive look.

Gritting my teeth, I inhaled deeply, “I can’t, gotta study”.

“Oh, come on, GG? The test will be easy, and it’s weeks away”, Simona replied, rolling her eyes.

“Easy for you maybe, how am I supposed to answer any of the questions, if I can’t read or write”?

Simona shook her head, “fine, suit yourself, I guess I’ll just have to find someone more fun to hang out with”, she stated dramatically, getting to her high-heeled feet.

“Ok, enjoy”, I said, looking up and smiling, knowing she was trying to get a rise out of me.

With her mouth open slightly, looking as though she wanted to say something, we both stared at each other for a second before she huffed loudly and stomped off.

Leaving me with my boring old textbook and a feeling of regret.

Day 64

With half-term quickly approaching, I was feeling a little defeated. For the past week, I had really tried to catch up on the work I'd missed, but with classes continuing and new content being constantly fired at me, I was struggling.

No matter how much I tried to focus, I just couldn't get my head around the Chinese characters. Even without the distraction of Jerome, who was down in the southern city of Kaohsiung (Gow-she-ung), visiting a friend for a few weeks, I was getting nowhere. Needing help, I turned to the only person who knew could, Simona!

"And why should I help you, after you've ignored me for the last week"? Simona stated as I caught up with her after class.

"I know, look, I'm sorry", I replied, trying to keep pace with her, "I freaked out a bit when I heard about the test, I thought if I could cut out all distractions and stay sober, I would be able to catch up".

"So, I'm a distraction then"? Simona exclaimed, pouting, and not looking particularly pleased with my choice of words.

"No, I didn't mean it like that", I quickly shot back, "I meant it in a good way. When I'm with you, it's like impossible to focus on work, you know".

Simona stopped and turned to look at me, the edge of her plump lips curling upwards slightly. "So, let's say I help you out. What do I get out of it"?

At that moment, I felt like a sailor being led towards the rocks by a beautiful siren, but at the same time, I didn't have any other options. "What do you want"? I asked,

giving her a pleading look with my eyes, hoping it wouldn't be something too humiliating.

She paused for a moment before smiling. "I want you to come to a Halloween party with me this Saturday, and I get to pick the costumes".

A party! That didn't seem so bad, even if I knew my costume probably wasn't going to be very masculine. "Ok, sure, but then you'll help me study, right"? I said, nodding my head.

"Of course, Babe", she replied with a smile, "but you can't complain about your costume, I've got something really fun in mind for us".

Day 66

I'd spent the last two days wondering what Simona had in store for me. It was almost guaranteed that I'd be going out en femme, my only question was, how bad would it be?

Well, pretty bad judging by the start of the day. Having spent last night at her place to get an early start, I woke up and after a quick shower, I was already dressing up in her clothes and having my makeup done. I did ask, why we had to start so early, but all I got in reply, was a reminder about not complaining, and a cryptic message about it being part of the preparations for tonight's party.

My outfit for the day, a pink knit sweater, covered in hearts. Something I couldn't have worn a few months back, not just because of its girly look, but because of the

heat. It was late October now, and although still warm by my standards. The weather was much more pleasant compared to the sweltering heat of the summer months.

Below my sweater, which almost completely obscured them, were a pair of cut-off jeans shorts. Not too bad compared to some of the things I had worn recently. But still rather feminine looking with their ripped and frayed design, not helped by the little pocked lined with rhinestones. The only other thing I wore apart from underwear, were a pair of cork wedge sandals strapped to my feet.

But when I said the day got off to a bad start. You probably thought I was talking about having to leave the apartment dressed in the outfit I just described, along with a full face of makeup and a blonde wig on my head, right?

Well, you'd be wrong. The outfit, as bad as it was to wear, was something I had been partly expecting. What I'm talking about is looking down at a set of claw-like nails, after sitting in a nail salon for almost an hour, trying to make conversation with the chatty manicurist in my broken Chinese.



I'd watched it all happen as Simona sat next to me, getting a similar style, and to this day, I don't know why I didn't stop it. Perhaps, it was the shock of the situation.

Perhaps, it was the idea of embarrassing myself in public and then having Simona leave me to fail the assessment. Whatever the reason, I let the woman work.

The first thing she did was clip and file down my shortish nails, before pushing back and trimming my cuticles. At this point, I was reasonably relaxed, that is until she got out a metal nail file and started roughing up the top of each nail, leaving each one looking a right mess.

I remember looking over at Simona at this point, who told me to relax, saying it was all part of the costume and everything could be fixed later.

Having never had nail extensions before. I didn't know that my nails were being prepped for maximum purchase with the ridiculously long nail tip that was about to be applied. But the penny dropped when I saw her bring out a piece of clear plastic, and after checking the size. The woman glued it to the top of my roughed up looking right index finger and asked me a question I didn't understand which Simona answered.

By the time she started spreading the thick white acrylic substance over the top, I knew it was too late. At that point, the damage had been done. I just lay back stunned, trying not to look over at Simona, who kept peering over in my direction with a big old grin on her face.

After thanking the woman for destroying my hands, we were back out onto the streets of Taipei. I couldn't stop glancing down at my hands and the monstrous nails sprouting from my fingertip. Not only did the two-tone design with yellow tips look rather garish but they also left me feeling puzzled. Simona who saw me looking, said they were my first clue to my character for the evening.

=====

It was almost time to leave for the evening, and I wasn't just apprehensive but also felt perplexed. Sat on Simona's bed with my new talons tugging at the hem of the short yellow dress I was now wearing; I still didn't know who I was supposed to be.

Having no luck in pulling the dress down any further, not able to get any kind of grip with my Edward scissor hands style nails, I gave up and touched my upper thigh.

The feeling was an odd one. I had never worn tights before, and the sheer white stretchy material encasing my freshly shaved legs sent goosebumps up my arms.

Shifting awkwardly to try and get comfortable, an almost impossible task, sat on top of my tucked away penis, I felt the strain in my ankles. Lifting my left leg to gaze down at the yellow mary Jane pump attached to my foot, I shook my head, causing a cascade of brunette hair to fall across my face.

I wondered how I was going to survive the night in these ludicrous shoes. The height was probably on par with the wedge sandals Simona had tricked me into wearing on our shopping trip. The difference being, where those shoes had been reasonably stable base, these ones sported a scary-looking tall thin stiletto heel.

Before going in the bathroom to put her costume on, Simona had instructed me to practice walking around the room to get my bearings. But having walked around in heels before, I thought it best to rest my feet as much as possible before the evening began.

Pushing the hair from my face and poking myself painfully with a nail while I detached a strand stuck to my shiny pink lips, I wondered how long Simona would be. Part of me wanted her to stay in there all evening. Anything to avoid having to go out dressed like this. But there was another part of me that was curious. A part that wondered who I was dressed as. Before going in, she told me it would all make sense when I saw her.

With the mirror covered and having promised not to look and ruin the surprise, I hadn't seen myself yet. But from my point of view, my mind was blank, thinking perhaps I was dressed as some obscure anime character.

As the bathroom door open, my wait was over. Where out stepped Simona, dressed all in white. “So, you got it, yet”? she announced, smiling.

I scanned her from head to toe but was at a loss. She obviously saw the look of confusion on my face. “Oh really”! she exclaimed, “come on, GG, we saw the movie a few weeks ago, look at my chest”, she added, pulling a pose.



Never one to refuse an offer to check out a woman's chest, I stared at the two black dots. Suddenly my pink lips parted, and my eyes widened. I'd worked out who she was supposed to be, but more worrying, I also knew who I was going to spend the evening impersonating. The thought terrified me!

“Fuck! Am I that geeky girl, from that animated movie we watched”? I announced, already knowing the answer to my question.

“You sure are, Sexy”, Simona responded, striding over, and resting a pair of round, red-rimmed glasses on my nose. “Tonight, you are the bubbly and optimistic, miss Honey Lemon, so, we'll have no complaints from you, got it”? She added, pulling me to my wobbly feet. “Come and take a look”!

Mincing forward a few steps, I stopped just as Simona removed the towel, she had hung over the mirror to keep my outfit a surprise.

Seeing myself for the first time, I gasped. The image in the mirror was frightening, it was me but, in a way, not. I mean, I looked like me but then again, I also looked like a woman, the whole experience was downright bizarre.

Well, what do you think? pretty sexy, right”? Simona declared as I stood there speechless, scanning the alien reflection in the mirror. Everything, from the short yellow dress, barely reaching my upper thighs, to the tights clinging to my legs and skyscraper heels below, made me feel odd and uncomfortable. “Do I really have to wear this out”? I finally said, turning to face her.

She grinned, “what do you think”?

I sighed and turned back to the mirror. “Where’s the coat? The character in the movie was wearing a coat”?

Simona laughed, “good memory, but there’s no coat. You don’t need one, it’s like twenty-five degrees out”.

“That’s alright, I can wear it, if it, you know, makes the costume more authentic”, I shot back, hoping to at least be able to cover up a little.

“Oh, you're worried about looking authentic, I see”, Simona replied giggling. “Don’t worry, Babe, you look authentic enough, besides the costume shop didn’t have a coat”.

“Here, take one of these”, she said handing me a white pill. “It’ll mellow you out. Then we might even have some fun”, she added before swallowing a pill herself.

Pincering the pill awkwardly between two of my ridiculously long nails, I almost dropped it. Only just about managing to transfer it safely to the palm of my other hand.

Looking down at my feminine looking body and shaking my head at the thought of wearing these clothes out, I thought, “what the hell”, as I popped the pill in my mouth, and swallowed.

=====

Having ridden out the high, I was now coming down on the other side. Did I feel comfortable, hell no! My legs were cramping up, and my feet were throbbing, and that was just the physical pain. Mentally, I was out of my element, tottering through a crowded nightclub, clutching a drink in each long-nailed hand.

The music blared out, giving me a headache as I scanned the room for my partner in crime, Baymax. No longer in the spot, where I'd left her before going over to the bar to fetch us some more drinks, I suddenly felt very alone.

"Hey, Simona, I thought that was you, long time no see", A voice from behind announced, as two hands grabbed me around the waist and a pair of lips pressed against my cheek and the corner of my lips.

Freaked out, I span around quickly, spilling most of my drinks over the tall man dressed as some sort of zombie. "Woah, careful, girl", the man shouted loudly. "But I guess, you're not the first woman to throw a drink over me in a club, and you probably won't be the last", he added, chuckling at his own joke.

Not knowing what to do, I just stared at the man blankly. "Simona, are you ok? It's me, Rob! Dam, girl how much have you had to drink tonight"?

"She doesn't recognise you because she's never met you before, Rob, "The real Simona announced, joining our conversation. "Is this mine"? she added, turning to me, and taking the half-empty glass from my hand and taking a sip.

Rob stood there with his mouth hanging open before, his eyes darting back and forth between the two of us. finally, he turned to me and smiled. "I'm so, sorry, I thought you were... I mean, you look...".

"This is GG, my cousin. She's visiting me for a little while! Simona said, stepping in.

"Cousin! Really! You two could be twins", Rob stated. "But hey, sorry for startling you, GG, I don't normally go around grabbing strangers, promise".

Looking up at the apologetic vampire, I smirked, “It’s ok, I guess, no harm was done”, I said while accepting the man's outstretched hand. Never feeling more emasculated in my life, than awkwardly shaking the larger man's hand with my long acrylic nails getting in the way.

“Let me get you two another drink to make up for the ones I just spilt”, Rob shouted out over the beat of the music as he released my hand.

Wanting to get away from him, I was about to say no when Simona got in first. “Sure thanks, Rob, two double G and T’s, with lemon”, she announced, downing what remained of the drink I’d just bought her, handing him the glass.

With Rob out of earshot and on the way to the bar, I turned to Simona. “Cousin, why did you say that”?

She chuckled, “I don’t know, it just popped into my head. Would you rather explain to him that the girl he just kissed is really a guy”?

“It wasn’t like that”, I said, slightly annoyed, “he kissed me and only because he thought I was you”. Who is he anyway”?

“Oh, just some guy who has a crush on me”, Simona said stepping forward and putting her arms around my waist. “He did me a favour a while back and now expects me to like date him or something. But don’t worry, Miss Lemon, you’re the only person I’m interested in tonight”.

“That’s good to know”, I replied, placing my own arms around her. “Do you think if he comes back and sees you making out with your cousin, it’ll frighten him off”? I added, moving my face closer towards hers.

Simona smiled, “I like how you think, you naughty girl, only one way to find out, I guess”!

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“Hey, stop here for a minute”, Simona suddenly announced as we stumbled down the Taipei streets looking for a taxi. It was late, and it had been raining, but we were both feeling giddy in our intoxicated state.

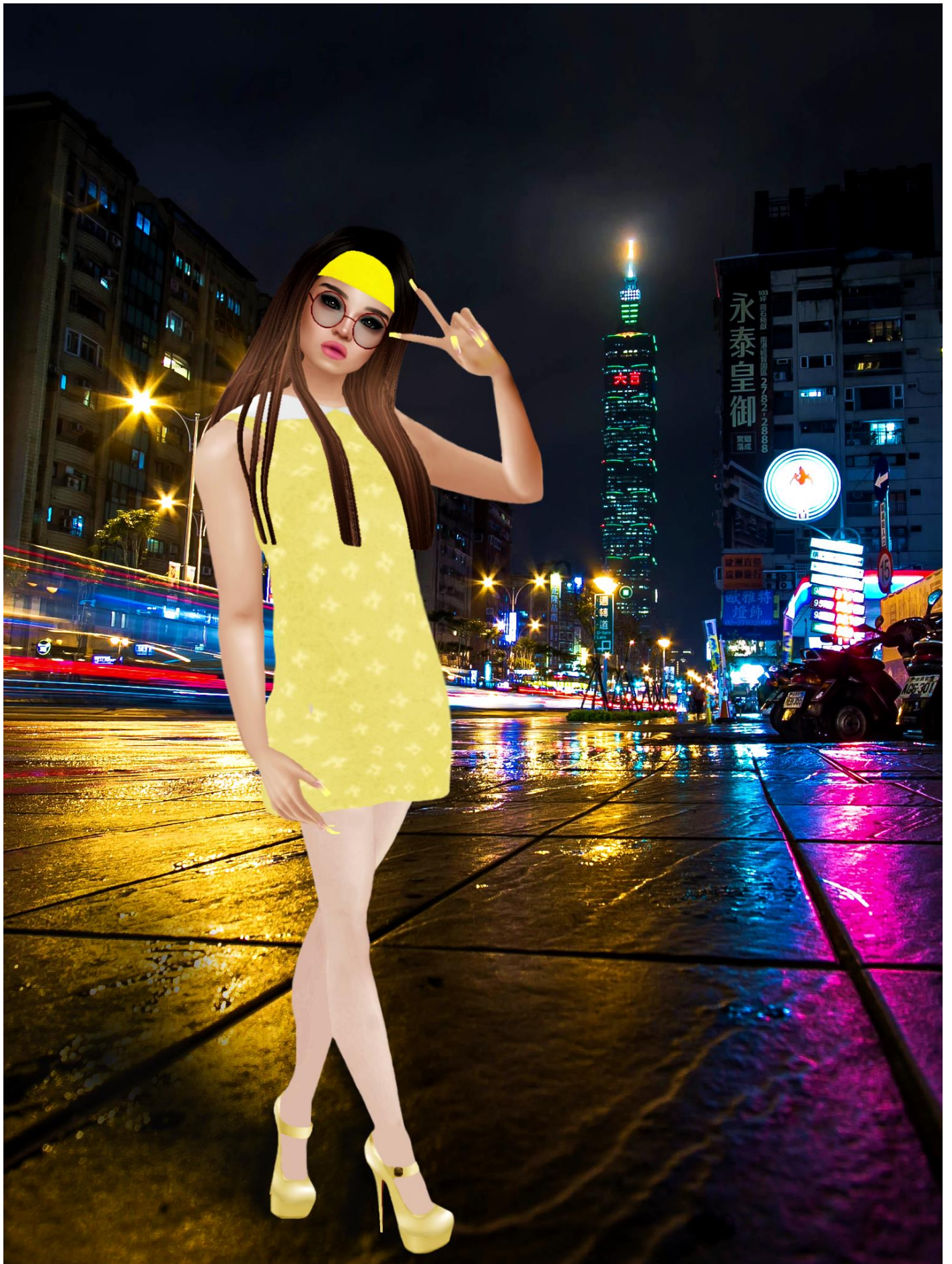
“What”? I replied, almost falling as she let go of my waist.

“This is the spot! The ultimate photo spot”! She replied, fishing around in her handbag, trying to find her phone.

Becoming aware of my surroundings, I looked up and had to admit, the view of Taipei 101 from here was pretty epic.

“Give me a pose, Honey”, Simona shrieked out, lifting her phone, and pointing it at me.

Turning on my wet numb feet, I arched my back and placed two fingers in the air as Simona snapped a few pictures. Capturing the moment forever, A snapshot in the history of the universe, one of me struggling to stand on the streets of Taipei city, drunk and high, crossdressed as Honey Lemon.



Day 67

“You want to go out and get some breakfast”, Simona asked as I struggled to get out of bed, my head pounding.

Holding up my hands to show her my nails, I shook my head. “Not with these claws, I’m too hungover to deal with people staring at me, right now. And I definitely can’t face sitting through a makeup session either”.

“Fair enough, you were a good sport last night. I’ll go out and get us something”, She said, hugging me. “Did you have fun, last night”?

I thought for a moment and didn’t know how to answer. I did but not because of the way I was dressed. “It was ok”, I replied nonchalantly.

“Ha! Oh really, just ok”? Simona replied, slapping me lightly on the shoulder, “So why did I have to practically drag you away from dancing with Rob just before we left”.

“What”! I exclaimed loudly. “No way, you can’t spin it like that! You were the one dancing with him, I just joined in. Besides, I was really out of it”.

“Yeah, sure you were, you little diva”, she replied playfully, giving me a kiss, “sure you were”.

Feeling a bit uncomfortable thinking back to the end of the night, I changed the subject. “So, can I get these nails off later, then we can get down to studying for the test”.

“We can start studying, but why don’t you keep the nails for a while. I kind of like them”.

“What! keep them? But they’re ridiculous, I can’t even use my hands”, I replied, flabbergasted.

“Just until the end of the week”, She answered, snuggling up to me. “Just stay here for the week. Your neighbour friend is away, right? You can think of them as an incentive to stay in and study more”.

“Well, when you put it that way, I guess I’ll be less likely to want to venture out”, I answered, looking down and twirling my dangerous-looking hands.

Day 71

“I officially give up. This is useless, Simona! I’m going to fail”, I announced, dramatically throwing my pen down onto the table, defeated.

“Hmmm, it doesn’t look good, not with the test in four days”.

“I know, don’t remind me”, I said with a heavy sigh. “No matter how much I practice, I just keep mixing up all these Chinese characters. What am I going to do”?

Reaching over, Simona took my hands, twiddling her own long nails amongst mine.

I was hoping it wouldn’t come to this, but we’ve got no choice. If you're going to get a passing grade and stay in the country, I’ll have to sit it for you”!

“What! I shouted, looking at her like she was crazy. “There’s no way that would work. This isn’t a movie, you know? This is real life”!

“It can work”, she responded with a smirk, “It just needs some prep work”.

“Ok, I’ll play along”, I replied sarcastically from across the table, thinking she had lost her mind. “How will you take your own test if you’re sitting mine”?

“On Monday, I’ll just call in sick”, she shot back confidently. “I’ll take my assessment later in the week”.

“Ok, but you don’t look like me, people will know it’s you, especially if you ace the test”.

“I won’t ace it, I’ll just do enough for you to pass. And come on, GG, if you can look like me, then I can look like you”.

“But... you... I...”, for a moment I didn’t know what to say as I let comment settled in. I had never really thought about it that way before. But, if people could mistake me for Simona, then perhaps people could also mistake her for me. “But what happens when you talk”?

“I won’t”, she shot back, “assessment day is always in and out. All I have to do is register in the morning, find a quiet spot to sit for an hour or so, take the test and leave, easy”.

With no further questions, I sat back in my chair, shaking my head. “Wow, you really thought this through, but do you really think it will work”? I replied exhaling. “I mean do you honestly think you can make yourself look like me and pull this off”?

Looking on, I saw her grin and nod her head. “Leave it to me, GG, I can make this work, trust me”.

Day 75

Looking back. This was the day! The day I'd be revisiting if I had a time machine.

The day I crossed a line and went past the point of no return.

It was the day of the assessment, and it was a bizarre one in several ways. The first thing I remember was hearing the alarm go off as Simona slipped out of bed next to me. With her taking my place that day, I'd be sitting around the apartment all day.

So, with no reason to get up, I went back to sleep. Dozing on and off as she got ready, hearing the occasional bang or rattle until I was shaken awake.

Sitting up and wiping the sleep from my eyes, I looked over towards the bedroom doorway and rubbed my eyes once more.

“So, what do you think”? Shrieked Simona, stood out in the hallway, not looking like herself. Gone were the short skirts and high heels. Gone were the colourful wigs and dark circle lenses. And without it all, she looked like a different person. She looked like a younger, more feminine version of me!



“Woah, your lips”, I announced in surprise. “They really went down”.

“Yep, just like they said, but you have no idea how fucking painful that was. You owe me big time for this”, she announced.

I nodded slowly, looking her up and down one more time. When she told me about the hyaluronidase injection that would break down the filler in her lips, I didn’t

think it would work. Especially after 24 hours, with no noticeable change in size. But I guess she was right as overnight; her previous plump pillowy lips had deflated to almost nothing.

“What happened to your boobs”? I blurted out, suddenly noticing her completely flat chest.

“Strapped down”, she shot back, "another painful process", she added, tilting her head, and glaring at me.

“Like when you made me strap my junk down between my legs”, I replied, showing her no sympathy.

She snorted and changed the subject. “Ok, I better get going, wish me luck”.

“Will this really work”? I asked, smiling but feeling really unsure. I had this really bad feeling, like something terrible was about to happen.

“It’ll work”, Simona replied, skipping over, and giving me a little peck on the lips.

“What can go wrong”?

As she turned, I wiped my lips, feeling odd after kissing my younger clone. I watched as she minced up the corridor in a rather flamboyant way. When she reached the door, she turned and blew me a kiss, then she was gone. “What could go wrong”, I thought to myself. “How could this possibly not go wrong”?

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I knew something was wrong even before Simona walked in through the door, with her head down and a sombre expression on her face.

Looking at the clock, it was almost five in the afternoon. Four hours later than I'd been expecting her to return!

I'd been pacing around the apartment all afternoon. Feeling sick to my stomach and waiting to hear some news. I gave up calling after the tenth. Losing count of the number of text messages I sent, not an easy task, I can tell you, with inch-long acrylic nails protruding from the end of your fingers. She'd ignored them all.

"What's wrong? Where have you been?" I yelled, jumping up from the bed and running towards her. "I called you. Why didn't you pick up? Did something go wrong"?

Looking up slowly, she burst into tears. For what felt like an eternity, I just held her as she shook violently in my arms. When her whimpers decreased in volume and frequency, I led her over to the bed and sat her down. By this point, the feeling I had was indescribable as I fought against projectile vomiting across the room.

"They caught you"? I whispered quietly, as I felt a vein throbbing in my forehead.

Simona looked up, her eyes red and bloodshot. "No, but I don't know what to do"! She announced, bowing her head once more.

"Simona, please! You're scaring me. What happened"? I asked while rubbing her shoulders gently.

"I can't believe they chose today to do it", she shouted angrily, "Of all the days to do it, why did it have to be today"?

"Do what"? I shot back as I watched her delve into the pocket of her jeans and pull out a plastic card.

It's your new university ID card or mine, I'm not really sure", she whimpered as she passed it to me.

Grasping the card awkwardly with my long yellow talons. I looked down at the picture of Simona pretending to be me before looking over to the left to see all my detail written next to it.

I sighed loudly before smiling. "Hey, it's ok", I announced. "I can live with that picture; I'll just try not to show anyone".

"No", Simona screamed, making me jump, "you don't understand, they took my fingerprints. They've also got all these new security checkpoints everywhere; you won't get in"!

With the cogs turning in my brain trying to process what she had just told me, Simona once again delved into her pocket. This time, retrieving her phone. "I also got this", she stated angrily, showing me a message.

Taking the phone. I read it through in my head, "Dear miss Aboud, we are sorry to hear about your sudden illness. On this occasion, we are prepared to reschedule your assessment to Tuesday, 9th November at 2 pm. If you are unable to attend, please call and reschedule. But please be aware, we will require a sick note on your return. Kind Regards, Luo Che-Chi, Human relations officer, National Taiwan University".

Dropping the phone, I brought my hand up to cover my mouth as I inhaled deeply. The room fell silent. The only noise to be heard, my laboured breathing and Simona's sobs.

“Is there anything we can do”? I asked as Simona finally looked up at me with a gloomy looking face.

“Not really, I can’t go in. My fingerprints are already on record but under your name”, she replied meekly.

“What if I could register for you somehow? Couldn’t we then just switch cards”? I suggested out of desperation.

Simona suddenly perked up. “Yes”, she shrieked, “that could work. You could go in, get my ID card, and then sit the assessment”.

“What? No! What do you mean, sit the assessment”? I exclaimed loudly, “I was talking about a quick photo before changing places”.

“I know you were, but it won’t work! How will we switch”? Simona asked, looking me square in the eyes. “Say I enter the building with your card, what happens then? I skip class and wait around until you’re done getting the card? Then what? We meet up and instantly transform into each other? It wasn’t a quick process to look like this morning, you know? And if you’re going to pull off looking like me, we need to do things right”.

I shook my head. “Ok, it won’t work. It was a stupid idea, I know”.

“No, it can work”! Simona announced, smiling, “as I said, you just need to sit the assessment, and I’ll go to class as you”.

“I’ll fail”, I stated, squinting my eyes, “have you forgotten? That's the reason you sat in for me in the first place”!

“That’s fine, I would have failed it anyway”, Simona replied.

“What are you talking about?” I asked, confused and shaking my head. “So, you’re saying after all this, you failed the test today”?

“No, of course not! You passed, but I always planned to fail”, she replied like what she was saying was completely sensible.

“Then what? Get kicked out”? I asked, bemused.

Simona laughed. “No, they can’t kick me out, I passed this module years ago. It’s a little complicated but there’s this policy at the university that states if you fail by a certain amount, you can re-sit the year”.

Now more confused than ever, I huffed. “How many times have you re-sat”? I asked, also wondering how long she had been in Taiwan.

“That’s not important right now”, she shot back. “Will you do it? All you have to do is go in, write my name, and sit there until the test finishes. As long as I show up, there's nothing they can do”.

The idea sounded crazy, but what was the other option? Go into the university and explain to them how we had cheated on the test. Both of us would be kicked off the course and probably out of the country. “Ok, let’s try it”, I said, sounding very unsure of myself, “What have we got to lose”?

Day 76

Sitting with my smooth legs pushed tightly together, I looked down at the out frilly layer at the hem of my skirt and tried to flatten it down with my arms. Dressed in

what Simona had called a smart outfit, I felt like bolting for the door and running away. if that was even possible in the platform sandals tightly strapped to my feet.

I'd lost control of the situation and I knew it. Everything was spiralling out of control, and I was scared. Looking around the little room, where I'd been asked to wait, I couldn't help but feel that coming here could have been avoided. But Simona had insisted, saying if people were going to believe I was her, we were going to need some help.

As I sat fidgeting, wondering how much worse it would have been if I was waiting to sit in the electric chair. I replayed the conversation we'd had, wondering if I could have said something to change her mind.

The problem was her logic had been sound and made sense in a way. She would be in class, impersonating me, something she was scarily good at, I may add. But as a result, she wouldn't be around to help me with my hair and makeup before they took my picture for her new ID. I'd suggested getting up early to do it but that was already part of the plan.

Before heading off to class in my place, she had laid out an outfit for me and given me a casual makeup look. But in her mind, this wouldn't be enough. More needed to be done! That's what led me to where I sat now, in the Cosmetology department of the university, waiting for someone Simona knows, called Lin.

Nervously, I looked over towards the door once more, which was a little out of focus, thanks to the dark circle lenses Simona insisted I wear. I knew it was my last chance to leave before Lin arrived to do god knows what to me.

Knowing Lin spoke very little English made things even scarier. Simona had said, all I had to do was sit back and relax. She had supposedly, already briefed Lin about the situation and the dramatic look she wanted. A look that was going to hopefully convince people it was really her, under all the layers of makeup. The thought made my stomach turn.

Suddenly a voice startled me. “GG”? A young Taiwanese woman said, stepping in through the doorway. “Ready, ma”?



With a weak smile, I stood up. Hearing my platform sandals click loudly on the tiled floor beneath me. Taking a second to steady myself, Lin said something in Chinese that I couldn't understand. And doing what I always did in situations where I didn't understand. I smiled and nodded. It seemed to do the trick as Lin smiled back at me, looking incredibly happy before turning to leave the room.

Nervously, I tottered after her, feeling relatively calm. The pill I had taken before leaving the apartment starting to do its thing. Ok, some people reading this might think it was a ridiculous decision to take mind-altering drugs in a situation like this, and looking back, I'm inclined to agree with you. But at that moment in time, I was popping them like candy, sometimes up to three a day.

The effect was not as strong as it had been. To be honest, it's hard to explain how it felt. When it kicked in, this feeling of tranquillity would wash over me. Leaving me almost oblivious to everything going on around me, but strangely able to function quite normally. Afterwards, I could always remember everything that happened, but it would seem like the memory of a movie I'd watched rather than something that had actually happened to me.

Catching up with Lin, who had stopped to wait just outside the door, we trotted along, side by side as she led the way. Realising that my Chinese was pretty basic, Lin, who was pretty chatty, just talked away, seemingly not expecting an answer.

Focusing on my walk, my mannerisms, and my voice, I wondered how much Lin knew about my situation. For some reason, at that moment, the thought of her thinking that I was a girl, and then suddenly finding out I wasn't, seemed like the worst thing in the world. The thought of her laughing at me and then having to

spend the next few hours with her seemed like a fate worse than death. And yes, Simona told me, I'd be there for at least a few hours, another reason for taking a pill. Turning a corner, we passed through a set of doors and entered a windowless room that looked like a beauty salon. I looked around at the alien environment as I was led over to a black leather seat and was relieved to find the place empty. But what was strange was the positioning of the chair. Slap bang in the centre of the room with nothing around it.

Sitting down, Lin helped me remove the flimsy scarf from around my neck, before placing a white sheet around my shoulders. Securing the sheet behind my back, she then asked me another question. The only word I understood was makeup, but I nodded my head and said ok, finding it really hard to focus.

Seeming pleased with my answer, Lin took my hand and helped me over to another chair in front of a sink. Once sat comfortably, Lin went straight to work.

First, reaching towards my eyes and peeling away my fake eyelashes before I could even flinch. Next, she grabbed a cloth and squirted on some kind of white liquid. It must have been good makeup remover because she hardly had to rub at all. The cloth just glided across my face removing the makeup Simona had applied a few hours ago with ease.

When done, she picked up my hand and examined the long yellow acrylic nails still attached to the end of my fingers from the previous week. I thought I heard her say something about removing them, and I nodded enthusiastically. After over a week of not being able to make a fist, the muscles in the back of my hand felt stiff and strange.

Lin again looked really happy with my answer as she reached up, and without warning, whipped the shoulder-length brunette wig from the top of my head. Ten minutes earlier, I might have been mortified, but at that moment, my mind was too far gone.

Feeling Lin's fingers rake through my hair, I closed my eyes and let out a little moan. Her fingertips felt electric across my scalp as I struggled not to fall asleep. Stopping for a second, she once again asked a question. I nodded my head and agreed.

Thinking back now, I should have guessed I was agreeing to do something pretty extreme by Lin's reaction. Startling me by jumping up and down and clapping her hands enthusiastically. But incapable, and in no state to ask what was going on. I quickly found my chair being lowered, so my head was level with the sink.

I must have dozed off for a second while Lin washed my hair because she was done in a flash, and when she lifted my chair back into an upright position, we were no longer alone. I remember staring opened eyed at the three women and one man smiling back at me as Lin gave some kind of introduction.

Unable to speak or comprehend what was happening. Lin started towel drying my damp hair as the four Taiwanese cosmology students all chimed, "ni hao", in sync. I may have said hello back, I can't remember.

Still in shock, Lin wrapped something tightly around the top of my head before helping me back over to the seat in the centre of the room. I sat down, automatically smoothing out my skirt, and just stared forward blankly as Lin spoke to our guests who were happily scribbling away in their notebooks.



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For the next few hours, that's where I sat. With my legs pushed tightly together and my muscles cramping up. The time seemed to pass by in an instant. But at the same time, it felt as though I'd been there for days.

Under normal circumstances, I would have felt terrified and embarrassed being the centre of attention as Lin gave what turned out to be some sort of demonstration lesson. But thanks to the pill, I didn't really feel anything. I just remember sitting there, telling myself not to look at anyone. Instead, I picked a spot on the wall, focussing on it throughout as Lin whizzed around me, occasionally inviting one of the students up to help her.

Thinking about the event now, sober. It's difficult to understand how I sat oblivious through it all. But the strange thing is. I barely even noticed any of the procedures and hardly felt anything. There was no pain, just numbness as I sat there like a statue letting these strangers prick, poke, and prod me.

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Suddenly, I noticed my eyes feeling very dry, and after blinking furiously a few times, the world slowly came back into focus. Still sat on the chair in the centre of the room, I observed Lin stood directly in front of me. She had her back to me and was addressing the students.

With the effects of the pill now wearing off, I felt weird. And for the first time that day, a little anxious. I wasn't in pain but there were these really odd sensations all over. Starting at the top of my head, I felt a tightness like someone had a hold of my hair and was pulling. It also felt heavier.

Moving down to my forehead. My eyebrows felt a little sore, but just below them, my eyes felt heavy. Blinking again, I became aware of the fluttering lashes in front of my vision. For a moment, I felt happy, thinking that if Lin had already applied my makeup, that the nightmare must almost be over.

With my throat feeling dry, I swallowed hard and felt a strange sensation as my numb rubbery feeling lips compressed together. That's when I realised something was really wrong and the panic set in. Pursing my lips together, I made what would probably be described as a classic duck face and peered down. The view from my perspective was staggering. My lips looked huge, much bigger than when Simona had previously used her lip plumper on me.

Hearing stirring behind her, Lin turned around and smiled at me. “Mei geren, GG, huilaile. Dengdao Ta kan Dao ta kan qilai duo piaoliang”. (“Everyone, GG, is back with us. Just wait until she sees how pretty she looks”.)



“What time is it”? I mumbled. My lips feeling extremely odd, and my words coming out muffled.

Turning, Lin tilted her head to the side, having not understood what I’d just said.

“Xianzai shi ji dian”, I said. This time asking the question in Chinese and having to open my mouth a little wider than usual to speak clearly.

Understanding me the second time around, she said it was around noon and to be patient while she finished up my hair.

My first reaction was surprise, hearing that three hours had passed in what seemed like a few minutes, but then I thought about what she had just said. “Hair! What did she mean hair? I was supposed to be wearing a wig.

Lifting my right arm, I rummaged around under the sheet that was covering my upper body, searching for a way out. I could still feel long acrylic nails attached to my fingertips and felt disappointed that Lin hadn’t removed them.

Seeing me thrashing around, Lin leaned down and grabbed my arms by the biceps. She was pretty strong for a girl her size, and as I looked up at her through my thick feathery eyelashes, I felt a little intimidated.

She said to stay calm before quickly moving around behind me.

I nodded and looked out at the Taiwanese faces smiling back at me. But before I could look away in embarrassment, I suddenly felt a strange new sensation. It started at the top of my head before sweeping down. I quickly realised it was a comb, but as I felt a tugging at my scalp, the most disconcerting thing was that it just kept on going and going.

Feeling a mixture of disbelief and surrealism. A shiver ran down my spine as Lin moved the comb in one steady stroke down to the small of my back.

Sat there like a statue with Lin brushing out my now shockingly long hair, the penny finally dropped. This wasn't a wig! This was hair, and it was firmly attached to my head!

While I tried to comprehend what was happening, Lin looked over and said something to one of the students, sat watching. The young man in question looked extremely pleased to have been chosen and jumped up enthusiastically.

I watched as he sashayed across the room before disappearing from the corner of my vision. But he wasn't gone long. Returning in an instant, wheeling some sort of trolley towards me.

Lin thanked him and asked him to stay and help her. Looking down past my inflated lips, my eyes widened, seeing row upon row of colourful cylindrical objects. Varying in size from very small to huge. Lin picked up a medium-sized one, and if I hadn't guessed already, I soon realised what was happening as she took a long strand of my new hair and started rolling it up tightly. The young man who watched on keenly was then told to do the next one.

Appearing in front of me, Lin smiled and said something about leaving for a moment. Feeling very overwhelmed at this point, I panicked. "No, stay", I lisped. Sounding rather pathetic and feeling even more so, when one of the girls watching started to giggle.

Lin leaned down, stroked my shoulder gently in a comforting manner before saying some soothing words, that I barely understood. I was now red in the face with

embarrassment. With the other girl, now giggling too. The whole situation suddenly felt so much more real and utterly humiliating.

Lin stood back up and watched for a moment as the man carefully sectioned a part of my long hair before swiftly rolling it up. Looking satisfied, she then left the room as I stared at the wall, avoiding eye contact with the girls directly in front of me, and feeling absolutely humiliated.

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Stood shaking on my high-heeled sandals, I could feel my heart racing. Having been announced ready, it seemed it was time for the big reveal. A large object, that I guessed was a mirror, with a sheet draped over the top, had been wheeled in and placed in front of me.

I tried to focus on my breathing and not look at the smiling students, filming me with their camera phones or the older woman who had now joined them. It turned out, she was some sort of senior tutor at the university, there to critique Lin's work.

I remember hearing a countdown, "3, 2, 1", and then suddenly, the sheet was whipped away as the world as I once knew it, changed forever.



They probably heard my gasp in the next room as I stumbled on my heels and almost fell. Looking at the new me, reflecting back at me, I gulped and was almost sick. The

image I'd seen all my life was gone, somehow replaced by something impossible.

Simona!

I shuddered while examining the extreme changes at the hands of Lin and her student volunteers. But the funny thing was, in that moment, the thing I remember noticing first were my new pink nails shining in front of my gaping mouth. I guess a part of me had expected to see the pouty lips and the flirtatious lashes, but the sight of a new set of pink acrylics annoyed me. It meant Lin actually had removed the old ones but then replaced them with a new, even girlier set.

Smiling, Lin moved over to stand next to me before addressing the new woman in the room. Still in utter shock after seeing my terrifying transformation, I barely understood a word of what she said. I just stared gormlessly into the mirror as she went about explaining what she had done while occasionally pointing over in my direction.

If I had understood, this is what I would have heard.

“Thank you for coming over to inspect my work, miss Wang. This was a strange request by my sister’s friend, but it has given me the perfect opportunity to show you my skills. Here is the picture I was sent”. At this point, Lin passed her phone to the woman to inspect.

“The task was to transform this girl, if you swipe right, you’ll see the before picture, to look as close as possible to the picture. The hair extensions weren’t in the original plan. But as I washed her hair and saw how perfect it would be for them, I had to ask. Luckily she agreed”. At this point, Lin paused for a moment as the woman made a comment.

When the woman finished speaking, a smiling Lin continued. “First, I started with the face, with a chemical peel and microdermabrasion removed the dead skin and fine hairs, giving me a base to work off. At this point, I also shaped and waxed her eyebrows. This allowed me to draw the corners back in later to match the picture. Next, I moved on to the eyelash extensions. The junior students really helped me out here by prepping her nails and laying out the hair extensions, saving me a lot of time. Alternating between the lashes and the acrylic extensions, this was a great opportunity to give our junior students some hands-on experience. You can judge for yourself, but I think they did a wonderful job”. The woman stepped forward at this point, leaning in to examine my hands. With a nod of her head, the students all clapped and seemed very excited.

“The next job was the trickiest. Using Botox injections and lip fillers, I tried to change the shape of her face to match the picture. It’s not a perfect match, but I did the best I could and, with the help of the students, moved on to the most time-consuming part, the hair, and the nails. I also pierced her ears around this time, seeing that the girl in the picture was wearing earrings”.

Seeing Lin point at my ears. I suddenly noticed the shining stud earrings in my ears and let out a little whimper. Looking back now, they weren't the worst of the feminizing changes force upon me that day. But suddenly noticing something so obvious, something seemingly permanent, really shocked me.

Seeing my reaction, Lin asked if I was ok. My mouth moved but no words came out, making Lin laugh. Turning, she continued speaking her explanation. “And that’s it.

Oh, apart from a few touches of makeup and curling her hair. Thank you once again for coming over, miss Wang”.

The room erupted into applause as miss Wang looked happy. I was now swaying from side to side, with my legs feeling like jelly. The room was spinning as I blinked my voluminous lashes, desperately trying to avoid blacking out. Luckily, Lin was there to catch me before helping me over to a nearby chair to sit down.

Taking a few deep breaths, one of the junior students brought me over a glass of water. Grasping it between my pink claws, I lifted the glass to my swollen lips. But not used to their new inflated size, I ended up spilling most of the liquid straight down my chin.

shocked and appalled as the glass was taken away, I looked away in shame. It all seemed like a nightmare. How was I going to hide these changes from the people who knew me? But worse still, I still had to get Simona's new ID card and take her assessment.

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Closing the front door quietly, I felt a huge sense of relief, having made it through the horrendous afternoon. Having just lived through one of the worse days of my life, I was mighty glad to be back in the safety of the apartment.

Looking around and not seeing Simona, most likely out on the balcony, I debated in my mind which had been worse. Being flirted with by the man who had helped me get the ID or having to sit for two hours while the exam officer stared at my legs.

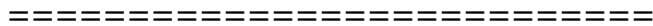
Taking a step forward, the loud clicking sound of my heel colliding with the tiled floor, echoed through the apartment, reminding me of how much my feet hurt. For a moment, I considered taking the torturous sandals off. But in my tired state. The thought of messing around with the buckles with these long nails just seemed like too much hassle.

Taking another step, I set off slowly towards the bedroom. Simona must have heard my distinctly feminine approach because I was barely halfway up the corridor when her head appeared in the bedroom doorway.

We locked eyes for a second, and her mouth dropped open as I continued my slow, noisy approach.

Arriving in front of her, I stopped and stood awkwardly as she looked me up and down. I didn't speak. I had no words to describe how I was feeling, knowing I was more likely to break down in tears than form any kind of legible sentence.

Finally, after looking me up and down several more times, we locked eyes once more, and surprisingly she looked angry. "What the fuck have you done, GG? You look more like me than I do"! She exclaimed loudly, covering her mouth with her hands.



That evening after letting the dust settle, Simona and I sat down to discuss our situation. After getting comfortable on the sofa, we both sat there in silence for a few minutes, neither wanting to begin.

Eventually, Simona turned to look me up and down, shaking her head.

“This isn’t my fault”, I stated, feeling very frustrated. “You’re the one who organized everything with Lin”.

Simona sighed loudly. “Yes, but I didn’t tell her to do your hair and use fillers on your face. When I text her earlier to see what the hell had happened. She said you agreed to it all”!

“Are you serious!” I screamed, “I hardly understood a word she was saying. My Chinese isn’t exactly fluent, you know? That’s what got us into this mess in the first place”.

“Fuck! I knew I shouldn’t have tried to help”, Simona said angrily, stamping her foot. I bowed my head and looked down at my smooth legs poking out from the little pair of shorts I’d put on to feel more comfortable. “So, why did you”? I asked, turning to dace her. “Why keep trying to dress me up like a woman”?

It was Simona’s turn to go quiet for a moment before. She looked like she was lost in thought before her lip curled a little in the corner. “It was fun”, she stated, “and you know... It’... It’s kind of a turn on for me”, she added before turning away, looking a little embarrassed.

“What, crossdressing”? I announced, surprised.

“Yes. I’ve always liked the idea of making a boy look like a girl, and with you looking like me it was even more of a turn on”, she answered before taking a deep breath.

“But now, everything is fucked”.

“We have to come clean, tell the university the truth”, I said assertively.

“No”! she shouted back, “we can’t do that”!

“But I can’t live like this, Simona”, I moaned. “Do you know how nerve-racking it was going in there today as you”?

Startling me, Simona suddenly shouted out. “I won't go back there, I'd rather die”.

I remember looking over at her and seeing, for the first time since I'd know her, fear in her eyes. “Back where”? I asked. A topic I'd approached multiple times but always finding Simona reluctant to open up.

Taking a deep breath, she looked over in my direction, her eyes wide and her whole body shaking. “What’s the worst thing that has ever happened to you, GG? She announced, not expecting an answer.

"Is it as bad as watching the town where you grew up drenched in the blood of your family and neighbours as everybody you ever loved is torn to pieces by AK47's? My family, my friends, my country, they're all gone now. The only thing waiting for me back there is a bullet”!

Stunned by what she had just said, I just sat there quietly as she shook violently beside me.

“You once asked how many times I had taken the Chinese course? Well, the answer is six, six times! And as long as I fail by less than 5% each time. I can keep my visa and stay here”.

I didn't respond, I didn't know what to say. We just sat there together like statues until I eventually looked over to see her looking a little calmer. “Simona”, I said, taking her hand, “I can't imagine what you've been through, and I'm so, so sorry, but what the hell are we going to do”?

“We carry on as each other, it's the only way”, She stated assertively.

“We can't! I can't live your life! People will know I'm not you”. I replied flustered, “It'll never work”.

“We'll practice, we have a few days, I reckon before I need to go into class. As you know, attendance is not a top priority for me. I'll train you to move and talk just like me and tell you everything you need to know”.

“And you're what... just going to convince everyone you're me”? I replied, shaking my head.

Turning to face me, Simona huffed out a laugh. “That's not the hard part, I was in class as you all day and nobody even batted an eyelid. The tough part is getting your Chinese to a point where you can speak to the people I converse with in Chinese, convincingly”.

“Simona, this is too much! I don't know if I can”, I complained.

The comment must have angered her because her mood suddenly changed, “You will do this, GG, I'm not being sent back to a war zone because you're too scared to wear

a dress for a few months”, she declared angrily. “Besides, have you thought about what the police would do if the university reported this. It’s fraud, you know”?

“Fraud! is it that serious?” I replied, alarmed.

“You can look it up. At a minimum, it’s a criminal record, but it more likely carries some kind of jail time”, She stated confidently. "But listen, we can avoid all of that if you just man up and do what’s needed. It’s only for a few months. After that, you’ll graduate with a first-class degree, and return to England. I’ll say I’ve lost my card and ask for a new fingerprint scan”.

Even at the time, I had my doubts. I knew it was a ridiculous plan. But thinking I had no other choice, like an idiot, I nodded my head and agreed to go along with her ludicrous idea.

Day 79

With the dull drone of the city filling my ears and my heart thumping in my chest, I slowly made my way through the streets of Ximen. My legs ached from the days of practice, strutting up and down Simona’s apartment to perfect my walk but at least now I didn't feel as though I was going to fall over with every step I took.

The downright bizarre feeling of going to class dressed as I was indescribable. Somewhere between dread and distress with a dash of humiliation.

Tottering along on my six-inch wedge sandals, which for the life of me, I to this day can’t understand why Simona wore, I tried to keep my head held high. “Be

confident”, Simona had said, “if people look, it’s because they are admiring you”. I tried to keep these words in mind as the people I passed looked over.

Simona also had advice for combatting the stares. "Pick a spot on their forehead and stare back", she had said before showing me how to pull a resting bitch face.

This attitude wasn’t something I was very comfortable with; I was much more accustomed to smiling at people. But I had to hand it to her, it worked. As soon as they saw me staring back, everyone who looked my way quickly looking away.

Reaching the steps of the MRT, I sighed, knowing I was going to stand out down there in my little outfit and heels. At least I had my new bitchy attitude to shield me, to guard my true identity.



=====

My heart was still racing as I slowly traversed the classroom steps with all eyes on me. It was something I was starting to worry about, knowing the stress couldn't be good for me. But given the absurdity of the situation, how would you feel?

With my long-nailed fingers curled tightly around the large coffee, I'd just purchased. I carefully placed down each wobbly foot, trying not to rush.

Catching Simona's eye who was dressed as me, and sat in my usual seat, I shuddered as a strange feeling washed over me.

The first time I'd ever laid eyes on Simona was this exact scenario. Except at the time, I was the one sat on the chair looking and she was the one arriving late to disrupt the class. With the roles reversed, I felt really uncomfortable. It was just bizarre, especially seeing Miss Li's warm smile and my doppelganger grinning at me.

Smiling back at Miss Li, I strutted across the room like a catwalk model, trying to block out the fear and the staring faces.

Clack, clack, clack! The sound of my shoes colliding with the hard floor echoed through the room.

Thud, thud, thud! Went my large hoop earrings, lightly kissing the side of my neck with each torturous step I took.

Reaching Simona's chair, I placed my backpack against the wall, sat down in an exaggerated manner, before looking around the room pouting. It was showtime, and I planned to dial the bitchiness up to ten then pray no one saw through this farce.



=====

“What was with the attitude in class today”? Simona announced angrily as we entered the apartment after travelling home together.

Leaning down to unbuckle my sandals, I looked up at her and lifted a thinly plucked eyebrow. “What do you mean, I did exactly what you told me”! I proclaimed innocently.

“I didn't tell you to be such a bitch! Harry was red in the face after you scoffed when he got an answer wrong. You even rolled your eyes at Miss Li at one point”!

Chuckling, I kicked off the painfully tall wedges, which I'd somehow made it through the day wearing without tripping once. “That's how Simona acts”, I stated as I stretched out my numb feet, "Sorry to be the one to tell you, but you are a bit of a cow".

“I am not”, Simona shot back, “I know I'm not the friendliest, but I'm not as bad as you made me out to be”.

Chuckling again, I walked past her. “If, you say so. Do we have any beers in the fridge”?

“Hey, come back here, we're not done”! Simona shouted. “You can't be so mean. You're going to make everyone think I'm a bitch”.

“Too late for that, I'm afraid and it wasn't my doing. Oh, and while we're on the subject of acting like the other. You need to stop staring at all the guy's arses. People are going to notice and think I'm gay”.

“Was I staring? I didn't realise”, Simona replied, looking surprised. “Hey, what does it matter anyway, it's ok to be gay”.

I shook my head. “You know I’ve got nothing against people being gay, you know that. But I’m straight. It will seem suspicious if our whole personalities suddenly change overnight. It was you who said that, right”?

Knowing that she had lost out to my logical argument, Simona ran into the kitchen ahead of me. There, she opened the fridge and took out some juice. “No more beer for you”, she stated, “you need to lose some weight. In fact, we need to improve your lower body shape too”.

“What!”, I declared annoyed, “why? I passed today, didn’t I”?

“Maybe”, Simona shot back”, But you were sat down, and even then, I thought you looked a little chubby. I’m not talking anything drastic. I’ll show you an easy exercise routine, just a few squats and stretches, I’ll be easy”.

Groaning, I unscrewed the lid of the juice, struggling as usual to position my hands right, thanks to my cumbersome nails. “Fine, but if I'm chubby, you’re too thin. If I’m going to diet, you need to do a few push-ups and eat a bit more”.

“Fine”, Simona replied, “easy”.

“Exactly, easy”, I shot back, “It won't be a problem, you know, being you isn't as tough as you make out”.

“Oh really”? Simona announced, pulling a face. “Just wait until you start my job, then”.

Turning on a pivot, a cascade of long dark hair whipped around in front of my face.

“Job”! I exclaimed, “shit, I have to do your job”!

Having not considered that I might have to do other things, other than just going to university, the smug look on my face changed. Simona had mentioned before that she had a job, but she'd never gone into any details.

“What is it you do exactly”? I demanded, “and no dodging the question this time”.

Simona chuckled. “Ok, I'll tell you. It's not something I'm very proud of but it's easy work and the pay is great. Take a seat and I'll tell you all about it”.

Day 81

With the streets whizzing past me like a blur, I clung to Simona for dear life as we sped out of the city.

With one hand on her shoulder and the other between my legs gripping the material of my tiny pink skirt to stop it from riding up my legs, my thoughts were all over the place.

Having taken a pill to calm my nerves. I was now in my own personal dream world where I was trying to convince myself, everything was all a dream. I mean, there was no way I could be on the back of a scooter, squeezed into a tiny pink dress, the top low enough to show off a small cleavage, created by half a roll of sticky tape and padding. There was no way I could be wearing flimsy high heels sandals that I could barely stand on while my exact double drove me through the streets of Taipei, Taiwan on a pink scooter. That would be ridiculous!

But as crazy as it sounded to my drugged-up mind, it was real, and reality hit me hard in the face as we parked up in an area just outside the main city called Banqiao. Before we left, Simona had tried once again to explain what she did. But until that moment, seeing it with my own two made-up eyes, I couldn't really picture it.

Taking off my helmet, I looked around, flabbergasted. We had parked on a street, lined with what I could only describe as glass boxes. They were all lit up with flashing neon lights and inside, sat on tall stools in skimpy outfits, were what looked like prostitutes. I gulped, knowing I was about to become one of them.

Feeling my steeply angled foot touch the ground, I froze. I knew these girls weren't actually prostitutes, Simona had explained how things work. but nevertheless, the job sounded horrendous.

"Come on, Simona", The real Simona called out, extending her hand to help me off the bike. We were now referring to each other by the other's name to avoid slip-ups.

Reaching out, I took her hand, and I fell into her arms. Feeling Embarrassed to be cradled in her arms like a baby, I pushed myself free.

Stepping up onto the curb, I took a few small wobbly steps forward before stopping dead as I looked around in awe. I scanned from booth to booth, wide-eyed, trying to convince my confused brain that the scene in front of me wasn't something out of a sci-fi movie.

"Ok, I'll introduce you to Mei. She knows the situation and will help you through your first few shifts", Simona stated, prompting me to turn.



“This feels so wrong! I don't want to be here! I want to go home”! I announced, feeling overwhelmed.

“Just breath. You’ll be fine, trust me”, Simona replied smiling, “I’ve taught you all the words you’ll need. Mei is amazingly helpful, and for tonight, I’ll stay in the area, in case, you need me. Relax, ok”?

So, what did I do? Refuse to go in? Run away, heels clicking and arms flailing? No. I meekly bowed my head and resigned myself to the idea of working as a “Binglang xishi” or as they were known in English, Betel nut girl. A strange profession, unique to Taiwan. Where scantily clad women, in glass boxes sold cigarettes, alcohol, and of course Betel nuts. A seed that when chewed, gave the person a small buzz or high.

It was a custom that went back decades. Starting when where truck drivers and construction workers would stop by. Over the years, competition grew. And as a result, the girls started dressing more and more provocatively to attract customers. The booths were now illegal in Taipei city itself, but in the surrounding areas and the rest of the country. Betel nuts and the profession of selling them was all legal and completely above-board.

Day 94

Looking in the mirror, I didn't really know who I was anymore. I didn't see Grant; I saw someone else. Most people would have seen Simona, but I wasn't her. Even with all the makeup, training, and subtle touches, like wearing her precious necklace, I never would be her.

Lately, I'd been feeling pretty down. Forced to live a life I didn't want, where I had to put up with all the uncomfortable outfits and male attention that came with it. And there was a lot of male attention, especially at the Betel nut stand.

I don't know what it was like for the rest of the girls working there, who never seemed to complain. But for me personally, every shift was like a living hell. For

hours I'd sit, perched on a little stool in a completely see-through plastic booth. Everyone who passed would gaze in at me, ogling my half-naked body. And let me tell you, being on display like that is absolutely awful. Not only must you constantly be aware of what you're doing and how you're sitting. But it also seemed to give people the confidence to gawk in at you, like they had some kind of permission to do so.

Worse yet. Every few minutes, usually just as I'd found a comfortable position to sit, a vehicle would pull up outside, making me spring into action. Climbing down from my stool and most likely flashing my panties, I'd totter off, out of my box, trying to look sexy and alluring as I did so.

Reaching the curb, I'd take the customer's order before trotting back inside to retrieve it. In the beginning, I had worried that my limited Chinese would let me down here. But as it turned out, I only needed to know about twenty to thirty words as each customer always asked for the same things.

There were all sorts of people who frequented my booth, from students to old-aged pensioners. All very pleasant and nice people but then there were the regulars. I quickly learnt who to watch out for and hated them all.

Mostly Middle-aged men. They would stare and undress me with their eyes. Take ages to find their money as they gazed at my legs or fake cleavage. And when they did finally produce it. My reward for waiting patiently wasn't a nice tip. No, instead, I was molested, something that seemed to be commonplace in the Betel nut selling business. Where the squeeze of a buttock or grab of a breast was all part of the

service. Thankfully, Simona only had three shifts a week, giving me plenty of time to recover between them.

In comparison, the one day a week, I had to spend at the university was a cakewalk. All I had to do was sit there and look bored. Nobody really spoke or engaged with me. Even Miss Li just left me be to focus on the other students.

The worse part of going into the university was seeing how natural Simona was pretending to be me. It was pretty impressive how she was able to convince everybody that Grant had turned a new leaf. The Chinese she spoke progressed at a believable pace; she even threw in the odd mistake to keep up appearance.

She was also looking the part these days. Having spent the last few weeks working out and eating like a pig, she must have put on at least a few kilos, something she gloated about, especially with me struggling to lose much weight.

When in class, I'd usually just sit there staring daggers at her with my eyes. In reality, I should have been happy that she could play the role of me so well. Grant was now getting good grades and was a popular figure in the class. The thing was, I wasn't happy, I was jealous. Jealous that Simona was a better Grant than I had been.

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Having just applied my make-up completely by myself for the first time, with only a few pointers from Simona. I peered into the mirror and again saw a stranger. Made all the more strange by the actual reflection I expected to see, hovering over my shoulder and grinning.

“Well, done Simona, not a bad effort at all”, The real Simona announced, in a scarily good imitation of my natural voice. “Now, I just have to teach you how to do your own hair, and you won’t need me anymore”, she added, chuckling.

Reaching up slowly, having learned the hard way not to rush with my claws. I touched the top of my head, feeling the tightly twisted strands, pulling tightly at my scalp, and seeing the two pigtails behind.

I shook my head, feeling my large hoop earrings tapping against my neck, and sighed. I had seen myself dressed up as a woman many times by now, but tonight felt different. Tonight, Grant or Simona, the person next to me was taking me out on a date, and I wasn't very keen to go.

Having complained during the week about feeling out of place and uncomfortable. Simona had come up with an idea. A night out, where I would dress and act as feminine as possible to make me feel more like a woman.

“Ok, go and get dressed”, Simona announced. “That dress will make you feel like a princess, it’s one of my favourites”.

“Do I really have to dress so fancy”? I moaned, knowing exactly which dress she was talking about.

“Yes, you told me you feel uncomfortable. It's because you still consider yourself a man”!

“But I am a man”, I shot back, feeling a little hurt by the comment, " a little makeup and some clothes aren’t going to change that”!

I saw her smirk behind me. “There lies the problem, you see? If you think like that. Wearing these clothes and acting feminine will always feel wrong to you. It’s how society has brainwashed you to think. Tonight, I want you to let all that go. You are Simona Aboud, sexy, feminine, and not embarrassed to show it”.

“Isn’t saying that a little egotistical of you”? I replied, trying to lighten the mood and deflect with a joke.

“No, because I’m not Simona, I’m Grant”, she replied, spinning me around. “Just a guy giving a compliment to a beautiful girl, he’s about to take on a date”.

Before I could say another word, she leaned in and kissed me full on the lips.

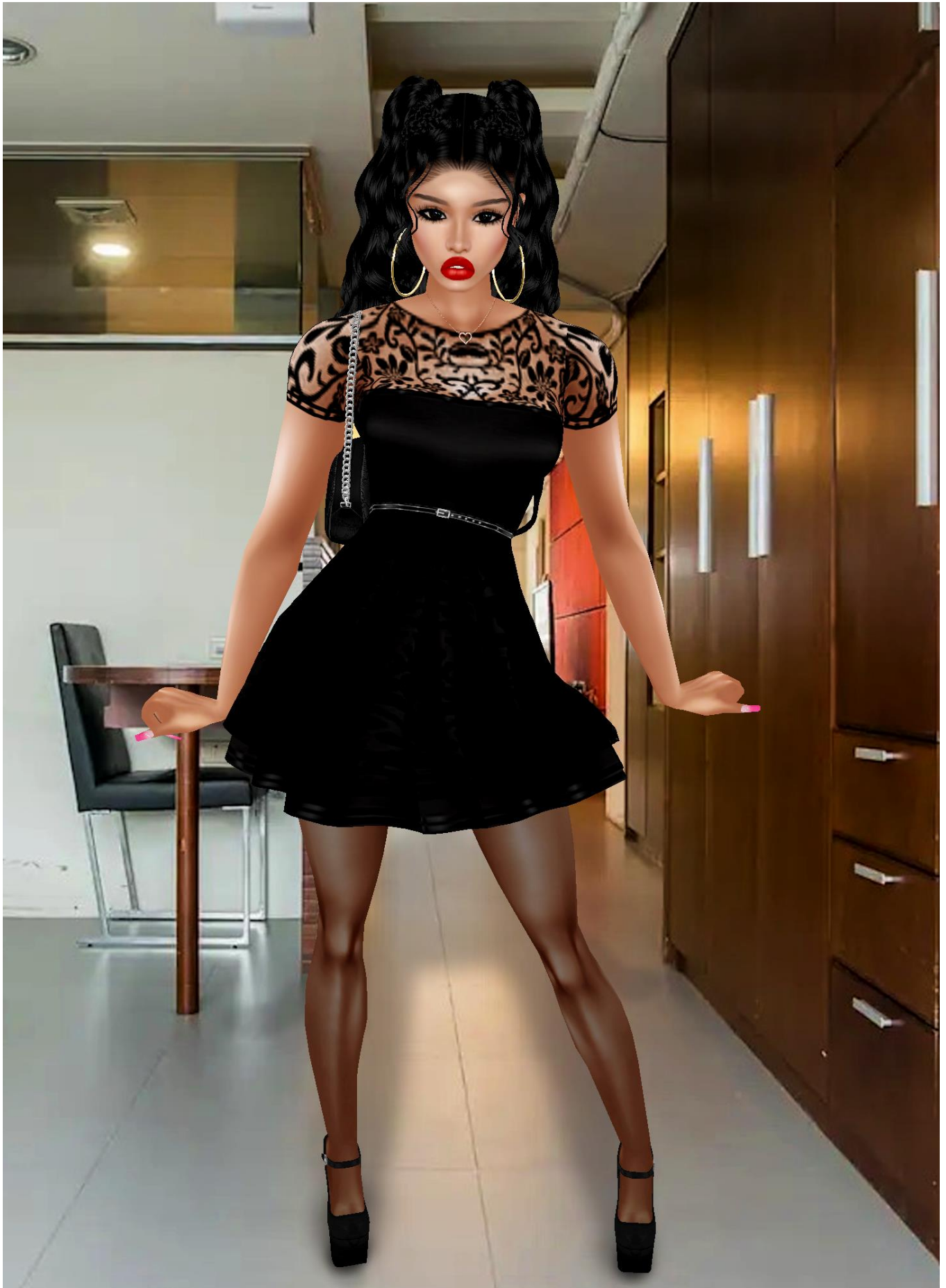
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“Wow, you look amazing”, Simona announced as she placed a small black leather handbag over my shoulder. Gazing at my reflection in the mirror.

I didn’t feel amazing. I felt uncomfortable and awkward. With every breath, the overpowering scent of Jasmine filled my nostrils. And with every slight movement, the slippery, silky feeling from my silky underwear and sheer black tight, hugging my body made me shudder.

Biting my bottom lip, I took a long hard look at myself and wondered what my father would think if he could see me at that moment. He had sent me out to Taiwan to grow up, to become a man. Somehow, I didn't think he'd be pleased with the result. Everything about me now screamed girly girl. My taped and padded chest created a realistic-looking set of breasts. The painfully tight corset around my waist gave me a

slim figure. And paired with the flared skirt of the little black dress clinging to my hungry frame, worryingly, I had quite alluring the feminine figure.



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Not to be outdone by me in my fancy dress, Simona had dressed up and was looking smart in a pair of trousers and a freshly ironed shirt. In her mission to make me feel as ladylike as possible. Simona was trying to act like a perfect gentleman, complementing me constantly, holding doors open. She even presented me with a red rose before we left the apartment.

Our destination that evening was to be the Xinyi district of Taipei. An expensive area, full of shopping centres and fancy bars. A place well the well-off Taiwanese crowd hung out.

Exiting the apartment, we jumped in a taxi, something I was very grateful for. I was already struggling in my spindly stiletto heels and having just descended the steps down from the apartment, I was exhausted.

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Feeling the eyes of our driver, gazing at me through the rear-view mirror, I looked out of the window. Taipei 101 towered over us, making the other building in the area look ridiculously small in comparison. This only meant one thing, we'd soon be reaching our destination. Looking down at my nylon covered legs and the killer heels straps to my feet, I chuckled. What the hell was I doing? How did things end up in this position?

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After paying the driver, Simona insisting on running around to open the taxi door for me. Taking her hand, she helped me out as I felt my calf muscles stretch. My feet once again adjusting to their now familiar arched position.

Our first stop was a romantic dinner in a fancy restaurant. Simona took the lead ordering for us, and to be honest, it was really nice. I rarely got to eat out somewhere that fancy, and with the diet out of the window for the evening, I savoured every bite of the delicious food.

When we returned to the streets, they were much busier, with a combination of late shoppers and early partygoers milling about. And I had plenty of time to take it all in with the speed we were walking. Simona, to her credit, having literally experienced walking in my shoes, seemed sympathetic to my situation. She kept the pace slow as she walked beside me, continually holding my hand for support.

After a ten-minute walk, we stopped on a pedestrian street, lined with bars and outside drinking areas. We walked over and joined the crowd of people drinking and laughing, and I instantly wanted to leave, having already been looked up and down like a piece of meat, several times, by the three, not very subtle guys to our left.

=====

Half an hour later, I slowly made my way back from the bathroom using the trick of staring at people foreheads. The problem was, here, it seemed to have a different effect. On the street, people always looked away, embarrassed. Here, I was the one left feeling uncomfortable as people would stare back and smile before checking out my body.



Taking my eyes off where I was placing my tired feet, for a second, I spotted Simona, stood in a different spot to when I'd left, and she was no longer alone.

“Simona, I want you to meet, Lulu”, Simona announced as I minced up.

“Hi, Simona, the mystery woman announced, "It's great to see you”.

“Hi”, I replied, confused. Before taking a sip of the drink, Simona passed me, through a long pink straw.

“It’s nice to finally meet you, it feels like we’ve been sending emails back and forth forever”, Lulu said with a smile.

Probably looking very confused, because I was, I went with it. “Yeah, like forever”, I announced in a high sing-song voice. “I love your dress tonight. Where did you get it”?

Lulu and Simona smiled, and I felt proud of myself for deflecting. “It’s Balenciaga”, Lulu said with great pride, "I picked it up on after a shoot in London”.

“Lulu and I just bumped into each other”, Simona declared, jumping in, “I recognised her from that photo you showed me and thought I’d say he”.

“Yeah, sorry, I haven’t got back to you in a while”, Lulu asserted, looking past Simona, and talking to me "I’ve been ridiculously busy travelling and working”.

“It’s no problem, Simona has been busy too, haven’t you Simona”? Simona said, again jumping in, “So Lulu, have you got any shoots coming up, I’m sure Simona would love to see a professional like you in action”.

Lulu looked puzzled by Simona's actions. From her point of view, it must have looked very odd to have a scrawny looking guy answering for me. “As it happens, I’ve got this shoot up at Fulong beach tomorrow. I can’t promise blistering sunshine this time of year, but I did promise to introduce you to my photographer. If you want to come along and meet the team and observe, I can make a call”?

“Err... the beach”, I stuttered as a terror gripped me. Not wanting to imagine the type of outfit I'd have to wear. “Thank you for asking, Lulu, but can't. I think Grant and I have plans for tomorrow”.

“No, we don't”, Simona almost screamed. Causing both Lulu and I, to jump.

“Simona, can I talk to you for a second”? Simona stated, gripping my arm, and pulling me to one side. “We'll be right back, Lulu. Don't go anywhere. ok”?

“Yeah, I'll be here, I guess”, Lulu answered, rolling her eyes.

I could tell Simona was angry by the strength of her grip digging into my arm as I stumbled along next to her.

Stopping just out of earshot of Lulu, she leaned in. “What the hell, are you doing”? She whispered angrily. “Do you know how long I've been trying to get a modelling gig with her agency? You're about to fuck everything up for me”.

Wrenching my arm away from her and rubbing it gently, I pouted. “Modelling? You want me to model now”? I announced, annoyed.

“No, not you. Me!” She cried. “Well, me eventually. You just need to help me set things up. I've been waiting months for an offer like this. If you don't go, there might not be another”.

“You can't be serious! I can't be a model. It's bad enough pretending to be you”, I moaned.

“There you go again”, Simona shot back. “Can't do this. Can't do that. Look at you, Princess. You can, and you will!

Screwing up my face, I felt like walking off, and I probably would have if it wasn't for how I was dressed. "No", I stated, firmly, "I won't do it! You're asking too much. And... and... it's just unnecessary".

I saw Simona's shoulders lift. "Unnecessary", she screamed. " This is my life, you little shit. My future! All I'm asking is for you to go along and meet a few people", She added, lowering her voice but still shaking with rage. "What if I deemed it unnecessary to try so hard to imitate your old personality. Perhaps, I should relax a little more and have some fun. Perhaps send a few fun messages to your family and friends. What would your father think if I sent him a message, saying that you've got a fit new boyfriend"? Or posted some pictures, on your social media, of you out in one of them, men only bathhouses?

"You wouldn't"? I yelled back, in shock.

"Try me"? You fuck up my life, and I'll destroy yours! So, what's it to be, gorgeous"?

=====

After Simona's Mr Hyde moment, she acted like nothing had happened. We re-joined Lulu and drank some more, and after a few hours of getting to know each other, we were invited to join her and her friends at a nearby nightclub.

Being out in a nightclub dressed as a desirable young woman, was quite the experience, I can tell you. But after popping one of Simona's magical relaxation pills, I soon started to relax. If you're wondering. Up until that point, I hadn't taken anything except alcohol as Simona wanted me to fully experience every moment of the evening.

I have to admit, I had a lot of fun that night in the club, even if Simona and I barely spoke a word to each other. What more could a young straight man ask for? Lulu and her girlfriends were all stunningly beautiful and flirtatious. Dancing with them as they rubbed themselves all over my smooth silky body was pure bliss.

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Arriving back at the apartment, it was late. I was ready to kick off my excruciatingly painful shoes and hit the sack, but Simona had other ideas. “Listen, I’m sorry about getting angry earlier”, she said in a garbled drunken voice, "It really means a lot to me that you've agreed to go along tomorrow”.

Having come down from my high and able to think straight again, I shuddered at the thought of it. “I didn’t really have a choice now, did I”? I replied, frustrated, “I'm going to get ready for bed”.

“Not yet”, Simona said, stepping in front of me. “The night’s not over, yet. You haven’t fully experienced a proper date”, she added before catching me by surprise. Grabbing me around the waist and kissing me passionately.

I struggled at first, but soon my pent-up sexual frustration took over my thoughts as I felt my penis struggle against its confinements. Relaxing, I felt her hands run up and down my back as she gently caressed it through my thin dress. Simona found the zipper on the back of my dress, and in an instant, it lay on a heap surrounding my ankles, leaving me in just my fancy underwear.

“Come”, she said, pulling away and running her finger along the front of my panties.

Without a word, I took her outstretched hand and followed her out onto the balcony. It was a beautiful warm night, and as I looked up, I could see countless stars, littering the night sky.

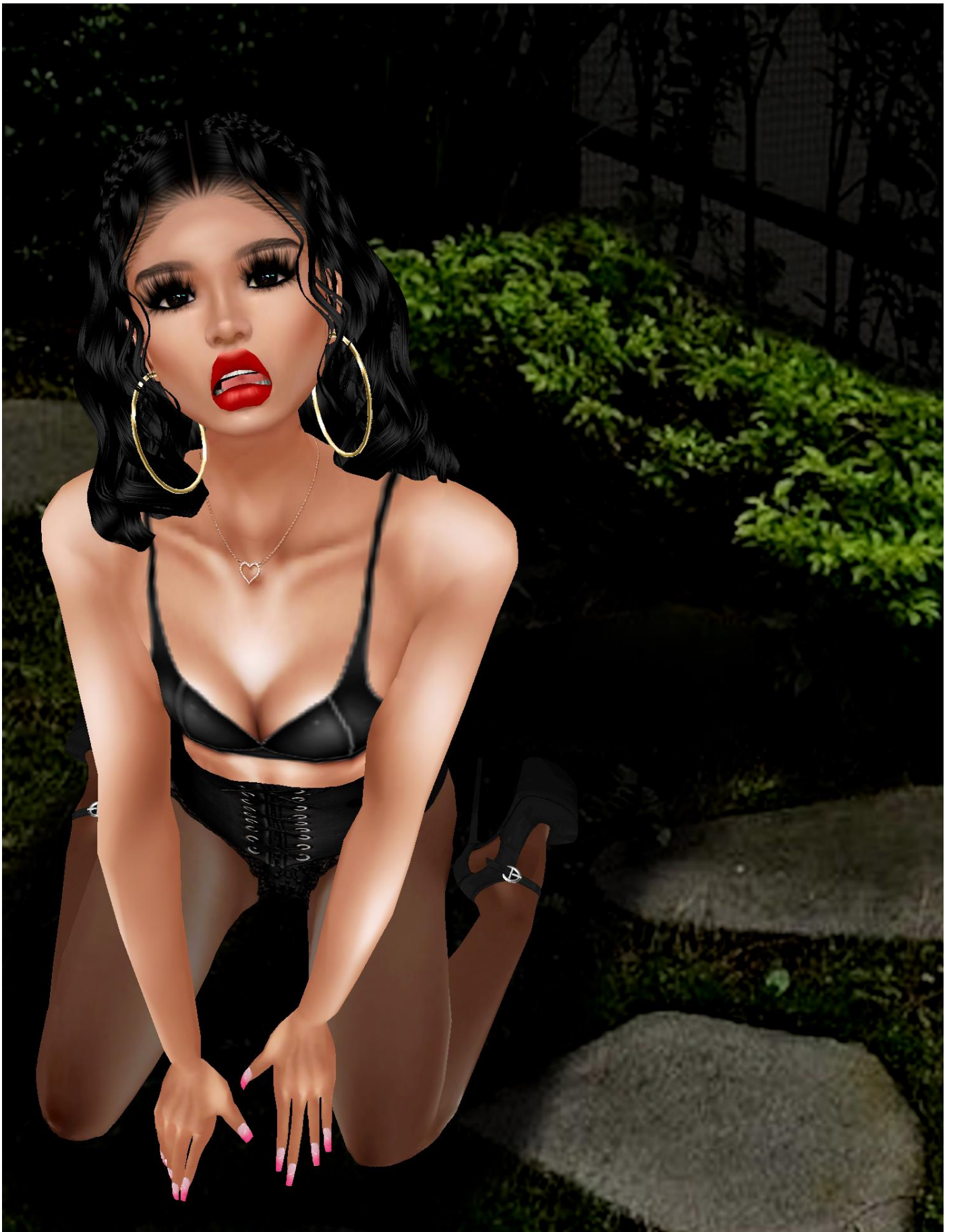
“Remember, our first night together, Simona? Out here on this balcony? Let’s recreate it”, She said, placing her hands on my shoulders and pushing me down to my knees rather firmly.

“Tonight, I’m going to make you feel like a real woman”, she declared, unbuckling her belt, and lowering her trousers to reveal a terrifying sight.

Stunned, I looked on with my mouth gaping at the large veiny, very realistic looking phallic- shaped object that had just flopped out.

I shuddered, knowing what she wanted. Even if some of the memories from that first night together were blurred in my mind.

“Suck it, Simona”! She commanded, looking down at me. “Show me what those lips can do”?



Day 95

I woke up pretty hungover the next day and really didn't want to get out of bed.

Unfortunately, Simona was already up.

“Come on, sleepyhead, it's time to get up”, she announced cheerfully, “we have to get ready”,

With my head pounding, I just stared at her. I didn't want to speak to her. Hell, I didn't even want to be around her. By this point, I was convinced Simona had a screw loose, and if I'm honest, she scared me a bit.

“Ok, let me at least take a shower first”, I replied groggily.

“Of course”, she answered, “I was going to suggest that myself. Remember to wash your hair. It smells like smoke”.

I nodded my head and sighed before dragging myself out of bed and plodding off to the bathroom. Feeling a twinge of pain in my backside as I walked, I tried to block the thoughts of the previous evening out of my mind. At that moment, I couldn't deal with them.

=====

Two hours later, we were sat on the train, heading up to Fulong beach. Being late in the year, thankfully, there weren't too many people on board. Meaning we managed to easily find a seat. I'd heard the train got pretty busy in the summer months when the weather was hotter. Not that it wasn't nice out today. The Sun was shining, and the temperature was in the mid to high twenties, perfect weather for the beach, under different circumstances.

Shoulder to shoulder with Simona, I avoided eye contact with the old couple sat opposite us. Feeling very self-conscious, I wriggled in my seat and pulled at the short summer dress barely covering the top of my legs. I couldn't stop thinking about what I was wearing beneath, and was dreading the thought, that soon. Everyone on the beach would see me parading around with only the tiny orange bit of material to cover my modesty.

But the bikini wasn't the only thing making me squirm. Worried that wearing so little, something might show, Simona had taken great care in strapping down the thing between my legs and taping my chest to create some cleavage. The result was almost unbearable, but at least I didn't have to worry about anything that shouldn't be there showing. One small mercy, at least!

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After an extremely slow train ride, we finally pulled into Fulong station. Simona jumped down from the train first, having no problems wearing my old flip flops. For me, it proved a little more troublesome with a pair of her high heeled cork sandals strapped to my feet. I accepted her extended hand but still stumbled down from the train and into her arms.

"I got you, Babe. Don't worry", Simona joked.

Stepping back and straightening my dress, I glared at her. Annoyed that she had made me wear those shoes which my opinion, was a ridiculous choice for a day at the beach.

Straight of the station, we were right in the middle of Fulong town. A small place with not much to see, just a few streets with little shops and restaurants, a seven-

eleven, and a few street vendors. But I guess people didn't go there for the town.

They came for the beach, just a few hundred yards away.

After getting some drinks and snacks in the seven-eleven, we headed for the beach.

But before we stepped foot on the sand, we first needed to get changed, something about making an entrance. Finding the place, she was looking for; Simona stopped and took some sunscreen out from her backpack. "Ok, dress off, Simona. I'll do your back, so you don't burn". Not wanting to overthink things, like I'd done all the way here on the train. I grabbed the hem of my dress and whipped it over my head.

Stepping forward, Simona pried the dress from my hands before stuffing it in her backpack. Bringing my arms in to try and cover some of my exposed flesh. My head swivelled about to see if anyone was looking. Having never felt so exposed in my life, standing there in a tiny two-piece bikini, I was convinced I was doing something wrong.

Squeezing a dollop of sunscreen into the palm of her hand, Simona approached me.

"Come on, we talked about this, you can't walk around looking like a scared cat".

"But I am scared", I replied nervously, "I feel naked".

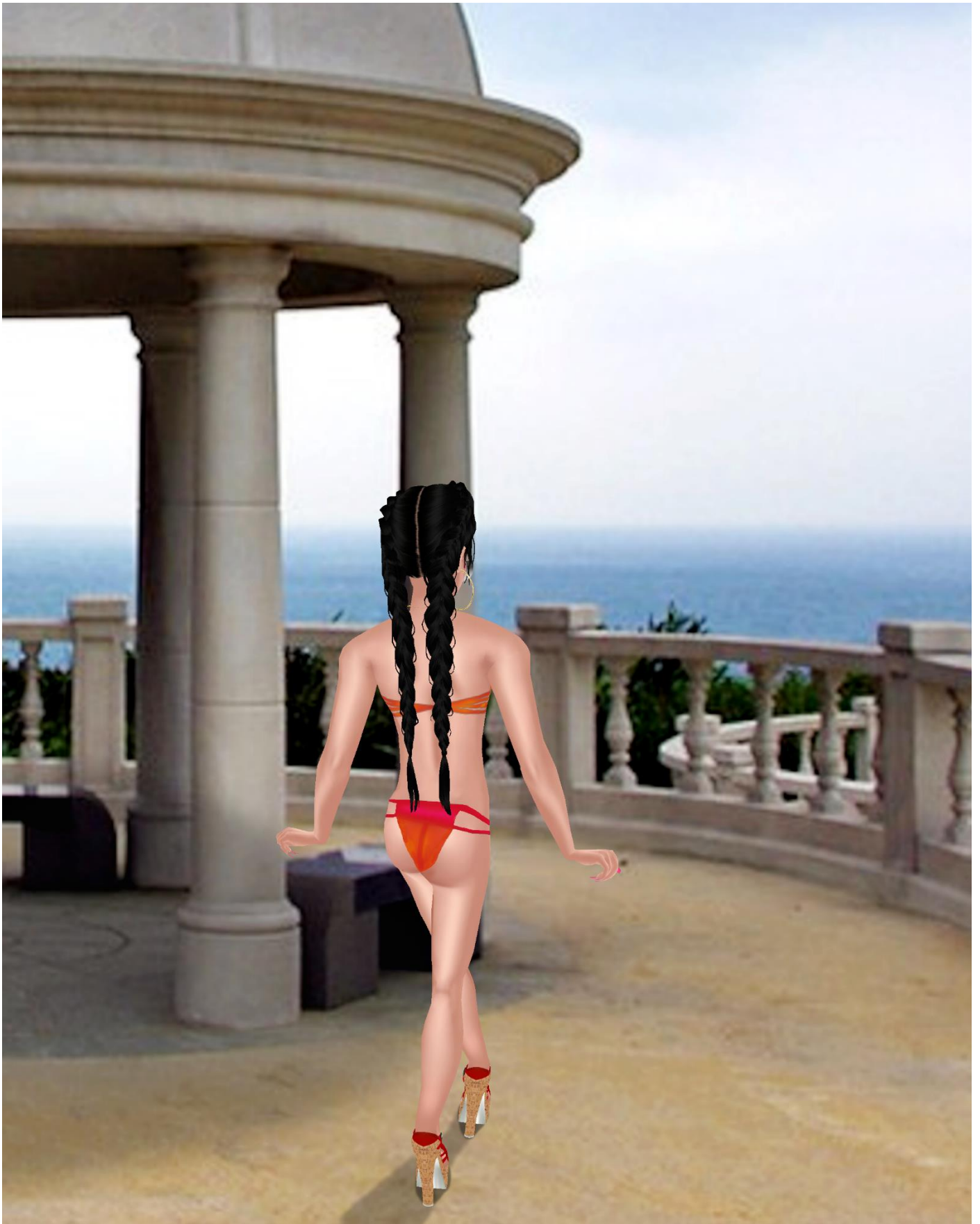
"But you're not", Simona shot back, "you look like every other girl going to the beach, you look great".

Her words weren't very reassuring if anything they just made me feel more frustrated. But knowing I wasn't getting my dress back; I didn't bother to argue.

Instead, I let her lather up my body with sunscreen, which actually felt pretty nice, not that I wanted her to know that. I waited for her to close the bottle before I looked up into her eyes. "Are we done"? I asked in a surly voice.

“Yes, let me just...”.

“Great”, I declared, cutting her off before turning my back and strutting away.



It didn't take her long to catch up with me, given the steepness of the path down to the beach and my impractical footwear.

"Is this about last night"? Simona announced as she arrived alongside me. "Are you still upset about what happened at the bar"?

Stopping, I slowly turned to face her and took a breath. "It's everything", I yelled, throwing my arms in the air. "I don't want to be here! And I don't want to be wearing a fucking bikini! I want my old life back! I want to be Grant again"!

Simona looked angry for a second before her face relaxed. "Ssshhh, keep your voice down. Do you think I'm happy with the way things are? We just have to get through today and the next few months. There's no point continually complaining about it. After all, this is your fault".

"My fault"! I cried, "you can't be serious"!

A tremendously loud cracking sound exploded in my ear as a stinging pain erupted across the side of my face. My vision blurred and I barely managed to stay on my feet. "Pull yourself together. I'm so sick of this shit", Simona screamed, " I can't believe I ever gave a loser like you the time of day. All you ever do is moan, moan, moan. Now let's get down there and impress Lulu and her team. That's why we're here".

Holding the side of my face, I could believe she had just slapped me. I felt like punching her in the face or scratching her eyes out with my nails. But something stopped me. Perhaps it was some deep routed feeling that it was wrong to hit a girl, even if she didn't look like one, at that moment in time. But more likely, it was the

fact that I was almost naked. In a place, I'd never been before with all my belonging, including my little dress, stored away in Simona's backpack.

Pulling my hand away from my face, I looked into her eyes and smiled broadly. "Yes, Grant, whatever you say, Baby. Can you hold my hand on the way down, so I don't trip"?

I saw the look of surprise on her face, obviously not expecting my reaction. Reading this, you might also be surprised by my reaction. But I had made a decision. I'd had enough. For the rest of the day, I would jump through her hoops. Smile and agree. And then as soon as we got back to the city that evening. I'd get back to my apartment and out of these girly clothes, to hell with the consequences.

"No problem, Babe", Simona replied, raising an eyebrow, and extending her hand, "I've got you".

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With the smile still plastered to my face, we arrived at the bottom of the path and stepped onto the sand. My heels. as chunky as they were, instantly sank into the soft sand.

"You can take your heels off now if you want"? Simona said, looking over.

"No, it's ok, I think I'll keep them on", I replied, knowing how ridiculous I'd look, hobbling across to where Lulu was wearing them. Or in my mind, how ridiculous Simona would look. If she wanted me to wear these impractical shoes, she was going to get her wish.

“No really, you’re going to sink in with every step”, Simona stated, sounding a little annoyed, "you'll be much more comfortable without them".

“Now who’s the one complaining”, I said with a smile. “Just hold my hand and I’ll be fine”.

“Fine”, She groaned, “let’s just go”. And off we went, across the soft sand at an excruciatingly slow pace. My feet were sinking in with every tiny mincing step I took. Which was pretty tiring, I can tell you, but seeing the angry look on Simona’s face made it all worthwhile.

After fifteen minutes of walking, which without the shoes would have taken a minute or so. We approached the area that had been set up for the photoshoot. A cordoned-off area with ten or so people inside. Most of them staring straight at me. Looking bemused and obviously thinking I was ridiculous as I stumbled along awkwardly, pulling my well-practised bitch face. But the looks only made me play it up even more, exaggerating my movements and letting out little moans of frustration. If Simona wanted a fight, then game on. I had my own arsenal of weapons.

Arriving at the area, I was drenched in sweat and panting. Simona quickly let go of my hand and ran ahead to talk to one of the men who was supposedly going to let us in. I didn’t care either way. My attention was drawn beyond where the two of them were talking. To the absolutely gorgeous Lulu, lying on the sand, posing for a picture.



Seeing me, Lulu rolled onto her side and waved towards me. I smiled and waved back, momentarily forgetting the miserable day I was having.

“Simona”, The real Simona called out, “come on, they said we can sit over there”, she added, pointing towards a set of beach chairs under a large umbrella.

Desperate to rest my feet and get out of the bright sunlight, I happily nodded my head before awkwardly trudging over.

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“Uh-huh, uh-huh”, I muttered while nodding my head. Not listening to a word Simona was saying and looking straight past her. She had been blathering on about something ever since we sat down. Important or not, I didn’t care as I had decided to ignore her and to try and enjoy my afternoon. Apart from the shoes and the bikini.

And, well, having to pretend to be a woman, un all. It was actually a pretty pleasant place to be. Sat under the shade of an umbrella, watching a beautiful girl in a bikini pose, while the sea breeze blew on my face and the sound of the waves crashed around me. I'd even been given a cocktail by one of the set assistants.



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“Hey, how are you feeling today, Hun? You were really knocking back the drinks last night”, Lulu said cheerfully as she strolled over to say hello.

“Hey, Lulu”, I answered with a smile, giving her a hug, and feeling my penis strain inside its prison. “A little hungover if I’m honest, but I really like it here”.

Lulu giggled, “we did drink a lot, I’m not surprised”.

“But you seem ok, what’s your secret”? I responded, genuinely curious.

“Hmm... ok, but if you tell anyone I said this, I’ll deny it”, she said whispering into my ear. “You just need to stick your fingers down your throat before bed to get all the alcohol out. After, drink a full glass of water and take some vitamin C. You’ll wake up the next day feeling great”.

“Really, you really do that, no way”, I shot back, astonished by her very honest answer.

“Try it, but remember, it’s our little secret, ok”? Lulu said, giving me one last squeeze before releasing me.

“What secret”? Simona shouted across, obviously feeling left out.

“Oh, Hi Grant, you came too, I see”? Lulu responded in a deadpan voice.

“Of course, thanks for inviting us. So, are you finished now”? Simona said with a smile.

“No, we have a few more shots here, then a few up the coast”, Lulu said before turning back to me. “Let’s catch up later, ok? We’re all going for dinner after, but perhaps we could ditch Grant”, she added, saying the last sentence quietly so Simona wouldn’t hear.

With Lulu going back to work, I leaned back in my chair, sipped my cocktail, and closed my eyes. As tempting as the offer to go out with the sexy Lulu was. I was done being Simona. I had a date that evening with a pair of scissors and some nail clippers.

I sat relaxing for a few minutes until a shadow covered face. Opening my eyes, a man was standing over me. "Hello, you must be Simona? My name is Eric. I'm Simona's agent. She asked me to come over and introduce myself".

Sitting up, I extended my hand. "Oh, hello, Eric. It's nice to meet you", I replied, a little startled.

"I hear you speak pretty good Chinese. Do you mind if we talk in Mandarin"? He asked before perching on the edge of the table with his back to Simona.

"Err... could we stick to English", I said nervously. "I'm feeling a little tired today, and your English is so good".

"No, please, you flatter me", Eric responded. "But of course, it's not a problem. So, Lulu says, you are looking to get into modelling. What type of modelling are you interested in"?

Knowing nothing about modelling, I panicked. I couldn't even look to Simona for help with Eric in the way. "Err... like Lulu, I guess", I spluttered.

"Oh, I see", Eric answered, looking over his shoulder to where Lulu posing in front of a camera. "Listen, Simona, I'll be honest with you, that might be a little tricky. I'll be blunt, ok? You don't really have the right assets for that type of work if you know what I mean?" He added while cupping his hands in front of his chest.

"Oh, I see", I answered, feeling embarrassed for some reason as Eric stared at my chest.

"I mean if you were willing to get them augmented, I might be able to set up some work for you", Eric said with a smile. "You're definitely pretty enough".

Blushing, I turned away. “No... no, thank you. Thanks, Eric, but I couldn’t do something like that”, I replied, shuddering at the thought.

“Yes, she could”, Simona shouted over. “She could get them”.

Looking surprised, Eric looked around. “And who are you”? He asked confused.

“I’m her...her... agent, yeah agent”, Simona shot back. “If you can set up some work for her, we can get her the breast implants”.

“No! I cried out, “I’m not doing it”.

Eric, caught in the middle, suddenly looked very uncomfortable. “Well, I’ll let you two discuss it. Here’s my card. If you ever want to discuss your career further”, he said passing me a business card before standing up and walking away.

Ready for the fireworks, I folded my arms and looked over at Simona, who was red in the face and shaking. “I fucking hate you”, she snarled through gritted teeth. “You didn't actually have to get them. you know? If you remember, I already have a pair strapped down under this T-shirt. Now you've gone and blown my only chance. You’re going to pay for this”.

“Whatever”, I replied, rolling my eyes. "You could have warned me about some of this. What was I supposed to say? Can you imagine me with a pair of tits? That's fucking nuts”.

I thought she was going to explode, but instead, she just calmly stood up. “I’m going for a swim”, she announced, her face still twitching, “Enjoy your cocktail, Bitch”!

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Several hours later, I feeling pretty good. Having been offered a ride with Lulu and her crew to the next shooting location. I now stood, looking out at mesmerizing blue water stretching out towards the horizon as huge waves crashed against the foot of the cliff fifty meters below me.

With the sun starting to set, the scene was really quite magical. Made even better by the fact, Lulu had offered to drive us back to Taipei later. This meant all I had to do was survive another couple of hours. I could then jump out in the middle of the city and make my way back to Gong guan. Knowing where the spare key was, I could let myself in and de-feminize myself. After that, what the future held was uncertain. But whatever happened, I was determined to face it as Grant and not Simona.

Hearing footsteps behind me, I turned slightly to see Simona approaching. I didn't really want to talk to her, but I also didn't want to make a scene with the end in sight. I smiled at her, and she smiled back. She looked in a better mood, giving me hope that our conversation wouldn't end in an argument again.

“It's beautiful up here, isn't it”? She announced, stopping next to me.

“Yeah, it really is a beautiful island”, I replied, turning back to look out into the horizon once more. “I really should have gotten out of the city more often and explored the place”.

“I guess we all have regrets”, Simona stated, placing her hand on my shoulder. “And we all have to live with the consequences of our actions”.

Before I could react, she shoved me hard in the back. So hard, I stumbled forward. Unable to regain my balance, I flapped about in a panic as I tried to find some sort of footing on the uneven rocks.

Over the edge I went as a terror gripped me like nothing I'd ever experienced before. Screaming at the top of my lungs, I remember seeing the ocean crashing against the rocks below, hurtling towards me at light speed. I thought it was the end. And in that moment, my life didn't flash before my eyes. Instead, all I could think about was how humiliating it would be for my family when they discovered how I'd died.



Day 110

I remember opening my eyes slowly and feeling my eyelids pry themselves apart. Something felt off. Different!

Looking around the room, my eyes took a moment to focus. Trying to sit up, I found I had absolutely no strength at all. Suddenly, a memory flashed through my mind. Starting to Hyperventilate, I remembered the fall. I remembered plunging helplessly towards the crashing waves and then nothing. Struggling, I tried to get up once more, but it was no use. I was just too weak.

Opening my eyes again, I heard what sounded like the front door close. For the last few hours, I'd been drifting in and out of consciousness. Each time I woke up. My brain felt a little more coherent, and my body gained a little more strength.

I heard footsteps approach, then I saw her, grinning down at me. It made me feel sick. "You're awake!" Simona announced loudly, "how do you feel"?

I tried to speak, but my mouth was too dry. Seeing me struggle. Simona rushed off to the kitchen, returning moments later carrying a glass of water with a straw poking out the top. She placed the straw between my lips, and I took a few sips, almost choking in the process.

Placing the glass down on the table by the bed. Simona took a seat next to me on the bed and stared down at me. "Do you remember anything that happened"? She asked, squinting her eyes.

I looked back at her and felt afraid. She had tried to kill me! Was she going to try again? Deciding that it wasn't the time to confront her, instead played dumb. "Only,

a little. It's a bit hazy", I croaked, my throat feeling like I'd been eating broken glass.

"Was there an accident"?

Simona looked confused for a second before smiling, "Yes, you tripped and fell off the cliff. We were all so scared. You're lucky to be alive. You hit your head pretty hard, but Lulu's team had a medic with them. You should have seen him. He was like a real-life superhero. Diving off the cliff after you and protected you from the rocks until the coastguard arrived. I've never seen anything like it".

Stunned, I didn't know what to say, there were so many questions I wanted to ask, but at the same time, I just wanted to get away from the smiling psychopath lurking above me. "What time is it? What day is it"?

"It's four-thirty, and It's a Monday", Simona announced. " But you probably want to know how long you've been out of it, right? Well, it's been over two weeks since the accident".

"Two weeks!", I cried, trying to sit up and feeling a strange weight on my chest.

"Try to rest. You're still recovering from the surgery", Simona stated, placing a strong arm on my shoulder to hold me down as I struggled a little.

Exhausted, I stopped moving and looked up at her, "surgery! I had surgery! I thought you said I was ok"?

Standing up Simona, looked like she wanted to laugh. "Oh, you are. you were unconscious for a few days, but the doctors told me you're going to be fine".

"Then what going on"? I asked, panicked. "I don't understand"?

“Let me show you”, Simona announced, taking a step forward and grabbing me under the arms. With ease, she lifted me into a more upright sitting position as I felt the most bizarre and alien feeling of my life. A shifting, jiggling, weighty feeling on my chest, which pulled downwards.

Looking down at the protruding mounds sticking out from my chest, my mouth fell open in horror. “I... what... no... what the fuck...”? I gasped, in the midst of a panic attack.

“I guess I should explain”, she announced, chuckling. “You see, with you unconscious, I thought it might be a good time to have them put in. You seemed a little reluctant when Eric mentioned it at the beach, so, I reasoned you must have been scared”.

“How could you? I shrieked, touching the alien mounds, and recoiling in horror. “I didn’t agree to this”!

“No, but I did”! Simona shot back. “You see, while you were recovering, I went to see a surgeon. I did all the tests and explained what I wanted. I had to pay a little extra, but in the end, I managed to get a date for surgery within the week”.

Listening to her speak, I was trying not to throw up, not that that was anything in my stomach to throw up. It was like listening to some evil villain in a movie, except this was real life, my life!

“When you finally woke up after three days, the doctor wanted to keep you sedated until swelling on your head went down”, Simona said, continuing. “But amazingly, I was still able to discharge you. What a crazy country this is sometimes! Anyway, after that, it was easy to look after you. I just kept you drugged until the day of the

operation. wheeled you in and said you were me. No one batted an eyelid. That was a week ago. You should be fully recovered in a day or so. Oh, and I know what you're thinking. You're thinking, they're a little small, right”?



Believe me, when I looked up at Simona, glaring down at me, with a crazed look on her face. The last thing on my mind was that the two terrifying lumps jiggling about on my chest were small.

“Well, don’t worry”! Simona added. “You need to give your skin enough time to stretch. Then, in a few weeks, you can get them enlarged. You’ll be able to wear all my tops and dresses with a low top after that. Doesn’t that sound exciting”?

Terrified, I looked back up as the room began to spin as a shivery cold feeling move up my body. I blacked out.

Day 134

With the hum of the small motor ringing in my ears, I whizzed through the city streets before stopping at a red light. It was now January. Christmas and New year had passed by without fanfare, not that I cared, I had been in no mood to celebrate.

The weeks that followed waking up on that awful day, where Simona had delivered the news to me were all a bit of a blur. Thinking back now, I’m not sure how I got through them without snapping and having a breakdown. I guess I just shut down and became a zombie. I barely ate or slept. I even gave up writing in my journal. In fact, I’m not sure what possessed me to start up again. Perhaps it was the loneliness, or maybe I just needed somewhere to vent my feelings.

As the light changed to green, I revved the engine and shot off across the intersection. The wind blowing through my long dark hair, and the cold air making me wish I’d brought a coat out that morning as it chilled me to the bone in my short pink work dress.



Having just finished another awful day shift in the Betel nut stand, all I wanted to do was go home, kick off my painful shoes, and rest. But that evening, I wasn't headed home. That evening I had somewhere to be, and I was nervous.

Beeping my horn angrily at a taxi driver who had just pulled out in front of me without looking. I imagined Simona face behind the wheel. Her smug, smirking face, and wanted to claw her eyes out.

Anger was perhaps the only emotion I felt these days, especially towards Simona. Not only had she mutilated my body, but she was also hell-bent on forcing me to continue with our lie.

Reading this, perhaps you think I'm an idiot for not fighting back. Perhaps you're stronger and smarter than me. Perhaps you could have found a way out. But no matter how much I thought about it, I couldn't see one. You see, a pair of wobbly hooters attached to my chest wasn't Simona's only surprise waiting for me upon waking.

Firstly, she had moved out and into my old apartment. I remember listening to her explain her reasons for this, aghast. "This is for the best", she had said, "Jerome is back from his trip. What will he think if Grant just disappears"?

It was a clever move on her part, taking away my only safe haven, and stopping accessing my stuff. All my male clothes, passport, and phone were now in her possession. She even had my credit card, which I later learned, she had used my purchase my new breasts.

The next surprise was perhaps the most shocking, which I discovered not long after waking up. Needed to relieve my bladder, Simona brought over a bedpan. I won't go into the details of how I used it. Let's just say it wasn't very dignified. But dignity was the last thing on my mind when I looked down between my legs. For a moment, I thought I was high because what I saw just wasn't possible. My penis was gone and, in its place, sat a hairless vagina.

With shaking hands, I reached down to examine it. Feeling numb to the touch, I let out a massive sigh of relief, realising it was fake. But my relief was short-lived as I quickly discovered, fake or not, it had been glued on tight.

Simona chuckled, seeing me touch it. "It will help you feel more like a woman", she announced. "Now, you don't have to worry about any bulges showing down there.

That thing is state of the art. Everything is tucked away safely, meaning you can pee like any other woman. if you need to clean your junk, there's a guide online. I even rea, you can have sex".

Hearing her speech, I instantly felt sick and realised this was her way of keeping me under her control. The prosthetic vagina would need a special solution to remove, and Simona was, of course, the only one who knew what it was.

To this day, I still haven't adjusted to the empty tight feeling between my legs. Even now, the vibrations of the scooter make me feel funny inside. A constant reminder of what I've lost.

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Pulling up outside a building, I stepped down from the scooter and opened the seat to retrieve my handbag. Taking out Simona's phone (mine now after we had swapped), I checked the address once more.

I was in the right place, but I didn't really want to go inside. You see that day was going to be my modelling debut. Now that I had a little more cleavage to flaunt, Simona had forced me to give Eric a call. He seemed very happy to hear from me, and after asking how I was feeling, he easily found me some work. He didn't go into details about the shoot, only telling me it was fully clothed, and that if the pictures were selected, they were going to be used to promote some comic book event that was coming up. To be honest, I didn't really care, I just wanted to get through it and go home.

Suddenly feeling as though I wasn't alone, I looked up and jumped, seeing an old man staring at me with lust in his eyes. Quickly closing the scooter seat, I threw the phone back in my bag and tottered off towards the entrance.

It was warm inside, and it felt nice. Seeing a receptionist behind the front desk, I took a deep breath and trotted over. She wasn't a very friendly person, but at least she spoke good enough English for me to get my point across.

That brief conversation with the receptionist was the last time that day that anyone spoke to me in English. I was now stuck in a place, I didn't want to be, doing something I didn't want to do, it wasn't much fun. But as I was led towards the changing rooms, I decided to just do the best I could. Reasoning, that if I followed all their directions without complaint, I'd be out of there much sooner.

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I learnt that day that modelling is more tiring than it looks. From when I arrived, to them starting to take pictures, took hours in itself.

First, I stripped down and measured for my costume. Where my newly enhanced feminine body did help to disguise my true identity, not that I ever told Simona that though.

When they were satisfied, I was given a robe to wear and shown over to the makeup station while they made the necessary alterations to my costume.

The makeup was the slowest part. The woman doing it was very organised and methodical as she worked. She spend what seemed like an eternity mixing colours.

Trying to find the perfect shade to match my character's skin tone, which she kept checking in a photograph.

De-robed, I got my first experience of a spray tan, or spray foundation, as the woman sprayed me all over in a very pale colour. She then went to work on my face. Taking a lot of care around my eyes. Which to this day, I still find funny as nobody ever got to see them! You see, the character I was portraying, from some computer game I'd never heard of. Somehow managed to fight robots or something, not only in stilt-like heels, and a tiny skirt, but also wearing a blindfold.



Day 228

With the weather warming up again, I had settled into a routine of sorts. Not that it made things any better. I hated my life and was wishing away the days until I could jump on a plane and get away from the girly prison, I found myself trapped in. But with only two months to go until the end of the school year, the end was in sight. It just seemed so far away.

So, what had happened over the last three months? Nothing good, to be honest. My hair was now some shade of purply pink and extremely long. Oh, and I had been forced to have my breasts enlarged with the skin having stretched enough to add more saline solution to the implanted bags. When I look down now, I can't even see my feet. Oh, and the weight of them! I'd heard women with large breasts on TV, complain about them being heavy. Let me tell you, they aren't just complaining for the sake of it. There are days when I wake up with such a bad back, I don't want to get out of bed, especially after a shift sat on the uncomfortable stool at the Betel nut stall.

Talking of the Betel nut stand, that's where I seem to spend most of my time these days. As time has gone on, my shifts have steadily increased in number. I'm not sure if it was just a consequence of that time of year or if it was Simona messing with me. Either way, as much as I hated being there, it was better than being sat at home alone, feeling sorry for myself.

Well, hate is a strong word. There were parts of being there I quite liked. For example, chatting with Mei, my partner in the booth. Over time we'd become quite close. She was really easy to talk to, and it definitely helped that she knew who I

really was, with Simona having told her about the crazy plan, back in the beginning, when I first started working there.

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Shifting my body to try and find a more comfortable position. I felt my slick, smooth legs, slide effortlessly over each other as I fidgeted around on my plastic stool, clawing at my tiny skirt with my long pink nails.

“Baby, your turn”, Mei announced from the seat opposite, using the nickname she always used when referring to me.

“No way”, I shot back, “this one’s yours. I’ve just been out. Look at my legs! They're still wet from the rain. It's your turn”.

Groaning, Mei slowly got down from her stool and straightened her short black skirt.

“I know, but I thought you loved me, Baby”, she replied with a smile, “besides you’re already wet”.

“Go”, I replied, chuckling, “the customer is waiting, and who knows, you might meet your dream man”.

“Driving an old van like that, not likely”, Mei responded with a giggle, before strutting over to fetch her little red jacket.

“Don’t forget your umbrella”, I reminded her as she crossed the room.

Mei stuck out her tongue and pulled a face making me giggled for a second. That is until I caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror on the back wall. A little pink princess in a little pink dress and high-heeled shoes. My lips pouted, and my mood instantly changed as I remembered where I was and who I was supposed to be.



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“Baby, try this”, Mei said, holding out her hand.

Looking across I shook my head, “No way, my lips are bad enough as they are. I want them smaller, not bigger.

Mei looked disappointed for a second before laughing. She was testing out some makeup samples given to her by her sister Lin. Yes, the same, Lin who had given me the makeover at the university that fateful day, forcing me to swap lives with Simona.

“You’re no fun”, Mei replied, frowning, “you always say no to me”!

Laughing, I looked away. I knew she was just joking around. As I said, by this point, we knew each other pretty well. And if you're wondering, we talked almost exclusively in Chinese. It's true what they say, if you want to learn a language, it's best to immerse yourself in it. These days, I could chat about almost anything and not even have to think about it.

"Fine, I'll just look through a few pictures on my phone, then", Mei said, acting like she was upset.

I knew what she was doing, and I ignored her.

"Oh, this one is so sexy", she announced loudly, "The model is a beautiful girl but looks so unhappy".

Again, I resisted the bait.

Mei leaned in a little. "It's such a shame because I'm sure she's a great person. If only she'd learn to enjoy life a little more and listen to her best friend Mei. I'm sure she'd be a much happier girl if she did".

"Are you looking at pictures of me"? I asked in surprise while screwing up my face.

Mei giggled, "You? No, this is Harley Quinn".

"Let me see", I declared, swiping the phone from her hand. "Where did you get this"?

I added with a sigh, looking down at the embarrassing picture from a recent photoshoot.



“I guess, you’re famous now, Baby”, Mei answered happily. “This one was sent to me, but I’ve heard this picture is on a few billboards around the city.

Looking down again, I shook my head, not wanting to believe the girl in the picture was actually me. And even worse, that it was being displayed around the city where people could see me wearing that ridiculous outfit as they went about their daily lives.

“Oh, come on Baby, I’m only joking around”, Mei said, tilting her head to one side, “What is up with you today? You look even more miserable than usual”!

“It’s nothing”, I replied, not wanting to talk about it.

“You think I’m going to believe that”? Mei countered, “come on! Tell me what’s on your mind”.

“Ok, fine. Did Simona ever mention anyone called Long Bo to you when she worked here”?

I saw her face tense up. “Yes, I know who he is. Why are you asking about him”? Mei replied, sounding concerned.

“Simona said I need to visit him at the end of the month, but she didn’t give me any details”, I replied, hoping Mei might be able to fill in a few blanks.

“Oh”, Mei replied before going quiet.

“Oh”! I repeated, “that’s all you have to say. Who is he”?

“He works at the university”, Mei replied in a serious tone. “Simona has some kind of agreement with him, where she meets him once in a while. In return, he makes sure she can stay on at the university. Meaning she can remain in the country”.

“What”! I cried, “And what does this man expect from her in these meetings”?

Mei reached over and took my hand. “Come on, Baby. I know you’re not that naïve.

What does any man expect in a situation like that”?

Pulling back my hand, I looked away disgusted. Deep down, I’d already known what this man wanted. But, having it confirmed made things seem a lot more real.

“You don’t have to go”, Mei announced, “You have other options”.

“Yeah”, I replied looking up through my thick eyelashes, “like what”?

“You could leave the country, go home”.

“I don’t have my passport”, I replied in a sad voice, “And I’m not going to the UK embassy dressed like this”.

Mei nodded. “On the day you could pretend to be sick”.

“That could delay things, but he’ll surely reschedule, don’t you think”? I replied with a sigh.

“Baby, don’t worry about this now”, Mei shot back, tottering over, and giving me a hug, “we have lots of time to come up with a plan”,

“We”? I said, surprised, “Won’t Simona be upset if you help me”?

“Pfft, who cares about her”, Mei said squeezing me tightly.

“But I thought you two were friends”, I asked, confused.

Pulling back, she looked me square in the eyes. “Friends! I can’t stand that self-centred cow. All she ever thinks about is herself. You are my friend”!

In that moment, I remember tearing up. It had been so long since someone had actually been nice to me.

Seeing a motorcycle pull up outside, I lowered myself down onto my sore high-heeled feet. “I better go serve that man”, I said, changing the subject before I completely broke down in tears.

“I’ll go”, Mei announced, “you sit”.

“No”! I quickly replied, “It’s my turn, I’ll go”.

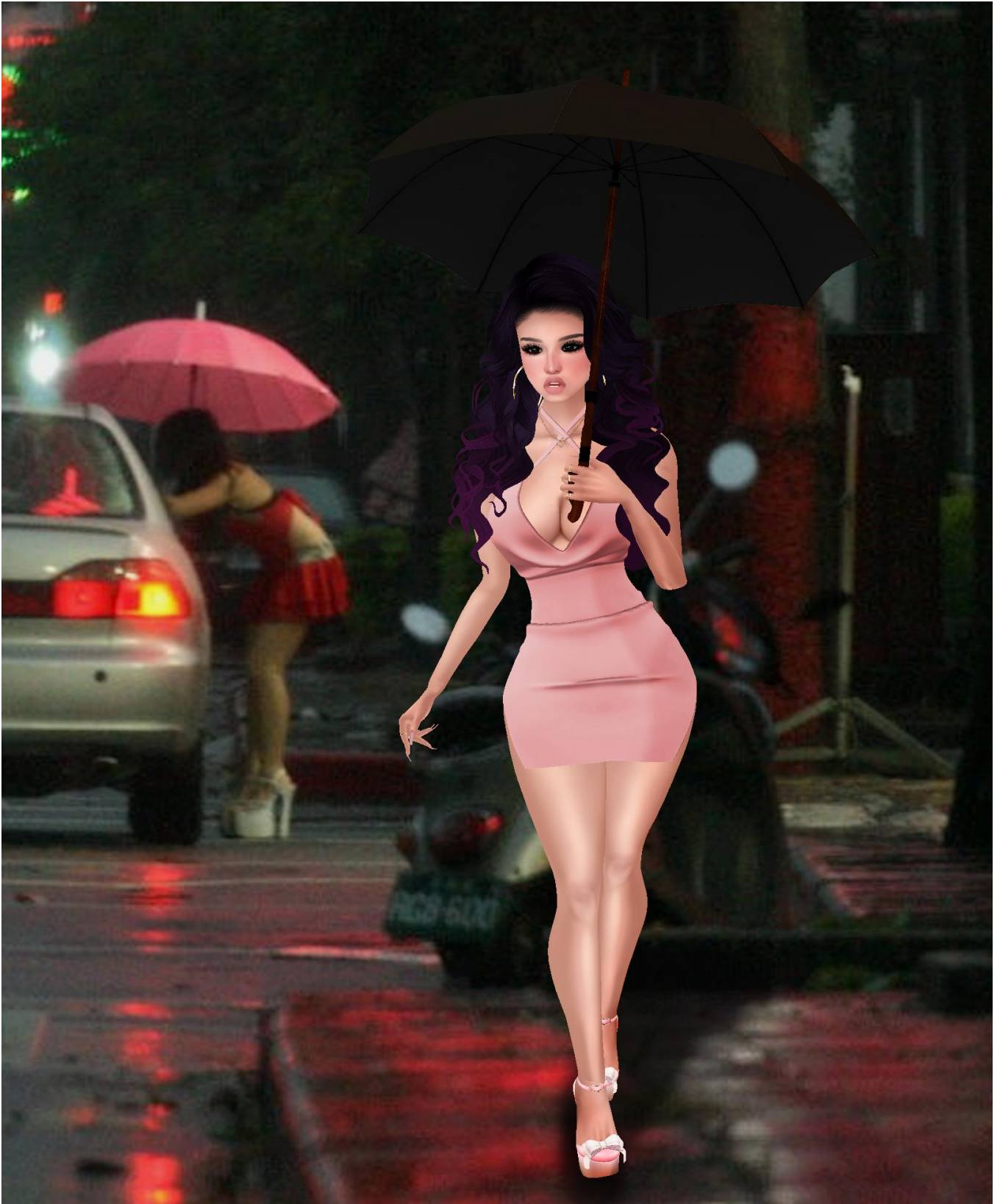
Mei nodded and gave me a warm smile before hoisting herself back up onto her stool.

Taking a deep breath, I carefully lifted my dangerously long pink nails up to my face and carefully wiped under each eye before taking off across the room.

Hearing my heels click-clacking loudly, I stepped out the door, picked up my umbrella, and felt the rain against my exposed skin. The floor outside was slippery, but it didn’t bother me. By this point, having walked around in six-inch heels every day for months, I was a pro. My feet and legs still got sore after extended periods of walking, but in terms of poise and balance, I had those mastered.

Tottering over to the waiting man wearing a waterproof poncho, I didn’t recognise him at first, but when I did my heart sank. He was one of the regulars and a notorious pervert. Always touching and grabbing, given the smallest opportunity.

Looking over, I saw the man grin back at me. I was probably supposed to smile back but I couldn’t bring myself to do it. Instead, I slowed my walk to a snail’s pace, wishing I’d taken Mei up on her earlier offer.



Day 253

As I exited the taxi, the butterflies in my stomach felt as though they were about to burst out. Trying to keep my legs together, I struggled to my high-heeled feet while unintentionally flashing, anyone who cared to look, a view of my silky pink panties.

It was eight o'clock at night, and I was stood outside a tall hotel building in a part of the city I'd never been to before. Upstairs, Long Bo lay in wait, and I was so scared I could barely walk.

Shuffling up to the front door, I caught a glimpse of my reflection in the glass window and froze. It was a familiar image by now, but it still made me feel sick to my stomach.

I shook my head and thought back to when I'd first boarded the flight to Taiwan. I was so full of excitement and hope, anticipating what the future would bring. Well, here it was, staring me in the face, and I didn't want it one bit.

Looking at my heavily made-up face, I batted my thick dark lashes and stared at my huge blown-up lips, wondering if I'd ever be able to look like the old me again. There was a time when I believed it might be possible. But, after all the salon trips, an injection here, a skin treatment there, it was hard to imagine my face looking anything but feminine. And that's before even considering my body.

Looking down, the first thing I saw, the first thing I always saw, were the twin globes jutting out from the front of my extremely short pink dress. From the moment I woke up to the moment I went to bed, they were constantly on my mind. Drawing looks and pulling me off balance with every step. I had no idea how to get rid of

them, after all, they had been implanted into my chest. And accompanied by all the other changes to my body, the slim waist, smooth tanned skin, and developing bubblebutt, thanks to months of diet and exercise. The old Grant Gale had been completely erased and replaced.

Shaking my head, I felt the weight of the heavy hoop earring in my ears sway gently back and forth. More than anything, I wanted to leave, to run away, but a little voice in my head kept telling me I needed to do this.

Taking a deep breath and wishing for one of those pills Simona used to give me before the incident at the beach. I took one last look at the slutty looking girl looking back at me with disdain in her eyes. I was about to become one of those women, willing to give up their body for some favour in return. There's a name for a person like that, and after that night, I knew it was going to be a label I'd forever have to live with.

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Standing outside room 1106, I was shaking like a leaf. I must have stood there for a good five minutes before I somehow found the courage to softly knock on the door.

I heard footsteps approach, and then the door opened. A smartly dressed man, probably in his mid-fifties opened it and stood there looking me up and down. I guess, he wasn't bad looking for his age, a little on the heavy side, with a few grey hairs contrasting his jet-black hair, not that it mattered.

"Come in", the man commanded, in Chinese, still looking me up and down with a little smile on his thin lips.

With wobbly legs, I obeyed, tottering in past him and made my way to the centre of the room, which consisted of a large double bed, a writing desk and chair, and little else.

Hearing the door close, I turned to face him and again saw the smile on his face as he undressed me with his eyes. He walked towards me, covering the same ground in three steps where it had taken me ten. He stopped in front of me, so close I could feel his breath on my face. Looking up at him, I could tell he wasn't one for small talk. This man was all about business. Without a word, he gently removed the handbag from my shoulder, placing it on the chair before taking a hold of the back of my head.

Running his fingers through my long-extended hair, he smashed his lips against mine and started kissing me roughly. Stood there like a statue, I felt his other hand slip down the straps of my minidress to release the girls. I felt the full force of gravity pull them downwards before Long Bo's free hand took a hold of one, partially supporting its weight.

Feeling sick to my stomach, he started rubbing my nipple between his thumb and forefinger, before breaking the kiss and ducking his head. In an instant, he took my erect, sensitive nipple into his mouth and began to nibble softly. I fought back the urge to let out a little moan. I can't deny that it felt nice after so long without any attention. But my overriding thought was disgust.

For what seemed like an eternity, Long Bo, suckled away until I felt him take my hand, and guide it towards his crotch. Without me noticing, he had lowered his pants and was now completely naked from the waist down.

Trembling, he guided my long acrylic nails along the length of his little soldier, standing to attention, as I resisted the urge to throw up. With his rock-hard member in the palm of my hand, something inside me snapped. “No”, I screamed, pulling away and trying to step back.

Long Bo looked confused. “Yes”, he counted, grabbing my wrists, and pulling me towards him. Struggling, I managed to break free with one hand and slapped him hard across the face, shouting no one more time. As you can imagine, he didn’t like this as I watched his face turn angry and red. He reached out to once again grab me by my loose arm, but before he got the chance, I thrust forward with my knee, connecting hard with a place I knew would hurt. Long Bo screamed and fell to the ground. I knew his pain first-hand, and as he writhed around on the ground, shouting obscenities at me in Chinese, I used the opportunity to escape.

In a flash, I was out the door and hurtling down the corridor towards the elevator. My only thought, to get out of there as quickly as possible. But having never moved that quickly wearing such tall shoes before, I caught my heel on the carpet and tumbled to the ground.

Dazed, I looked up to see one of my shoes lying in front of me. I gazed at it for a second and felt a mixture of anger and stupidity. It was the same shoe; Simona had worn to the white party all those months ago. The same shoe she had sauntered up to me wearing, outside the club when she'd asked to hang out the next day. At that time, I had looked down at the sexy nude six-inch stilettos gracing her feet and felt lust. That feeling had changed, all I felt at that moment was disgust and hatred.

Pulling myself gingerly to my feet, I wanted nothing more than to remove the other shoe from my foot and toss it down the corridor. But that's not what I did. Instead, knowing how dirty the streets outside were. I hopped over to the cursed object, slipped it back on my foot. Which turned out to be a good idea in the end, realising as soon as I stepped outside that I'd left my handbag on the chair upstairs.



Day 257

After that fateful evening in the hotel room, things changed, and not in a good way. I woke up the next day, my legs and feet in agony, after trekking across half the city, to find Simona standing over me in my room, and she looked furious.

“You fucking idiot”, she screamed at me, “do you know what you’ve done”?

“I'm sorry”, I replied, half asleep, “It was asking too much. I couldn't do it”.

“It was one night, GG”, she hollered, “all you had to do was get through it. He would have been done with you within the hour. Now you've fucked up everything”.

“I'm sorry”, I said, apologising again, “I'm not like you, I just couldn't let him touch me”.

I saw her eyes bulge. She looked like she was going to explode. “And what the fuck does that mean? Like me? Do you think I meet that creep because I enjoy it? I do it to survive. I do it because I've got no other choice”.

Cowering under the sheets, I just stared at her. “I'll have to leave now”, she muttered with her head in her hands, “they'll send me back. No! I won't go back! I won't!”

I tried to speak, but she cut me off, “I hope you have some master plan to sort this out because I'm done”, she said, shaking her head, “you're on your own now, Simona. Have a nice life asshole”. And with that, she turned and stormed out of the apartment, slamming the door on her way out.

That was a week ago, and I haven't spoken to or seen her since. At first, I thought she'd calm down, so I just went about my life or her life as normal. But I knew

something was really wrong when I went to the university three days ago to discover, Simona or Grant hadn't been in.

I sat through the classes with my mind all over the place, wondering where she could be. I think I only spoke once all day, and that was more like a grunt to acknowledge Ms Li when she told me they had something for me in reception.

I left at lunchtime that day, not able to face sitting there any longer with everyone staring at me. Remembering to stop by reception, I was presented with the handbag I'd left in Long Bo's hotel room. The woman said someone had found it in the canteen and handed it in. I guess Long Bo, didn't know what to do with it.

With my phone back in my possession, I text Simona to apologise once more. I received no reply. I also received no reply to the countless messages I sent and calls I made after that. Simona really didn't want to talk to me.

Day 275

Another two weeks had passed, and I still hadn't heard from her. At my wit's end, I was living in a constant state of worry.

"You need to go around and see her, talk to her", Mei stated as we sat together in the Betel nut stand.

Looking across at her, I knew she was right. "But Jamal will be there, I can't face him again looking like this", I moaned.

"Why? Do you think he'll recognise you? Did he last time"? She shot back.

“Well, no”, I stuttered, trying to think of any excuse not to go over there, “I... I... It will just be too weird”.

“Baby, listen”, Mei said, taking my long-nailed hand, “you need to sort this out with her. This is making you ill. You said yourself. You’re not sleeping, and when was the last time you had a decent meal”?

Again, I knew she was right. “Ok”, I said with a large gulp, “I’ll go around in a day or two”.

“No”, Mei countered, forcefully, “you’ll go now before you chicken out. I’ll cover for you if any of the bosses show up, which is very unlikely. Go get on your scooter and talk to her”!

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Out of breath, I found myself outside the door to my old apartment, having not seen it in so long, I’d actually forgot the colour of it. With my legs shaking, not just from the nerves, but also from the hike up the stairs in my strappy black platform sandals. I closed my eyes, took a deep breath, and knocked on the door.

There was a long delay as I considered running away. But then I heard heavy footsteps approaching. Knowing who it was going to be, I braced myself for an awkward encounter.



“Oh, hey, Simona, I wasn’t expecting you”, Jamal said, his eyes half glazed over and sinking of weed, “how did you get up, here”?

“Oh, hi Jamal”, I replied nervously, trying to appear confident, “someone was leaving when I arrived. They let me in”. That was a lie. I’d let myself in with the spare key.

“Oh, ok, cool”, Jamal replied with a smile, “how can I help you”?

“Well, I was hoping to speak to Grant”, I answered, playing with my long ponytail, and looking down at my elevated feet, "is he in"?

There was a sudden look of confusion on Jamal’s face, “Grant? He’s not here. He left a few weeks back. Didn’t he tell you”?

The words felt like a dagger through my heart. “Gone”, I cried, “Gone where”?

“Back to England, I think”, Jamal answered, the look on his face made it look like he was struggling to think. “But I’m not really sure, he left in a hurry. To be honest, I was quite hurt. I thought we were buds”.

Up until this point, I had tried to be strong, but after hearing those words, I broke. Falling to my knees and started to sob.

“Hey, don’t cry. I’m sorry. I didn’t realise he meant that much to you”, Jamal said, picking me up with ease. “Here come inside and sit down for a minute”.

Placing one of his huge arms around me, he guided me into the apartment. For a second, the familiar feeling of being with him in our old home felt comforting. That is until I looked down past my watermelon-sized breasts to see my thin shapely legs perched atop ludicrously tall high-heeled sandals. Stumbling along, I tried to keep up with him as he led me onto the patio and sat me down on the chair where we used to sit and smoke together in the evenings.

“Can I get you a drink or something”? he asked, after around twenty seconds of silence. Without looking up, I shook my head to indicate I didn't.

“Erm... so... I'm sorry about Grant, Simona”, Jamal muttered, “I don't know what to tell you. He wasn't the same guy when I got back from my trip to the south”.

Feeling completely lost and frightened, I looked up into Jamal's stoned eyes. “I'm not Simona”, I cried, fighting back the tears.

Silence fell upon us once more as Jamal looked at me with squinted eyes. “Ha, good one”, he announced with a chuckle, “If you're not Simona, then who are you”?

“I'm Grant”, I announced, almost choking on the words as I looked down at my girly legs.

Jamal took a second to look me up and down before again chuckling. “Ha, you almost had me for a second there. I didn't realise you were so funny”.

“Do I look like I'm joking”? I screamed, looking up at him with a very serious face, “Do you think I wanted any of this”? Placing my head in my hands, I looked down at the floor.

“That's crazy”, Jamal shot back, “I saw Grant pack up his things and walk out!”

“That was Simona”, I replied meekly, “a lot of things happened, and crazy as it sounds, we ended up trading places”.

A few moments passed before Jamal spoke again. His half-baked brain probably not making it easy to comprehend what I was saying. “Ok, so if you're Grant, take off that wig”, he finally announced with a smile, thinking he'd come up with some sort of test.

“I can’t! It isn’t a wig!” I answered, raising my thinly arched brows, and tugging softly at my long ponytail. “Simona really wanted our disguises to be foolproof. But how about this, ask me a question. One only Grant would know the answer to. Something you told him”.

Jamal looked at me with scepticism in his eyes. “Ok, I’ll play along”, he announced in a mocking tone. “What are my parent’s names”?

“Your Dad’s called Terry, he’s an ex-basketball player like you. You never told me your mother’s name, but you did say once that she was a nurse”.

I could see the cogs turning in his brain. “Ok, I guess that was too easy. Grant probably told you about them. Try this one. When Grant first moved in, he lost his passport. Where did he lose it”?

Smiling, I looked over at him. “It wasn’t my passport; it was my wallet. And it was your fault for getting me so stoned. If that guy in the seven-eleven hadn’t been so nice, running down the street after me, I would never have gotten it back”.

“Shit”, Jamal announced, his mouth gaping. “This is crazy! You can’t be him. You look so... is it really true”?

Looking over I nodded my head and gave him a weak smile. “Unfortunately, yes. I have no reason to make this up”!

“Man, what the hell happened”? Jamal suddenly cried out, sitting forward on his chair.

“It’s a bit of a long story. Do you want to hear it”? I replied, nervous but happy he finally believed me.

“Yeah, shit man, this I gotta hear. But hang on a minute. Let me roll up a joint first, I get the feeling this is going to be wild”.

So, for the best part of an hour, we sat together on the patio just like old times as I recalled the crazy series of events that had led me to his door that evening looking like some sort of bimbo call girl.



To his credit, Jamal sat and listened attentively. Only interrupting to ask a question here and there when I forgot to mention some important detail. By the end of my story, I felt rather emotional, but at the same time, it felt like a weight had been lifted from my shoulders.

With the sun starting to set over the blocky but somehow beautiful old buildings of Taipei city, Jamal looked over at me and smiled. “So, what are you going to do now”? He asked, shaking his head.

Snorting, I looked back over at him through my thick mascara-laden lashes and pouted. “To be honest, I have no idea”, I replied, “I guess I’ll think about it in the morning, but right now, how about rolling up another”?

Reaching around to retrieve his little tin from the plant pot where he kept it, Jamal nodded. “I like you’re thinking Gra... err... what should I call you looking like that. Grant seems so wrong”?

“GG”, I replied, “call me GG”.

Day 734

I started this story by telling you who I used to be. So, the question is, who am I now? It’s a good question. Some people, like Jamal, call me GG, but most just know me as Simona. And having just passed my two-year anniversary from the day I first arrived in Taiwan, I guess I’m kind of used to it now.

I still sometimes look back on those first few months and wonder if I had been a little smarter. If I had thought a little more about the decisions I made. What might

have been. But I've also learned not to dwell on the past. The life I have now is far from the one I envisioned for myself all them years ago. But at the same time, it could also be worse. I'm sure there are a lot of people out there in the world in tougher situations than me.

So, you might be wondering why I'm still living Simona life? How I'm still in Taiwan? And what happened to the real Simona?

Well, the last question is an easy one to answer as I have no idea. After telling Jamal my story, he convinced me to go to the UK embassy. the problem was, they thought I was crazy. After making some calls, they informed me that Grant Gale was back in England with his parents. What followed was a pretty intense interview where they grilled me on who I really was, and why I was claiming to be someone else. You see, I had no criminal record or genetic information on file, meaning there was no way to prove who I was.

When words like criminal charges and deportation came up, I freaked out and told them it was all just a joke. They weren't very pleased as you can imagine but eventually let me leave. I did call up my parents a few months later asking to speak to Grant. But they said he was off travelling around South America. Where Simona is these days, your guess is as good as mine.

As to how I'm still in Taiwan. Well, that's a little more complicated. After finding Simona's passport and documents in her room, I discovered she was from an area of Syria, where civil war had raged for years. As you can imagine, being thrown on a plane and sent off there was not an option. Instead, Jamal came to my rescue. He's now my husband. Yes, husband! And it still feels strange to say that.

Having been in the country for so many years, Jamal had secured a permanent residency. And as his wife, that status is now extended to me.

Our marriage is an interesting one, strictly platonic and out of convenience.

Although, I'm not sure what he gets out of it. To be honest, I was shocked when he proposed it, but after thinking it through, I found myself with no other options. So far, it's worked out ok, and the funny thing is! Nothing really changed after getting married. We still spend most evenings hanging out together, smoking and chatting. I still sleep in the apartment next to him, albeit with Simona's clothes in my wardrobe. He's been a real hero. I owe him so much.

What else has changed? Well, I no longer work in the Betel nut stand, although I still keep in contact with Mei. We speak almost every day and I love her to bits.

Believe it or not, I now work as a model, doing mostly events and glamour shots. I guess, my breasts as odd as it still feels to have them, have come in useful after all.

Eric, the guy I met at the beach what seems like a lifetime ago, is now my manager. He sets up photoshoots and contracts for me and is actually a really nice guy. I work a lot with Lulu, and we've become pretty close. In fact, we just finished an event working together today. The Taipei motor show. Easy work, posing next to cars with great pay to boot.



I guess the only thing left to ask is, will I ever go back to England and try to reclaim my old life? And the answer is, I'm not sure. Jamal sometimes talks about moving back, but what would I do there? I don't even know if I remember how to be the old me! So, for now, I'm trying not to think too far ahead. I'm living each day as it comes. As I mentioned earlier, things could be worse, right?

THE END