



*Reluctant Press* presents:

# A Perfect Fit

Sara James



ILLUSTRATIONS BY C. PAGANI

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**A 'NEW WOMAN' NOVEL**

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# A Perfect Fit

By Sara James

I don't know why I'm writing this. I sit here, typing on my computer, and I'm scared. Cindy always told me I should write down how it started, but I knew, I still know, that putting the truth on paper is dangerous.

But even though I know what could happen if the wrong person sees this, I need to get it out of me. I need for someone or something else to know, even if it's just a printout of a deleted file stored in a safety deposit box where no one but me will see it during my lifetime. I need to know that it's in there with all my other secrets, kept in the darkness of a vault, locked in a cold metal box.

I am scared, but this was what Cindy wanted. I owe her this much. I owe her everything.

It began with the ring.

I bought it at a lawn sale around the start of fall semester my Sophomore year in college. I don't normally go to lawn sales, but I was walking by on my way back to the dorms and the sale was so crowded that people were backed up onto the sidewalk. I was frustrated at first, and considered just pushing my way through. That seemed rude though. I wanted to see what all the fuss was about, so I joined the other people there looking at the contents of the tables.

As far as I could see, there was nothing special about the items for sale. In fact, almost as soon as I started looking around, the crowd began to dissipate. At the time I thought it was just a coincidence. Looking back, I think the ring wanted to be found by me. It certainly seems to have a will of its own.

I found it in a box of assorted jewelry. It was the sort of costume stuff that only approximates real jewelry; every lawn sale I've ever been to seems to have some. There were the standard strings of plastic beads that were meant to look like pearls, bracelets, rings with fake stones, and even a few pairs of earrings. As I was

about to move on to look at other items, the clean lines of the yellow metal ring drew my attention.

I looked like gold. It didn't have any fake stones set into it, or even any engraving. It looked like the kind of plain, thin band that people wear as a wedding ring. Something about the cut of it made it seem feminine and right at home with the other jewelry in the box.

But it didn't belong in the box. For one thing, unlike the other contents of the box, it looked like it was valuable. For another, it was too big. Its cut might have been feminine, but it was too large to have fit comfortably on the hand of any woman I knew. In fact, it looked even way too large to fit me.

I carried it over to the person was presiding over the money box and held it up so he could see it. "I think this got mixed in with the costume jewelry by accident. It looks like it might be worth a little something."

"Let me see," said the man, taking the ring from my hand with a frown. He examined it closely, then looked at me through narrowed eyes. "Where did you say you found this?"

I pointed in the general direction of the box where I had found it. "In a box of costume jewelry."

He nodded and returned his attention to the ring. "Nice of you to bring it to my attention, but that's no mistake. My wife bought this at a yard sale about a year ago. She thought it was gold, but we took it to a jeweler and it's just some kind of brass." He held it out to me with a smile. "It's pretty, but it's not valuable."

I took it back, looking at it closely. "Odd. Isn't brass usually dull if it isn't freshly polished?"

The man shrugged. "That was what we thought, but we took it to more than one jeweler, and they all agreed it was some kind of brass. Since it's not gold, we couldn't sell it, and my wife doesn't wear any rings other than her engagement ring and wedding band. I don't even think she ever tried it on"

"It's probably too big for her anyway." I held it up between two fingers. "It would probably have fallen right off."

The man nodded amiably. "There is that." He grinned at me and leaned forward slightly. "It might fit you though."

I laughed. "I doubt it. I think it's too big."

The man looked at me out of the corner of his eye. "You go to school up at the college, right?" As he shifted his weight onto his other foot, I could almost see the moment the guy decided he was going to try and get me to buy the ring. "I bet the girls would be fooled, just like my wife was. If they think you have enough money to buy a gold ring for yourself, they might pay more attention to you."

I didn't want to think that women were that shallow, but I had seen too many girls from the dorms hanging all over well-dressed guys who obviously had money to dismiss the idea. "What are you trying to say? That if I wear the ring, women will want to go out with me?"

“No, no,” he protested, all innocence. “I’m just saying it might make some women that would ordinarily not pay any attention to you listen to what you have to say. Then it’s up to you to hold their interest.”

I tried to look bored and doubtful, but he had caught my attention. “I don’t know,” I drawled in a low rumble. “I don’t think one ring will make that big a difference.”

“Maybe not,” agreed the man, “but for five dollars, isn’t it worth a try?”

Considering the man’s words while imagining myself kissing several of the more attractive and popular girls from my dorm, I began to fiddle with the ring. “I don’t know,” I said, but I did know. I wanted the ring if it meant that I had even a small chance of attracting the attention of one of the many women I lusted after every day. It was one of the downfalls of being in college; all the women were beautiful and they all seemed to want anyone that wasn’t me.

“Try it on and see how it looks on you,” suggested the man.

I shrugged. There didn’t seem to be any harm in trying the ring on. My money was still in my pocket.

I expected it to be too big, but as I tried to slip it over my right ring finger, it was, in fact, too small. I could only get it as far down as my knuckle, and it refused to go any farther. “Odd,” I said, holding my hand up for the man to clearly see the result of my attempt to put it on. “I thought it might be too big, but I would never have guessed it would be too small.”

He seemed surprised too. “Try it on your pinkie.”

I decided to try it, almost hearing the sound of every woman on campus sighing in disappointment. On my pinkie it was, as expected, far too large. It would have fallen off if I let my arm hang loosely at my side. Just as I was wondering how it could be so loose on my pinkie and so tight on my ring finger, the man suggested that I try it on my other hand, and so I did.

It slid onto my left ring finger with ease and fit there so comfortably that I could barely tell I was wearing it. “There! You see?” the man enthused. “It’s a perfect fit for you.”

I was pleased for about a moment and a half, until the thought drifted up that it looked like a wedding ring. “I’m sorry, but I’m not interested.” I pulled at the ring to take it off.

“Why not?” said the man. “It fits you perfectly and it looks great on you. The women will love it.”

“Not if they think I’m married,” I pointed out, still trying to remove the ring. “Women notice things like what finger a ring is on. If I wear this, every woman on campus will think I’m either engaged or already married. I’ll never get a date.”

The man seemed to shrink a little. “That’s true. I hadn’t thought of that.” He looked at my continuing struggle to remove the ring in silence for several long moments. “It could make a nice gift, though.”

“It’s stuck,” I said, conceding the fact that the ring wasn’t budging. I could barely make it move over the skin below the knuckle, let alone remove it. Yet it still didn’t feel tight or uncomfortable, except when I tried to pull it over the knuckle.

The man seemed to digest my predicament for a moment or two. He started to smile, but quickly covered it with a look of concern. “I have some butter inside. Maybe that will help.” He paused, not moving to go get the butter. “Of course, it you can’t remove it, I’m going to have to ask you to pay for it.”

“It went on easily enough,” I said, a little annoyed by the man’s self-interest. “I’ll get it off.”

But I didn’t get it off. Two hours later and a two sticks of margarine (not butter, as the man had said) later, I paid the guy my six bucks and left. Five for the ring, one for the margarine.

Bastard.

For a few days it gave me a story to tell and even got a few laughs. By the end of a week, my roommate had let slip that I had thought that the ring would make women more interested in me. And it worked, sort of. After that, women I didn’t know seemed to take great pleasure in walking up to me and make a show out of admiring my ring before walking off in a fit of giggles. I wasn’t exactly popular, but I was suddenly well-known. If it had been high school, the guys probably would have made me the butt of their jokes and ruined my life. As it was, I still got teased a little by some of the guys, but they also saw the number of women that approached me and knew my name, so I also earned a small measure of respect.

For most of my Sophomore year, that was all that happened. I became that guy that got the ring stuck on his finger. The teasing and comments faded away after a few weeks, with only the occasional encounter after that. The notoriety stayed though, and it made it a little easier for me to make friends.

It wasn’t until a few weeks after spring break that the weirdness started.

I had been out drinking the night before. It was one of the many parties that took place on any given Friday night, and with no classes the next day and no real work to do for any of my classes, I had gotten smashed. Like everyone else, I was underage, but that only added to the thrill. The seniors bought the alcohol and the rest of us worshipped them for providing it for us.

The result was a terrific hangover. I say terrific, because it was bad enough to make me feel like I had really been drunk, but not so bad that I was heaving sick.

I woke up full to bursting and needing to use the bathroom. It was right across the hall, but my floor was coed and some of my neighbors were women. All the guys I knew put on a brave front about undressing or wearing their underwear in front of the girls, but very few of them actually acted like being unclothed in front of them was no big deal. I think mostly it’s the natural fear of possibly being laughed at, but I’ll deny it if you ever tell anyone I said that.

So before I could pee, I had to put on some pants. It was a normal enough kind of a thing. I did it every day.

Getting out of bed, I went to my closet and fished in my laundry basket for a pair of jeans I had already worn. I didn't see the sense in getting a clean pair dirty just to go to the bathroom, and I was kind of in a hurry. Hung over and still groggy from waking up, I put on the jeans and threw on a T-shirt.

It was as the T-shirt was going over my head that I began to sense that something was wrong. It seemed way too big for me.

And it was. Once it was on, it fit me like a tent, hanging down almost to my knees. I was practically swimming in the fabric. I looked at myself in the mirror that hung above my dresser and almost fainted. I still looked the same, but it was like I had shrunk. My face was normally centered in the mirror; now the chin of my reflection looked like it was sitting on the mirror's lower edge. The image was like a decapitated, floating head.

I tore the T-shirt off and looked at myself in the mirror again. Nothing had changed, except my hair had moved slightly.

I still had to pee, but now I didn't want to leave the room either. I'm vaguely proud to this day that I didn't piss myself in terror. I was certainly scared enough at the time for that to have happened. From my point of view, I was the same, but everything else had gotten larger. Only my jeans seemed like they were the right size.

It was that thought that got me out of the situation. I looked at the jeans and could tell immediately that they weren't mine. They were a generic brand that I knew my roommate wore. My 4'10" roommate was so short and skinny that he looked like he hadn't quite hit puberty yet. It was as if my entire body had shrunk itself to fit into his jeans. With that thought in my head, I looked at the image of my head in the mirror and realized that there was no "as if" about it: I *had* shrunk to fit into his jeans!

I tore them off like they were on fire and found myself facing my mirror, everything normal, holding a pair of my roommate's jeans. Confused, I held them up to myself. I was not an overweight guy, but the waist was far too small to fit me, and the inseam only came down as far as the middle of my calf. I was 5'11", and there was no way those jeans could have fit. I couldn't have put them on if I had tried; they were just too small.

Thinking that I must have accidentally thrown them into my laundry basket, I looked around and located my jeans beneath my desk. I must have mistaken a pair of my roommate's jeans for my own when I had been trying to straighten up the room the night before. I made a mental note to myself: do not clean the room when drunk. Writing off the incident as a post-binge hallucination, I put on my own jeans and went to use the bathroom.

I spent the day in a funk. I tried to forget about the incident, but it kept preying on me from the back of my mind, popping up at odd moments. Where normally I saw people, I began to see just their clothes. I tried to tell myself that I had

borrowed clothes in the past and I hadn't noticed anything odd, and it was true enough. That thought even comforted me for an hour or so until it dawned on me that any clothes I had ever borrowed had been in my size, so I wouldn't have had to shrink to fit into them.

I spent time early in the afternoon with some of the guys on my floor, watching a basketball game on TV. I kept sneaking looks at this one guy named Danny. He was wearing a T-shirt that I had borrowed from him once. It was decorated with the logo of a band this girl I knew liked. I had wanted to borrow it to try to impress her. It hadn't worked.

Danny was a pretty big guy. He was certainly bigger than me. Why hadn't I grown bigger to fill out the shirt?

A brief image of me amazed and confused by the fact my T-shirt came down to my knees floated through my mind. Then I knew why I hadn't expanded to fill out Danny's shirt: I had been wearing my own jeans at the time. It wasn't possible for me to expand to fit the T-shirt without outgrowing the jeans. That made me wonder what would have happened if I had put on the T-shirt before my jeans instead of after.

"Hey Mark," said Danny, "what's with you?" He was staring at me like I had sprouted a third arm.

I panicked for a second, thinking that he had seen me staring or I had gotten shorter again or something. It took me a moment to realize that the team I was rooting for had just pulled ahead and I hadn't even noticed. Not even the cheering and celebrating from my friends had drawn my attention. I was overwhelmed with relief that my body hadn't spontaneously changed itself again.

"Oh. Right," I said brilliantly. "Go team." I was trying not to admit to myself that what I had experienced was real and not some drunken hallucination. It was a losing battle.

"What are you, sick or something?" said Jeff, another friend that lived on my floor.

I shook my head and wondered if I should tell them what had happened. Maybe they could convince me it had all been in my head. "I was just thinking . . ." I began, my forehead furrowed with my intensity.

They erupted in laughter and began to crack jokes about how I couldn't think my way out of a paper bag. I wasn't known as a brain, and using my head wasn't exactly my strong suit. Still, I think they were mostly trying to distract me from what was bugging me. Even without knowing what was wrong, they could tell I needed cheering up and a distraction. That's what's great about having friends.

For the moment at least, I was able to forget what I had experienced. That should have been a good thing, and it was. At least it was OK for the rest of the afternoon.

Around eight at night, the guys tried to convince me to go with them to a party, but I put them off. In fact, I was scared about what would happen if I got drunk

again. By then, I had convinced myself that my experience had been due to some kind of alcohol poisoning. Or maybe someone had slipped a tab of acid into my drink.

Once they had left, the floor seemed empty. I just kind of wandered around to see who was staying in that night.

There was my roommate of course. He was a pretty popular guy for an exchange student. He wasn't much into the party scene, although he belonged to several clubs on campus. None of them must have been having an activity that night. There was Joe and Dave, who I secretly suspected of being gay, based solely on the amount of time they spent alone together. Sherrie was in her room, studying as usual. The only other person around was Cindy Baker.

Normally, that would be enough to entertain me for a whole evening. Not only was Cindy blonde, big breasted and curvy enough to be a centerfold, but she was fun, outgoing, and seemed to like almost everyone. Every guy I knew had a thing for her.

For some reason, she had picked that particular night to do her laundry. My roommate, Cole (I always found his full name odd: Cole Porter Takeshi), suggested we do our laundry too. Most of the girls in the dorm guarded the machines their clothes were in, which meant they hung out in the laundry room while they did their laundry. Cindy was no exception. Cole thought it was a prime opportunity to spend some "quality" time with Cindy, and he didn't have to try very hard to convince me to join him.

Looking back, that decision was either the biggest mistake of my life, or the best thing I ever did.

After our laundry was in, Cole and I joined Cindy. The three of us sat on the counter that was supposed to be used to fold clothes and watched the machines do their work. There wasn't much else to do in the laundry room except talk or study. It was Saturday night, and so we talked. The only thing Cole and I studied was Cindy.

Actually, Cole and Cindy talked. As I sometimes did when women were doing their laundry at the same time I was there, I began to imagine the feminine clothes that were floating around inside the washing machines and the bodies that wore them. With Cole right there and the thought of clothes in my head, it wasn't long before I began to think about what had happened to me that morning. What if it hadn't been a hallucination? What if it had been real?

One glance at Cindy was all that was needed to turn my thoughts to a more disturbing path. What would have happened if I had put on a pair of women's jeans? Or a bra?

It was ridiculous to even think about, but the idea was stuck in my head. I couldn't even really look at Cindy. It made my skin all tingly to even glance at the tight jeans and baby doll T-shirt she was wearing. The fabric of her top was tight enough that the lines of the bra she was wearing was clearly visible. I kept wondering if my body would look like hers if I put on her clothes.

It was an hour and a half of pure hell for me. I felt like my mind was flying apart. Once we all shifted our clothes to the dryers, it only got worse. The dryers were those front-load kind with the circular glass doors. They took nearly a full hour to get stuff dry. During the never-ending drying cycle, there was nothing left to my imagination. I just had to glance at the dryers with Cindy's clothes in them to see the occasional pair of panties or bra among the rest of her more mundane clothing.

When my clothes were done, I practically fled the room, leaving Cindy and Cole behind.

Once inside the sanctuary of my room, I began to pace. I was torn between the conviction that what I had experienced couldn't have been real and the clear memory of what had happened. I kept stealing looks at myself in the mirror over my dresser to make sure I was still the right size.

I had left the door to the room open, so I heard the elevator door open and the sound of Cole and Cindy chatting as they returned. Cole's arrival in our room didn't surprise me, but Cindy's did. "Hey, Mark," she said as she followed Cole into the room. "You were very quiet, and then you left in a hurry. Did something we say offend you?"

"Uh, no." I said, amazed by the sight of Cindy Baker standing in my dorm room. It only added to the sense of surreality that threatened to overwhelm me.

"Is everything OK?" She looked genuinely concerned, which surprised me. She was so popular that I had always assumed I was beneath her notice. "You seem really upset by something."

"He's been weird all day," Cole offered.

"I'm fine," I protested, looking at both of them with my most sincere look. "Really."

"No, he's not," said Cole to Cindy. "Look at this: he's afraid of my pants."

I willed myself to not back away as he pulled a pair of his jeans out of his laundry basket. "You're nuts."

"No, I'm not. I saw you flinch when they came near you as I was putting stuff in the machines downstairs. I thought it was a fluke, so I pointed out a stain. Remember? You definitely flinched, Mark." As if that wasn't enough, he threw the jeans he was now holding at my head. I managed not to freak out, but I did flinch and avoid unnecessary contact with them as I threw them back at him. "See?" said Cole, looking smugly satisfied by my reaction. "He's afraid of my pants."

Cindy was looking at me speculatively. "Well, if Mark doesn't want to talk about it, that's his choice." Adjusting the position of the laundry basket on her hip, she turned and headed for the door. "I'm going to go back to my room. It's time for me to do some folding and ironing." She paused in the doorway and flipped her long blonde hair as she turned to look at me over her shoulder. The look she gave me smoldered the air between us. "Do you want to come, Mark?"

Unsure if I had heard her right, I glanced at Cole. His jaw was hanging open, and his face was slack with a mixture of awe, envy, and outright lust. He seemed to have forgotten that I was in the room and that Cindy could still see his face.

“Sure,” I said as casually as I could. “Why not?”

Like a puppy on a leash, I followed her back to her room. My heart skipped a beat when she closed the door after we had both entered. Girls didn’t usually do that when they were alone with a guy in their room. It led to talk about what was going on when the door was closed, and most of the college women wanted to avoid that talk unless it was true and they wanted people to know who they had been with. Kind of like marking their territory.

It shouldn’t have come as a surprise to me, but I was disappointed when she actually got out her ironing board and began to iron her clothes and put them away.

She asked about my classes, which led to talk about some of my professors, which led to talk about her professors. From there I managed to loosen up and act like a normal human being with her. She let me sit on the edge of her bed while she worked. I felt privileged to just be alone with her, let alone have her treat me as nicely as she was. We talked about everything and anything, except what was bugging me.

After I was fully relaxed, she asked the question. “So what’s really going on, Mark?”

If there had been even the hint that she wanted to know just because no one else knew yet, I wouldn’t have told her anything. I hated gossip, especially when it was about me. I also wouldn’t have said anything if she had been full of pity. Instead, she struck just the right mixture of curiosity and concern.

So I told her. I glossed over the party, since nothing about it was anything to really talk about. I only told her so she would know about the hangover. I told her about my panic, and what I thought had happened. I talked about how it must have been some kind of hangover-induced hallucination, but how real it had seemed at the time.

I did all of that without looking at her directly. I couldn’t have borne to see her reaction as I told her about my experience. When I finally finished, I risked a look.

She was smiling at me, but she also looked concerned. Her head was tipped to one side, and she had stopped ironing. “I think you’re probably right. It must have been either the alcohol, or something someone slipped into one of your drinks.”

I felt as if a huge weight had been lifted from me. She believed me, but she also thought it was as nuts as I did. “I couldn’t tell the guys,” I said in a rush. “They would have never let me live it down.”

She nodded and began to iron again. “I think you went through enough with the whole ring episode.”

I smiled. “It wasn’t so bad,” I conceded. “I met a lot of people because of it. Most of them women.” I sat up straighter and tried to look manly and desirable.

“Every lady on campus knows who I am. Ohhhh, yeah.” It was so not who I am that it made us both laugh.

“So you tried it again, just to make sure it wasn’t real, right?” she asked casually.

She was concentrating on her ironing then, so she missed the way I blinked in surprise and drew back. “No,” I said firmly. “It wasn’t real. Why would I have tried it again?”

Now *she* was the one who was surprised. “You mean you didn’t test it?” She set the iron on end and circled the ironing board. She moved closer, standing next to where I sat on the bed. “Why not? It would be a simple way to make sure it really was just a hallucination. I mean, you’re not still hung over now, are you? You’re not tripping?”

“No,” I admitted with some reservation.

“Then why not try it now then? I’ll be your witness, and then you’ll know for sure.”

For a brief moment, I wondered if her concern had been a ploy to get me alone with her. If she was interested in me, this was a great way for her to get me to take my pants off in front of her.

It was, however, only a momentary thought. No one, including Cindy, had known about my hallucination that morning. There was no way she could have used that information as part of a plan to get me to take off my pants for her. It was a bruise to my ego. Part of me had really wanted to believe, if only for an instant, that she was interested in me as more than a friend.

“I would feel stupid,” I deferred, already feeling stupid and hurt for telling her the truth.

“Come on, it’s no big deal,” she insisted. “You can use a pair of my jeans. I’m not as short as Cole, but I’m enough shorter and thinner than you so we can tell if you really do shrink.” Her eyebrows drew together and she frowned. “Unless you think it only works with Cole’s jeans. Maybe we should tell him what you think happened and borrow a pair of jeans from him.”

“I would rather not drag Cole into this,” I said firmly, only noticing after I said it that I had apparently decided to go along with what Cindy wanted. I took a deep breath to firm my resolve. “Your jeans should work fine.”

It’s amazing how hindsight is 20-20. At the time, I was certain that if it worked at all, putting on her jeans would just make me shorter again. Part of me was even relieved that she hadn’t thought to suggest that I should try on a bra or a dress. In my head, jeans were just jeans, and I had dodged a bullet by not having her insist on one of those as an option for our experiment. Even if nothing happened – which I fully expected once I heard how ridiculous it all sounded out loud – I would then have to deal with Cindy having seen me dressed like that.

She went to her closet and rooted around for a few seconds before drawing out a hanger with a pair of blue jeans draped through it. “These should work great.”

She blushed and looked nervous as she pulled them off the hanger. “I outgrew them in junior high. Not only are they a couple sizes too small, but they are too short for me. I keep them around as a reminder of what will happen if I don’t diet and exercise.”

As I stood up and took the jeans from her, I tried to think of a suave way to say she was attractive. It was too much for me. I couldn’t think of one that didn’t make me sound like an idiot. Instead, I held up the jeans and verified to myself that I shouldn’t be able to fit in them. I looked at her, and she continued to stare at me expectantly. “Uh,” I said finally, “are you going to at least turn around while I try and put them on?”

Her smirk was part amusement and part challenge. “How am I supposed to witness this magical change if I don’t watch you put on the jeans?”

She had me there. “Whatever,” I grouched, dropping her jeans on the bed long enough for me to kick off my sneakers and take off my jeans.

“What happened to your underwear?” she asked me just as I was picking up her jeans. For one awful moment I thought I had an obvious skid mark or hole or something in the briefs I had on. “Did they shrink with you, or did they stay big?” Still facing away from her, I let myself feel relieved.

I straightened back up, holding her jeans in one hand and wondering at the oddity of being half-dressed in front of the hottest woman on campus. And it had even been her suggestion. “I’m not sure,” I admitted, trying to think back. “I don’t remember anything being too big except for the T-shirt.” I thought some more, nodding. “Now that you mention it, I think my underwear still fit me. That means that if I shrank, they shrank to match.”

“Weird,” she commented, her eyes dropping to my waist. I think it was nerves, but I was only semi-erect. Being in a strange situation without your pants can have that effect on a person.

I shifted my grip on the jeans’ waistband, preparing to put them on. “Well, here goes.”

Just like before, I put them on as easily and as naturally as a pair of my own jeans. Even with me paying close attention this time, there was no odd moment or sense of shrinking on my part, or of any sense that the jeans were getting bigger to fit me. They just went on as comfortably and naturally as any jeans that I owned.

It wasn’t until after I had done the button at the waist and zipped them up that anything seemed odd. The first thing I noticed was looking up at Cindy. I mean, not just raising my head, but looking *up* at her. Normally I’m 5’11” and the top of Cindy’s head is about at my eye level. But not with her old jeans on. With them on, she topped me by several inches. As I looked up at her, her expression bloomed from a kind of vague amusement to a flushed shock. “Oh my God!” she finally managed to sputter out. “You weren’t hallucinating. It really happened!” Her hand rose to hover in front of her mouth as she began to erupt with husky, shocked laughter.

It was like watching a movie. You see what is happening on the screen and it interests you, but at the same time it doesn't seem to have anything to do with you or your life. I looked down at myself and was immediately struck by the wrongness of what I saw. Unlike the first time, I didn't just seem shorter. My shape had changed.

*I just put on a pair of women's jeans*, I thought with dismay as I observed the result of my action. The waist of the jeans seemed to fit me normally enough, even though it seemed higher on my waist than on my own jeans. Below that, everything was different. My hips and rear end curved out dramatically from the waist, seeming as wide my shoulders. Even my legs seemed to be set farther apart, along with having acquired a shockingly feminine shape the seemed to fill the fabric to capacity. Touching my fingers to either hip, it also seemed that my pelvis was more prominent.

But the most radical change was also the most obvious. Cindy saw it as clearly as I did. "Mark," she asked quietly, her voice shaking in time with the vibrations of my own nerves, "where's your package?"

Of their own volition, the palms of my hands slid over the taunt, smooth expanse of my lower abdomen. Pausing only for a moment, I moved my right hand lower, confirming the reality that I had only suspected until that moment: the only parts I had left belonged on a woman.

I don't even remember taking off the jeans or my underwear. One moment I had them on and was touching what both my hand and my groin told me was a canvas-covered pussy, and the next I was naked from the waist down, thanking God over and over for the reappearance of my manly parts. I didn't even care that I was exposing myself to Cindy. Having lost my manhood for even less than a minute had been enough to seriously freak me out. "Never again," I vowed like a first time drunk embracing a toilet the night after a binge. "Oh God, never again."

It was almost a full minute before I calmed down enough to regain a little of my dignity and pull my shorts back on. Part of me wanted to grab my jeans and flee, but Cindy had moved closer to me at some point and she now stood between me and my jeans. As I caught my breath and began to stop shaking, I saw that Cindy was at least as rattled as I was. Neither of us had really expected it to work, I think. We stared at each other as things slowly returned to some semblance of normal between us.

Cindy was the first to speak. "Your shirt still fit you."

"Huh?" I was still trying to come to grips with being temporarily dickless and she was talking about my shirt!

"The shirt you're wearing and your underwear both shrank to fit you. This morning, your shirt must have seemed bigger because you put it on after you shrank."

That seemed reasonable, not that it mattered much to me at the time. "I guess so."

“Did you really have a ... ” She pointed in the general direction of my groin and raised her eyebrows.

I laughed weakly, even as I covered that area with both hands. “Yeah, I really did have a, uh ...” I felt myself blush deeply, unable to say the word vagina, or even a nickname like pussy or slit. “Yeah. I did.”

Her next response almost floored me. “Cool,” she said with a kind of thunder-struck awe. She had a wild, fanatical look on her face that I had seen occasionally in women. It was a kind of cross between, “Wow, that rich man sure is good looking,” and “I can’t believe my luck! I’m standing next to Brad Pitt!”

“Cool.” I shook my head, but I knew that I had heard her right. “Cool? Are you nuts?!?”

She held her hands up defensively. “Now, don’t get excited. I mean, look at you now! You’re completely back to normal.”

“True,” I begrudgingly drawled.

“Well, where’s the harm in it then? I mean, Mark, this is magic. Real magic! You really got shorter! Even without the other changes, that’s pretty amazing.” She took a step closer to me. “How did you do it?”

I took a step back, only to come up against the edge of her roommate’s bed. “I don’t know. It just happened!” I was suddenly very conscious of the fact that from the waist down I was only dressed in my underwear. The thought that I had been exposing myself to her just a minute or two earlier made my cheeks burn. “How do you think I did it? Magic elves?”

“I don’t know,” she said thoughtfully, seeming to take my suggestion more seriously than I was comfortable with. After a moment, her face blossomed in a smile. “Does it really matter? This is awesome!”



Her enthusiasm wasn't rubbing off on me. Maybe from her point of view it was entertaining, but I was the one it was happening to. "It didn't feel awesome. It was weird."

"Of course it was weird," she argued. "What's not weird about having your body magically change so dramatically? But that doesn't mean it's a bad thing. I mean, aren't you even a little curious about just how far you can take this? Don't you want to experiment with it a little? Try on some more of my clothes?"

I had a heavy sense of foreboding about where she was going with this. She was probably thinking the same things I had been thinking about in the laundry room as I watched her clothes dry. "No. In fact, I think I should leave now."

She continued to stand in my way, looking thoughtful. It took her a few long moments to decide, but she finally stood aside. I practically flew at my pants. I put them back on again, looking for my sneakers as I did so. "Thank you," I said, more aggravated by the situation than relieved to be getting out of it.

She watched me, shifting her weight back and forth between her feet. "I'll tell the guys," she blurted out finally.

With my sneakers dangling from my hands, I grew still as a deer caught in headlights. I felt myself grow faint as I saw the vulnerability of my situation "You wouldn't," I almost whispered, afraid to hear her answer.

Looking canny, she left me hanging, but not for long. "No," she admitted, deflating a little. "I won't tell." She stomped her foot and waved her hands in my direction, surprising me. "Damn it, Mark! Can't you see how cool this is? Where is the harm in just trying a few things out? You know you'll go right back to normal."

"Do I?" I asked softly. "I don't know what's causing this, and neither do you. We don't know what the rules are. What if I get stuck? What if we do something that changes me and I don't change back?"

She looked vaguely sheepish. "I don't know." Her hands knotted together and she bit her lower lip.

"Damn straight you don't." I threw my sneakers on the floor in disgust, knowing that she was right. I *was* curious. Scared, but curious. I wanted to push the boundaries. I wanted to see just how far I could take things. If we were right and anything I did to myself would be undone when the clothes came back off, where was the harm? There was no way to know until I tried. "You don't know, I don't know, and there's only one way to find out." I sighed heavily and stared at her face. I didn't want her to catch me staring at where my thoughts were right then. "So what's first?"

It took a moment before what I had said sank in. "Really?" she squealed like a little girl that has just been given a puppy. "You'll do it?"

"I guess so," I breathed heavily. "Hurry up before I change my mind again."

She clapped her hands and giggled with delight. If she hadn't rushed forward to give me a quick hug and a peck on the cheek, I might have bolted out of the

room right then. She held me at arms' length, measuring me with her eyes before rushing to the corner of the room that held her dresser and closet. "Strip," she commanded with glee. "This is going to be so awesome! Take off everything, including your underwear. If we're going to do this, I want you to get the full treatment."

I had my reservations, but did as she said without protesting. My jeans came back off again, along with my T-shirt and socks. As I finished taking the second sock off, I held it up and stared at it. "I wonder if my feet shrank before? My socks still seemed to fit fine."

"Probably," Cindy offered over her shoulder. "The socks probably shrank too, just like your T-shirt."

I hesitated, not taking my underwear off yet. I watched Cindy instead. She was rooting through her drawers, making a small pile of various fabrics on top of the dresser. "OK," she said finally, blinking in surprise when she saw me. "You're still wearing your shorts."

"You weren't ready yet," I said by way of explanation.

"Well, I am now. Strip," she commanded again.

With more than a few reservations, I complied. As I did, I tried to convince myself that the knot in my stomach was fear that I was bravely facing down, not anticipation. I didn't want to believe that I was stupid enough to look forward to something that was so potentially disastrous.

Before I had even fully straightened up, she threw a minuscule piece of fabric at me. "Put this on."

I caught it deftly, and took a moment to unwad it. I looked back and forth between it and Cindy. "A thong? You can't be serious." The thong she had chosen was made out of a black lace fabric. It seemed too tiny to be a real piece of clothing.

"Sure, I'm serious. I want to see if your hips and rear change, or just the part covered by the thong." She looked intently at my waist with an ill-concealed smirk and a single raised eyebrow. "Unless you would prefer to stand around naked. Maybe I should get my camera."

"OK, OK. I'm putting it on."

At first, I didn't think anything had changed. I was still taller than Cindy, and my legs were still hairy. My hips didn't seem any wider either. I looked about the same. Only my genitalia seemed to have changed, not that "only" was the right word for losing a penis and gaining a vagina in the blink of an eye. It was only on closer examination that I could tell that I was noticeably thinner.

I looked at Cindy for her reaction. "Almost no change," she noted, sounding both disappointed and unsurprised.

"Hello," I said, holding up my thin arms. "No change? I'm a stick figure here!"

She jerked backwards. Her gasp of surprise so dramatic that it was comical. She hadn't even noticed. "Oh wow." She recovered quickly, moving forward to feel my bicep. "You look like the original ninety-eight pound weakling from those old ads."

"Now there's a compliment," I groused with a grin. She was right; that was exactly how I looked.

Cindy turned back to the dresser and picked out the next thing for me to try on. "Put these on."

"These" were a pair of shorts. They were made of a stretch fabric, and looked like the kind of thing women wore to aerobics or jog in. I slipped them on over the thong. Once again there didn't seem to be any change. I was still taller than her and I was still skinny. As I stared down at myself, I wondered idly if Cindy had worn these before. I was pretty sure she must have, and I thought that with what was between my legs at that moment, it was just as normal for me to be wearing them as her.

Cindy saw it first this time. She put her hands on my hips as if to confirm what she saw. "Your hips are definitely wider. You didn't really have any curves with just the thong."

She was right. It wasn't as dramatic as when I had tried on the jeans, but wearing the shorts definitely added curves. "I still have hairy legs," I pointed out. "In fact, my legs look pretty normal."

She nodded in agreement, putting her hands on her hips as she continued to look at the changes to my waist. Finally she nodded as if she was satisfied and turned to rummage through her closet. "Take off the shorts. I've got a garter belt and stockings I want you to try on, and then I want to see what your putting on a dress will do for your figure. If that doesn't fill out your chest at that point, you can put on a bra to get the full effect. I think we both know what that will do for you. Now where is that cocktail dress? If it's loose on my hips and bust and tight in my waist, I can't wait to see how it will look on you."

"Uh, Cindy..."

"Don't tell me you're ready to stop already! We haven't even gotten started." She pulled a black sequin dress out of the closet. "Here it is. Are you ready to try..." She trailed to a stop as she turned to face me, her flood of words caught short by the expression of alarm that I'm certain was glued to my face. "Mark, what is it?"

"I didn't change back," I said weakly.

"No," she denied, but it was obviously true. Unlike when I had first put on the thong, my hips were wider and quite female. Her eyes widened. "Take it off," she gasped, waving her hand at my waist. "Let's just check. I'm sure it's OK. Just take off the thong so we can make sure you'll switch back."

I didn't move. "I'm scared," I admitted weakly. "What if nothing happens?"

"It will."

“Cindy ...”

“It will,” she said more firmly. “It must just not make changes until it has to. Until you take off the thong, it has no reason to return your p-” She stopped abruptly, and I knew what she had been about to say. “. . . your body to normal. Now take it off, so we can be sure.” She forced a smile and nodded encouragingly. “Go ahead.”

I took it off and we both sighed with relief when I returned to normal. I put my hands on my knees and tried not to cry with gratitude. “Boy,” I gasped, “that will get your blood pumping!”

“Do you want to stop now?” Cindy offered, already sounding disappointed.

I suppose she thought that I had had enough. It was kind of her, but by that point I felt like there was already no turning back. “No,” I said firmly. “I changed back. I don’t think there’s any reason to think I won’t change back whenever I take all the clothes off.” With my hands still on my knees, I looked up at her and grinned. “Just don’t let me forget to take your thong off.”

She laughed. “As if I would let you leave this room with any of my underwear. Do you want to take a break?”

“No,” I said. “I want to finish with this before people start coming back for the night. I don’t want to have to explain this to your roommate. I’d really like to avoid being the talk of the dorm again.” I straightened up and felt myself blush with the realization that it would be her reputation and not mine that would suffer if people thought we had been together. “No offense.” I put the thong back on in a rush to hide my embarrassment, and I once again had a smooth groin and skinny arms and legs, but no hips.

“None taken. It’s a good point,” she agreed. “Now, put these on ...”

She made kind of a big deal of guiding me through putting on the stockings, but it wasn’t really necessary. I mean, it was just like putting on a pair of really long socks. The only thing she told me that I needed to know was that I had to be careful how I pulled on them or they would run.

I sat on the edge of the bed to put them on, so it wasn’t until I stood up that we could tell I had gotten shorter again. Much shorter. The stockings covered my entire leg from toe to groin, and I didn’t even come up to Cindy’s chin. “What the heck?” I looked up at her. “If you’re as tall as you are and wear these, why am I suddenly so short?”

She looked thoughtful. “I don’t know,” she admitted with a shrug. “Panty hose always seem too short to me. Every woman I know complains about that. Maybe this is the way stockings should fit for all women.”

I looked down at the stockings. I seemed far less skinny with the reduction in height. In fact, I almost looked normal except for being shorter. Just as I was about to ask about the dress, one of the stockings chose that moment to begin to roll itself up, sinking lower on my leg. I rolled it back up and held the edge in place with my finger, only to have the other stocking do the same thing. I put the

thought of the dress aside for the moment. “Didn’t you say something about a garter belt?” I did my best to put the offending stocking back in place with my one free hand.

Cindy giggled at my predicament. “Right here,” she said, holding it up. “Let me help you with that.”

I half expected my waist to shrink or something when she put it on, but that didn’t happen. No matter how we looked, it didn’t seem to do anything for me other than hold the stockings up.

I was so much shorter that Cindy got on her hands and knees to fasten the stocking so the garters. In the process of attaching the first garter to the stocking, Cindy suddenly stopped and brushed my fingers away. She rolled the stocking down my leg as far as the knee. “Hey, look at this.” She ran the back of her fingers over the skin of my leg. “No leg hair. It’s like you never had any hair on your legs at all.”

After all we had seen so far, it was just a momentary distraction. Before long the stockings were both in place, held there firmly by the garter belt.

“Bra next?” I asked.

I didn’t do a very good job of hiding how eager I was. Cindy laughed and looked up at me, using her hands to push her own ample breasts together. “Are you jealous? Do you want your own pair of these?”

I ran my tongue over the inside of my teeth and eyed the curves that seemed to dwarf her hands. Even covered by the baby doll T-shirt she was wearing, the sight of her large breasts pressed together was impressive. With her on her knees and me looking down at her upturned face, it was enough to make the thunder of my beating heart painful in my chest. “Maybe,” I admitted in a near whisper. “Just for a little while though.”

I don’t think she took me seriously. Or maybe she did. Either way, she laughed at me as she stood up and went to get the dress she had chosen for me to wear. “In a bit. If this doesn’t do the trick, I’ll have you try on one of my bras.” I took the dress from her when she held it out to me and tried to not look disappointed.

I already had one leg in the dress before she pointed out the zipper in the back. It seemed a little silly to me. The dress was backless, and the zipper was only about six inches long. She had to explain to me that the dress was designed to be fitted at the waist, and that a woman’s waist was much smaller than her hips. That meant that it couldn’t just be pulled over the hips because the fabric wasn’t elastic enough to put it on without tearing. Anticipating my next question, she explained that it was easier to just step into it than pull it on like a T-shirt, especially when you considered the risk of messing up hair and makeup.

I waited for her to stop talking before I tried to put the dress on again. I might have been a bit distracted when she had said it, but I had distinctly heard her say the dress was loose on her hips and bust, as well as being tight around her waist. There was a fluttering thrill in my belly at the thought of what I would look like after I put the dress on.

Even anticipating what I would look like, the result was something of a shock. My chest might not have filled out the dress, but everything else did. My hips seemed even wider than when I had tried on her jeans. As for my waist, it was hard to tell with the increase to my hips, but it certainly seemed like it was narrower. Like everything else she had me try on, the fit was perfect. Even without any breasts to fill it out completely, the low-cut neckline and thin shoulder straps seemed to make promises of bare skin and cleavage that my body couldn't keep.

Cindy grinned and led me to the mirror on the back of the door to the room. "Look at that! You look fantastic." She seemed proud of me for some reason. Neither of us could tear our eyes away.

It was an odd thing, looking at myself like that. From the neck up, I was still me. My day's growth of stubble especially wasn't doing anything to make me look more feminine. From the neck down, I was a hodgepodge of parts that were me and parts that were not me. Only my lack of breasts, arm hair, and armpit hair seemed out of place if you didn't look at my neck or face. I flexed a bicep briefly, and that did nothing to make me look more like a woman, even though the bulges made by flexing were far smaller than I was used to. I had the thong to thank for that.

Only when Cindy returned did I notice she had left my side at the mirror. "Here," she said as she handed me a pair of black leather shoes with heels that looked like they were at least four inches high.

"What am I supposed to do with these?" I asked her.

She rolled her eyes. "Put them on. I mean, look at your feet. They may be smaller, but they still look seriously out of place on you."

I looked at my feet. I couldn't see her point. They looked normal to me. A light dawned in my head then. She was really a woman and I was not. If she thought they looked wrong, she was probably right. "OK," I said, sounding more willing than I felt. Still, it didn't seem so bad considering the rest of the stuff I was wearing. "You know," I offered as I used one hand to steady myself by holding on to Cindy and the other to slip on the shoes, "we could have done this with a lot less trouble if I had just put the jeans on, and then a bra."

I wobbled as I put on the second shoe, but she held me steady. "I don't think it would have given you the same figure the dress did, but we can do that next if you want."

I looked up at her as I stood up from putting on the shoes. Even with the high heels on I was still several inches shorter than Cindy, if less noticeably so. I didn't have the heart to tell her that after we took this as far as we could, I was taking it all off and never touching a piece of clothing that didn't belong to me again. "Maybe," I said with a shrug.

Putting her arm around me, Cindy looked at me in the reflection of the mirror. She sighed. "I guess you were right. You should have put on the bra first." She moved to her dresser and picked up a bra that looked like it was a match for the black lace thong I was already wearing.

I decided to take a chance. “Since I’m going to be wearing it, can I ask what size it is?”

That stopped her cold. All of a sudden she seemed shy and hesitant. I almost laughed. She didn’t have any trouble at all having me strip for her or dressing me up in her clothes and even her underwear in order to watch how it transformed me, but she balked at telling me her bra size. It was so normal that I momentarily forgot the truth of the situation. I really did kind of want to know what size bra I was going to be putting on. In the end, she didn’t really tell me. She just showed me the tag so that I could read it for myself. “It’s one of my old bras. The band is a little too snug on me,” she admitted, “but it should be OK for you.”

The bra was a 32C.

“Don’t take the whole dress off,” she advised. “Just pull the top down so I can put the bra on you.”

“I think I can put it on by myself,” I said with some petulance as I withdrew my arms from the shoulder straps that were all that held the dress up. “I mean, it’s a bra, not a nuclear reactor. How hard could it be to put one on?”

“How would you know it’s not hard to put on a bra?” she probed in the midst of a fit of the giggles. “Have you done this before? Maybe borrowed one of your mom’s bras or something when she wasn’t looking?”

I could feel heat radiating off of my face again. “No!” I denied vehemently, wondering how she had managed to twist what I had said to make me sound like I secretly dressed in women’s clothes. “I mean, I’m just saying ...” Her continued giggling was distracting me. “It’s just that it can’t be that hard.”

“Uh, hello,” she said as she made a playful grab at my crotch. “I think that’s obvious.”

I walked away from her in disgust, the wobble of my ankle ruining the effect as I almost fell. Stupid heels. “Ha, ha. You know, I could just take all this off and leave. Even if you do tell someone, which I don’t think you will, who would believe you? The most you could really claim is that I was in here trying on your clothes. You can’t even say I snuck in here to raid your panty drawer. Cole heard you invite me over.”

She managed to calm herself. “OK, Mark, OK. I get it. You’re a big boy and you want to dress yourself.” Using just one finger hooked through one of the straps, she held the bra out to me. “Be my guest.”

I drew myself up, trying to seem taller than I was. Being shorter than Cindy really bugged me. “Thank you,” I offered as graciously as I could. I took the bra from her and began to arrange it so that I could put it on.

“You’re welcome,” she responded meekly. Only the twinkle in her eye betrayed her amusement at my reluctance to have her help me.

Almost immediately, I regretted my decision. Only my pride kept me from asking her for help. The tag let me figure out which side was supposed to be the outside. After that, I just kind of held it up and stared at it for a minute. I could put

my arms through the straps, but then how was I supposed to hook the back? I considered cheating and wrapping it around myself and hooking it where I could see it, then pulling it the rest of the way on. It occurred to me then that if I did badly putting it on that Cindy would make fun of me for it. On the other hand, if I put it on easily, she would make fun of me for doing it so well.

So I asked her as nicely as I could for her help.

Perhaps sensing my chagrin, she didn't tease me, but her giggles started up again. Taking the straps from me, she had me put my arms through the straps, then turn around. Within a matter of ten seconds or so, I was wearing a bra for the first time.

And I was really wearing a bra. One moment the cups were empty, the next they were as full as if I'd had breasts my whole life.

I stared down at myself and turned around so Cindy could see too. Her giggles ended abruptly. The two of us stared at my bosom with a reverence that seemed to fill the entire room. For a moment, it felt like we were the only two people on the entire campus. When Cindy lifted her hand and reached out to touch me, it seemed like the most natural thing in the world.

She hesitated, her hand a mere finger width away from the fabric covering my breast. I looked up and found her staring at my face. Her expression was rapt, but submissive. I nodded my acceptance, and her head lowered to look more fully on the object of her attention. For a momentary eternity, I waited for her to touch me.

Her touch was firmer than I expected. It was more of a grab really. She managed to get her thumb and forefinger positioned on either side of my nipple and give it a really thorough pinch in the process. I winced and pushed her hand away, sucking in a breath through my teeth. For the moment she had pinched it, my nipple had exploded and burned with kind of fluid heat you felt if your hands got really cold in winter and you warmed them up too quickly. At the same time, the burning had been suffused with an intense but pleasurable ache.

"It worked," she said, stating the obvious while still sounding incredulous. "You really have breasts."

I pressed the palm of my hand against my aching nipple. The discomfort evaporated quickly. "Why did you do that?" I accused her with dismay.

She shrugged. "I don't know, really. Tradition? My grandmother pinched me like that after I hit puberty. When I complained, my mom just said that her grandmother had done the same thing to her when she had hit puberty. She was almost proud when she told me that." Cindy shook her head with wonder and seemed to radiate a glow of pure femininity. "I never understood that until just now. There is something ... I don't know, nice maybe, about doing that. It's like an acknowledgment that I've been where you are, and now we are both women." She glowed at me as if she expected me to understand.

"But I'm not a woman. I mean, I have breasts, but I'm not a woman."

“Really?” She blinked languidly and tipped her head to one side. “Tell me, Mark, do you have a penis or a vagina?” Her raised hand stopped me before I could answer. “Not normally; I mean right now, this very second.”

“A vagina,” I said in a near whisper.

“That’s right. You have a vagina, and now you have breasts.” She shrugged and looked at me intently. “If that doesn’t make you a woman, what does?”

I frankly didn’t want to think about it. In fact, her intensity was freaking me out a little. To cover my discomfort, I began to pull the top of the dress back into place. “Let’s see how the dress looks on me now,” I said, changing the subject firmly and putting the dress on in record time.

“It will look pretty silly with the bra still on. It’s a backless dress, remember?”

I kicked myself mentally and pulled my arms out of the dress’s straps again. It wasn’t until the top of the dress was again lowered around my waist that it dawned on me what the consequences of taking the bra off while still wearing the thong, stockings, garter, shoes and dress would probably be. “Wait,” when Cindy asked me to turn around. “I don’t know about this ...”

She looked at me with apparent disgust. “Don’t tell me you’re embarrassed about being topless! It’s nothing I haven’t seen before, Mark. In fact, if anyone shouldn’t be looking, it’s you!”

She had a point. Rather than turn around, though, I reached behind my back and undid the hooks that held the bra in place. I managed to succeed on my third attempt, and my shoulder only popped once during my contortions.

As the bra fell away to the floor, I felt my first thrill of panic since taking off the shorts and finding that I hadn’t reverted back to normal. Putting the bra on and seeing it filled was one thing. I had been sneaking looks at bra ads in catalogs and newspapers for years. Seeing myself with two large, firm breasts dangling from my chest was another thing altogether.

I began to pant in panic, which only made the twin orbs of flesh rise and fall alarmingly. I watched in near horror as my panic began to cause the skin to redden on their upper slopes and make my aureole swell. I looked at those impossibly large circles and marveled at the size of the nipples that rose from their center. Was that natural? Did all women have such alarmingly large nipples? They looked almost as big as the tip of my pinkie!

“The tag must have been wrong,” I said as I shook my head in disbelief. “There’s no way these are only a C cup.”

Cindy just shrugged. “Maybe it’s your new perspective,” she offered. “They look normal enough to me. My breasts are the same size, remember. Yours don’t look that much different.”

“But my nipples seem so big!” I protested. “Are yours that big too?”

She nodded like looking at and discussing other women’s boobs was no big deal. Maybe for her it wasn’t. I could only imagine what she had seen in the course of a lifetime of being around other women in bathrooms and locker rooms.

“Mine are about the same. Maybe a little smaller, but yours aren’t the biggest I’ve ever seen.” Her smile as she gazed into my eyes was gentle and reassuring. “Really, Mark, they seem totally normal.” She blinked, looking surprised by her own words. “Well, at least they look normal for a woman.” She laughed again then as I pulled the dress the rest of the way back on again. Her laughter was a wonderful sound. “This is just too much fun. Maybe if you shaved and we did something with your hair, I could take you out somewhere.”

“Not a chance,” I snapped. I was nervous enough just being alone with her. If I went out in public, there would be no living it down.

My response couldn’t have come as much of a surprise to her, but she still looked a little let down. “I suppose not.” She fussed with the neckline of the dress I was wearing again, eyeing me up and down. “You might blend in from the neck down, but you just look too much like you from the neck up. Even with a wig and makeup, you wouldn’t look quite right.”

As I looked at my reflection, I thought in the most private part of my mind that she might be wrong. With the right wig and really heavy makeup, I might just be able to pass myself off as genuine. After all, I did have a body that was genuine, at least as long as I didn’t go totally naked.

Cindy broke my train of thought with a huff of air and a look of contempt. “It still seems loose in the bust,” she growled. “Why aren’t your breasts filling out to make the dress fit right? Your hips did.” The way she pressed her lips together made me glad I wasn’t the target of the look she gave the dress.

I was surprised anyone could get so passionate about how a dress fit. “It’s too bad you don’t have a bigger bra I could borrow,” I said facetiously. “We could fix that right up.”

“Yeah,” she agreed with slumped shoulders. “None of the girls are around except for Sherrie, and she isn’t ...” Trailing off, Cindy’s eyes widened and she suddenly bolted for the door. “Wait here!” she said as she flew out of the room, slamming the door shut behind her.

“Like I have much of a choice,” I muttered to the empty room.

I was wondering what to do while I waited when a soft knock at the door almost made me jump out my skin. Before I could get a hold of myself, I could see the doorknob turning. “Mark?”

It was Cole. I ran to the door, wincing at the sound of the high heels on the tile floor. I managed to lock the door before Cole could get it open. “What?” I hissed through the door. I kicked off the heels, not wanting to repeat the sound of the high heels clicking on the tile. As I did, I was momentarily distracted by my feet. Cindy had been right. The shoes had not only made me look taller with their heels, but they had reshaped my feet. I couldn’t imagine looking at them and thinking they were at all masculine.

“What’s going on? Are you making out with Cindy? She looked all flushed and excited.”

This was a nightmare. “No!” I practically spat. “We’re just talking. She went to go get something.”

“What?”

“I don’t know!” It was an honest answer, but I suddenly felt guilty for snapping at Cole. I even felt a little indebted to him. After all, it was putting on his pants that morning that had made me aware that something strange was going on. “Look, Cole, we’ll talk later.”

I waited for an answer, but I didn’t hear one. “Cole?” I prompted.

I jumped when the door rattled, and then began to be pounded on. “Mark,” hissed Cindy. “It’s me. Unlock the door.”

I breathed a sigh of relief, unlocking the door and hiding behind it as I let her in. I made sure to lock it again once she was inside. Up until then, we had been lucky that someone hadn’t just walked in. That was a common enough thing in our dorm.

My relief turned to confusion when I saw what she was holding. “Another bra?” I asked.

She nodded in response and grinned widely. Holding it up so that I could see it better, it was obvious what she had in mind. “You know how Sherrie is always so quiet and prim and proper? One night last semester, a bunch of us from the floor were going out, and we managed to convince her to come out with us. She got totally wasted. She couldn’t have walked a straight line to save her life. Anyway, she started rambling on and on. We couldn’t shut her up. During her little rant, she went off on a tear about how she had always wanted bigger boobs ...” She paused in sudden dismay. “Mark, you can’t tell anyone about this. I mean it.”

I nodded my agreement. “Sure.” I wasn’t sure whether or not I meant it, but I wanted to hear more. “Of course.”

Her dismay melted and she continued. “Right. Where was I? Oh yeah, bigger boobs. She told us she didn’t just want bigger boobs, she wanted tits the size of watermelons. It cracked us up, but even drunk she was being dead serious. She went on and on about how she wished she had been born with huge knockers. When her birthday came around, Heather and I went shopping and managed to find this as a gag gift.” She held up the cream-colored bra. “It wasn’t big enough to hold watermelons, but it was the biggest one we could find on short notice. Here.” She held out the tag so he could see it. “It’s a 32, just the same as the one you just had on, but the cup size is a triple-D.”

Sure enough, the tag read “32 DDD.” I wasn’t sure exactly how big that was, but the cups looked huge. I only had to think about it for a second. I shrugged, feeling the breasts I already had shift beneath the covering of the black fabric. “If I’ll only have them for a little while, why not?” I peeled the top of the dress off yet again, exposing the twin mounds that rose from my chest.

Cindy was delighted. She held the bra out for me as I partially disrobed, bouncing up and down while trying to suppress her laughter. My arms were

barely out of the dress's shoulder straps before she was looping the straps over my wrists and pushing the bra up my arms. Unlike the first time, putting it on seemed to make some sense. With breasts as a guide, it was easy to tell where the band around the chest should fit, and at the same time their bulk kept the lower edge from riding up in the front while she fastened the back.

Taking a deep breath, I drew my shoulders back slightly. It was a reaction to what had already happened. In typical fashion, my body changed without any noticeable transition. One moment the breasts that rose from my chest were large, but still relatively normal. The next they were huge. I looked at Cindy for her reaction and tried to pull my shoulders even farther back.

Her eyes were wide. I could see the whites all the way around her iris. "Umm," she said with a tremor in her voice, "I didn't think they would be that ... that big. Wow." She managed to tear her gaze away and look me in the face. Well, at least for a second she did. "Are they heavy?"

I didn't know about that, but they were certainly large enough to keep me from forgetting they were there. Unlike the first pair that were the same size as Cindy's breasts, these were so heavy that even with the bra on and my shoulders pulled back, I could feel the fold forming along the lower edge of their base due to their size and weight. I kept trying to pull my shoulders farther back to ease the oddity of the sensation. The effect was only marginal, but I still tried.

"I don't know," I finally answered. "They're heavier than the ones I had before, that's for sure." Giving up on trying to minimize their presence by drawing my shoulders back, I let myself resume a more natural posture. I could feel the fold at their lower edge increase dramatically. I immediately pulled my shoulders back again. I wondered idly if this was why women seemed to pay closer attention to posture than men.



Reaching beneath my arms, Cindy expertly unhooked the bra and began to peel it off of me. It caught me off guard. Before, she had circled me long enough to get at the hooks. I jumped, partly from the way the inside of her forearms lightly brushed the sides of my mountainous new breasts as she worked, and partly from the sensation of my breasts dropping and spreading as their support was taken away.

I opened my mouth to protest, even though I did nothing to stop her. I stopped before I spoke, the words catching in my throat as the tips of my breasts became exposed.

They were huge! Not just the breasts themselves, but the aureole and the nipples that rose from their center. If I had thought they were big before, this showed me what “big” really was. The pinkish-brown circles of the aureole were slightly larger than the top of a soda can. The nipples were larger too. They weren’t much longer, but they were bigger around and much more knob like. They dimpled inward at the center, hinting at the mother’s milk within that was their true function.

Even though they were firm and rose from my chest with a pride that seemed separate from me, they were not immune to gravity. I could have made two fingers disappear within the fold at their base. They also spread out to either side without the support of the bra. It made me maintain my new posture. If I didn’t, I could feel their curves along the inside of my biceps as they tried to slide into my armpits.

Not caring that Cindy was watching me, I raised my hands. Using just the tips of my finger, I lightly brushed their curves, trying to gauge the extent of their distention. It was like I had grown two extra limbs. These pendulant mammaries seemed as separate as a foot or an arm. As a hand has fingers and a foot has toes, these breasts had aureole and nipples, separate things that were part of the greater whole. The sensation caused by the trailing touch of my fingers was like summer lightning beneath the skin, sharp and hot, yet distant. Even as I thought that, a shudder ran through me, an echo of thunder that vibrated my whole body with its resonance.

It was Cindy that drew me out of it, gently pulling the black, sequined fabric of the dress between my fingers and my hungering skin. Aware again of more than just the sensation of my touch, I could hear the gulping rush of my own breath, feel my eyes refocus as they brought the world around me into crisp relief.

“It fits,” Cindy said simply. “Now it fits.” Her eyes were adoring and jealous, moist with the possibility of a third emotion hidden in her tears.

We stood together at the mirror again. Looking at our reflections, it almost felt like my prom night again. That is, if I had been the girl in the fancy dress instead of the guy in the tuxedo. And if you ignored the fact that the mid-thigh hem of the sequined dress was a little too racy for a prom. Cindy even was sort of like a big sister helping me get ready for the special night.

The moment didn't last. "Your arm hair and your pits are really spoiling the look here, Mark." Her nose wrinkled and she looked like she had smelled something rancid.

"I'm not shaving my arms or my armpits, either one," I said firmly. "You'll just have to live with the disappointment." My eyes were locked on my image in the mirror. I wouldn't have admitted it to her, but she could probably have talked me into shaving the hair off, just to see how I would look without it. I was as put off by how it looked as she was.

"I wonder ..." she mused. While I continued to ogle my reflection, Cindy went over to her roommate's dresser and opened one of the drawers. I could see just a hint of colorful undergarments from where I stood. "Tracy told me once she went through a stage where she wanted to be Rogue from the X-Men movie. She wore formal gloves all the time. I've never seen her wear them, but ..." She pulled a pair of arm-length gloves out of the drawer like a magician making a rabbit appear out of a hat. "Ah-ha! I thought she might have a pair of these tucked away in here."

She held the arm length gloves out to me, and I eyed them dubiously. "They don't match the dress." Made of a lime green stretch fabric, they were ugly incarnate.

Cindy didn't wait for me to agree. Walking to my side, she began to put them on me with an ease that must have come from a childhood spend dressing dolls. They were so long that they even covered my biceps. "Don't worry about it. You only have to put them on for a second or two to fix your arm hair."

As good as her word, she put them both on me, then stripped them back off again. The effect was dramatic, if less so than sprouting breasts the size of cantaloupes. Not only was all my arm hair gone, but my hands and arms were decidedly more feminine. My fingers especially seemed thinner and longer than before. I kept staring at the tips of my fingers, expecting to see nail polish there, and nagged by a sense that something about the nails had changed that I couldn't quite put my finger on. So to speak.

With that done, her imagination seemed to be spent. I posed in front of the mirror. It would normally have seemed ridiculous, mostly because I exaggerated it, trying to get a laugh. The result was far from comical. I oozed sex appeal, even with my shorter hair, hairy armpits and needing a shave. I don't know how Cindy felt, but she stared as much as I did. Maybe even more than me.

I don't know how long I stood there posing in every position I could think of, but eventually the silence between us began to bug me. I began to get embarrassed, and even a little worried about what Cindy might tell people. The whole thing was just too fantastic to keep a secret, or so it seemed to me at the time.

"Do you have a spare razor?" I found myself asking her, not knowing where the words were coming from. "I've come this far. I could at least shave my face."

She had a new disposable razor in her closet, so I dry shaved in the privacy of her room. I surprised myself by shaving off the sideburns I had begun to become fond of. After I did my face and neck, I quickly shaved under my arms too. Cindy

was sensitive enough to how fragile my mood was that she didn't say anything about that. She just helped brush me down and swept the floor, making sure that all the hair I had removed ended up in the trash and not on the dress. It wasn't exactly my sexiest moment ever.

Without saying anything to spoil the fragile moment, she got out her makeup kit. Looking into her eyes, I could see the question there, and I gave in with a kind of internal shrug. What was a little makeup? I had come too far to not finish the journey. I sat on the edge of the chair to her desk while she applied multiple coatings of various types of cosmetics. After everything else that had happened, I expected what she was doing to change my face somehow. It didn't seem to though. Well, almost. The flesh-colored makeup did remove the last traces of stubble rather than just conceal it. As for the shape of my face itself, Cindy reassured me that except for the hair, it was the same as before. It just looked different because of the makeup.

With the towel Cindy had draped around my neck to protect the dress from any stray makeup as it was applied, I started to stand. I wanted to see how I looked in the mirror. With a light touch on my shoulder, she kept me from rising and began to play with my hair. I had kept it really short for a long time, and had only decided to grow it a little longer in the last six months. Mostly that was because I spent my money on other things than haircuts, but also because I was tired of the near crew cut I had sported all through high school and my first years of college. As a result, my hair was about six inches long all over, and it wasn't cut in any style at all.

Using mousse and gel and curlers along with the more familiar brush and comb, Cindy spent even more time with my hair than she had with the makeup. Part of me worried that after I changed back, I would still have to work to return my hair to normal and remove the makeup. I would have to be thorough too, or someone might notice.

By the time Cindy let me stand up and face the mirror again, I looked like a different person. Not only my body was female, but my face was too. Don't get me wrong; it was still the same face I had been looking at in the mirror for years, but the makeup gave it a decidedly female appearance. The lipstick made my lips seem wider and fuller. My eyes looked bigger and my eyelashes looked longer. As for the blush, it made my cheekbones seem to pop right out. It was like a 3-D movie. The complete removal of my facial hair made the most dramatic difference all by itself, as did the curl and volume she had added to my hair.

All of that was just icing on the cake compared to the rest of the changes, but it made it all new again. With nothing obviously masculine to ruin the transformation, there was no denying that I was gorgeous. By any standard, I was a woman. A sexy, skinny, big breasted, wide-hipped, drop dead knockout of a woman.

As I looked at myself, my thighs tightened and my knees drew in slightly, a natural attempt to deny the wet warmth I could feel building in my groin. Even that slight motion seemed to increase the allure of my reflection.

“Wow,” Cindy said finally. “I’m glad you don’t look like that all the time. No one would even glance at me.”

“Ha! Like that would ever happen,” I countered, not looking away from my reflection. At least I still sounded like myself. “You have to know how popular you are. You’re probably the single most attractive woman on campus. I’m just ...” I held my hands out to my reflection, searching for the right word for a moment before I found my thought. “I’m all body. I mean, you did a good job with the makeup, but my face isn’t pretty at all. If it wasn’t for the makeup, I would still look like a guy.”

The glance she gave me was part pity and part annoyance. “No, really. I really do think you look attractive, and no matter how good-looking I might be, guys just seem to forget when someone better looking walks into the room. I wouldn’t want to have to compete with you.” Her eyes ran over my body, from curled hair to high heel-clad feet. “Not if you looked like this.” She poked me in the ribs, making me jump slightly. “And your face, damn it, really is pretty. You could stand to grow your hair out a little more, and your neck is a little too thick to be graceful, but neither of those things really detract from your overall appearance.

I pouted and turned to my right slightly, looking at the profile of my body in the mirror. “I suppose so.”

The pause before she spoke was electric. “I could pluck your eyebrows. Thinning them out would make your face look really feminine. I really could take you out then. I don’t think anyone would recognize you as it is. Doing your eyebrows would make a huge difference.”

I considered it, but only for a second. “No way. My face still looks too much like me. Besides, I’m already going to have to hide the fact that I shaved under my arms until the hair grows back. I can’t exactly hide a pair of plucked eyebrows, can I?”

Just then, as Cindy opened her mouth to answer, an amazing thing happened. As I was smoothing the fabric of the dress over my newly wide hips, the ring on my left hand fell off, sounding like a single wind chime as it bounced to a rest on the floor. I stared at it like I had never seen a ring before and this one had just fallen out of the sky at my feet.

I think Cindy asked me something, but I didn’t hear it. “Mark?” I heard her ask in a quavering voice, finally breaking me out of my stunned immobility. “Mark, are you OK?”

I wondered how long she had been repeating my name. “I’m fine,” I answered woodenly. “Just fine.” I shook myself and looked at her with a grin. “At least something good came out of this.” I bent down long enough to retrieve the ring from the floor. “See? The ring came off. I bet it was the gloves that did it. I think it made my fingers smaller.”

“Probably,” she conceded, still looking concerned. “Mark, are you sure you’re OK? You really seemed to zone out for a second there.”

“I’m fine,” I said. I couldn’t seem to stop smiling. “I’m just relieved to have the ring off. I was beginning to think I was just going to have to live with wearing it the rest of my life.”

Walking across the room to her dresser and setting the ring on top of it was one of the best moments of the semester up to that point, just like the panic of that morning was one of the worst. I had been considering getting the damn ring cut off, even though I had been afraid to do it. The thought of having something that could cut off a band of metal used near my fingers gave me the creeps. Having the ring just fall off like it did was a huge relief to me. Cindy probably had no idea what a favor she had done for me by talking me into our little dress-up session.

“So, you’re sure I can’t talk you into going out like this?” she wheedled. She put her hands over her head and began to dance in a way that made me pay close attention to the way her body moved. “Maybe go dancing? You would be the life of the party! Everyone would want to dance with you.”

“Um, no.” Watching her dance was making me horny. I knew the feeling from long experience, but the reaction of my body was still shockingly new. I could feel a dull ache in the tips of my breasts that accompanied the warm, damp heat between my legs. I was especially aware of the smooth sensation of building moisture. I was like my insides were sweating with anticipation, and it unnerved me.

I think that maybe Cindy sensed my arousal. Either that or her next suggestion was fate’s way of teasing me. “You know, Mark, I have a vibrator,” she said coyly. She lowered her head slightly and looked up at me through her thick eyelashes. “You could use this as a chance to find out what it really feels like to be a woman. I mean, you’re female now, but if you had an orgasm while your body is like this, how could you not feel like a woman? Wouldn’t that be fun?”

I’m not sure to this day why she suggested it. I know now that she wasn’t a lesbian or anything. Maybe it was just part of a phase that so many young women experience in college, that need to experiment sexually with other women. Or maybe she was overcome by the power of having transformed me into a woman. Or maybe it was the thought of watching a man get himself off while in the body of a woman. Or maybe she genuinely thought I would benefit from the experience. I don’t know why she asked, and now I never will.

Maybe if she and I had downed a couple of beers together as women first, I would have done it. Or maybe if she had just mentioned that she had a vibrator and kept the rest of her thoughts to herself. Or maybe if right as she stopped talking, a couple of girls hadn’t chosen that moment to walk past the closed and locked door of her room, laughing and talking loudly about the “lame” guys that had been hitting on them at some party. Or maybe if the thought of putting a vibrator inside of myself hadn’t led me to wonder what it would feel like to be filled with the throbbing member of a flesh and blood man instead.

For whatever the reason, I had reached my limit.

“We’ve been lucky,” I said as I began to strip off the dress. “I should change back now. Your roommate or one of your friends could stop by any minute. I’m

surprised no one has been by to see you. It would only take one person knocking at the door to tell you about their night out to ruin things.”

“That did sound like Mindy and Jane in the hall,” Cindy conceded. “I wouldn’t be surprised if they stop by later to tell me about their night.”

Even so, she didn’t do anything to help me undress. It was up to me to remove the dress, shoes, garter belt stockings and thong. As each piece of clothing came off, I felt more and more exposed. It was literally true, or course, but part of me felt like I was also exposing my own most perverted thoughts to Cindy, the most popular girl in the dorm. It was like I had conjured the overlarge breasts, wide hips and narrow waist from my own erotic fantasies and put them on display for her to see. It made me feel like a pervert. Only the knowledge that I would be back to normal as soon as the thong came kept me calm. Besides, I also knew she was as responsible as I was for how I looked. Maybe more so; she was the one that picked out the clothes for me to put on.

When I was wearing just the thong, I hesitated with my thumbs in the waistband. Just as my socks and T-shirt had changed to fit me when I first put on Cindy’s jeans, the thong had changed to fit my wider hips when I put on the dress. I looked at Cindy. She seemed sad. Her expression told me she didn’t want things to end so quickly. I felt bad for her, but only for a second. It was my body, and it was me that would be the center of attention if anyone caught us. I would be the one to pay the bigger price.

With that thought in mind, I took off the thong.

Nothing happened. My hips were still wide, my waist was still narrow, the twin mountains of my breasts still rose firm and heavy from my chest, and most importantly of all, the space between my legs was still empty.

Cindy panicked before I did. She reached out, lifting my breasts, touching my arms and legs, circling me like a moth darting around a flame, her fingers flitting over my skin. “Oh no! You’re missing something. You must still be wearing something. This can’t be right!”

Her panic helped me stay relatively calm. My only reaction was to tremble like a leaf in a windstorm. “I took it all off,” I insisted. “I’m not wearing anything. I should have changed back. Why didn’t I change back?”

She looked me in the eyes, and her face erupted with a grin and a sigh of relief. “The makeup,” she said. “You’re still wearing makeup. It got rid of your facial hair, so it must be preventing your transformation.” She practically dove into her closet. “I’ve got some makeup remover here. You’ll be back to normal in no time.” She pulled out a white plastic cylinder and opened the flip-up top. Even in shock as I was, I blinked at the label. They were baby wipes. “Here,” she said, holding a white, moist wipe out to me.

“It’s a baby wipe,” I said, wondering for a moment if the whole day wasn’t just one long, drawn out hallucination. Baby wipes?

“I know,” she said. Rather than wait for me to take it from her, she began to use it like a washcloth, wiping frantically at my face. “It sounds stupid, but they

work great to take off makeup. Hold still. It will sting if I'm not careful with your eyes."

She spent several long minutes working on my face. Having something do with her hands seemed to calm her, while I became more upset with my eyes closed and nothing to do but wait while she worked. As I looked at the inside of my own eyelids, the sensations of my body stood out as abnormal. I stood there, shaking, hyperaware of the dull weight of my exposed, sensitive breasts. My ass felt like it was a mile wide, and my hips felt like they were four sizes too big for the rest of my body. As Cindy worked, I kept checking those sensations, waiting for that moment when I would suddenly find myself tall, normally proportioned and breastless.

My breathing became more and more ragged as the minutes dragged on. Cindy went through a second, third, and then a fourth wipe. Swearing more forcefully each time I heard her pulling another one from the container, she went over every inch of my face and neck several times. Finally, she gave up. "This isn't working," she whined. "I don't understand."

I opened my eyes and looked down at myself. My eyes told me what my nerves already had told me: my body hadn't changed back yet. "Where are the wipes?" I asked. "You must have missed a spot." Seeing the wipes on her bed, I picked them up and moved to the mirror over her dresser, forsaking the full-length mirror at the door. As short as I had become, I could only see my head and shoulders in the mirror over the dresser. That was enough for me. I pulled out a new wipe, to make sure she hadn't missed any spots.

I stopped before I had even begun. Dropping the wipe on top of the dresser, I began to poke and prod my face with the tips of my fingers. "My face," I whispered so softly, I'm not sure I spoke aloud at all. "What happened to my face?" I said more loudly, making sure Cindy could hear me. "You told me the makeup didn't actually change my face! What happened?"

"I was wrong," she said simply. "It changed, just like the rest of you."

My face was still my own, but there were differences. The makeup was gone, but the effects it had created remained. My lips were fuller and wider. They even had those twin peaks at the center of the upper lip that I had always found so attractive. My cheekbones seemed wider and more prominent. My eyes were ... odd. Except for fuller, longer lashes, nothing else about them stood out as being changed, and yet they were. They seemed bigger and softer somehow. Like everything else about me, they were definitely feminine.

I looked at the hair that was artfully arranged around my face, and I felt a surge of hope. "My hair," I said, moving my eyes to Cindy's reflection in the mirror. She had moved to stand just behind me, and she was enough taller than me that I could see her clearly. "It's still styled. If it changed just like my face and the rest of my body, then the hairspray and mousse are preventing it from uncurling."

Her face filled with the same hope that was pounding through my veins. "So if we wash your hair, you should go back to normal." She seemed to slump with the

words, relaxing from the edge of the near panic we had both shared. "I'll let you borrow my robe, and then you can take a shower ..."

"Where?" I demanded. "In the women's bathroom? Are you going to run lookout for me in case it works and I change back to normal? And I'm not going near the men's bathroom. Not looking like this. Not with Cole snooping around."

"Cole?" she asked.

I nodded, remembering that I hadn't told her. "He knocked on the door when you left to get the bra with the really big cups. I managed to keep him out, but he knows something is up."

Cindy's lips twisted. "I don't think he'll guess the truth."

"He will if he sees me like this," I said, gesturing down at myself. "He'd have to be some kind of idiot not to."

She sighed in exasperation. "I guess you're right. So, what do we use for water? I don't want to waste bottled water just so you can wash your hair."

I turned to face her, more than a little upset. I was tempted to point my tits at her and ask her which was more important, her stupid supply of bottled water or me getting back to normal. Instead, I had an idea. "I've seen you in the hall on your way to take a shower before."

Her face closed like a door and she folded her arms tightly. "OK, so you've seen me in my robe. What's your point?"

I wasn't sure why she was so upset by me just telling her that I had seen her on the way to the bathroom to take a shower. Sure, her robe was a little skimpy, but she was the one that had decided to wear it into the halls. She had also just recently suggested that I borrow it from her to wear. Why was me wearing it in the halls OK, but me seeing her in it in the halls somehow upsetting to her?

All of which proved that no matter what I might look like at that moment, I was no woman; I wasn't crazy enough to understand them.

"I wasn't thinking about your robe. I was thinking about that bucket you use to carry your stuff in."

She relaxed, seeing what I meant right away. Cindy and a couple of the other girls used plastic buckets to carry their various soaps, lotions, and other toiletries to and from the showers in the bathroom. Emptied of its normal contents, it would double as a way to get water into the room and a basin to wash my hair in.

She reached into her closet and pulled out the kimono-like robe I had seen her wearing in the halls on more than one occasion. It was flirty and bordered on being too short on her. On me, it came almost to my knees. It hung loose on me as I belted it around my narrow waist. Trying to judge how much smaller my waist was now by trying to fully encircle it with my two hands, I wondered why my body changed to fit some clothes, and other times it didn't change at all. The dress had me especially confused. My hips had widened to fit into it, but even when I had breasts, they hadn't grown in size to fit into it.

While I had been thinking those thoughts, Cindy had emptied her bucket of its normal contents and moved to the door. She unlocked it, then paused to look me over with a weak grin. “The next time you see me in the hall in my robe, just remember that I’ve seen you in it, and that you filled it out pretty well, too.”

She added a wink, and then I was alone in the room again. This time I didn’t wait for Cole to arrive before I locked the door.

I paced to pass the time, expecting Cole to make another attempt to talk to me. He didn’t, and I was glad. It was unnerving enough to look down and see the way the robe tented out at the chest, my large, firm nipples clearly outlined beneath the thin, silken fabric. I kept stopping as I paced, upset by the way even that slow, simple motion made the weight of the breasts I had sprouted shift from side to side.

I never paused for long though. As soon as the disturbing motion would stop, my mind would fill with questions about what would happen to me if I really was stuck as a woman. Would I get thrown out of school? Harassed? Beaten up? What about my parents? Would they still love me? Would they disown me? At that point, the immediate reality of the soft touch of fabric brushing my thighs and the heavy, pendulous dance of my enormous mammaries would make me aware that I was pacing again. I would blush with the way my hips rolled as I walked, guessing without knowing how good I must look from behind as I moved. I would stop then, and the whole cycle would start over.

I panicked when I heard a jingle followed by the metallic sawing sound of a key entering the lock. I was certain for a moment that it was Cindy’s roommate coming back to the room for the night, but it was just Cindy with the bucket of water. I sighed and nearly folded in half with relief. I hadn’t even seen her take her keys with her. It wasn’t until after she had picked up the bucket, moved it inside the room and then closed the door that it occurred to me that I had been standing in the middle of the room and the door had been wide open. If anyone had been walking by just then, they would have seen me clearly.

“If anyone asks,” she said folding the carpet back in front of her dresser so she could put the bucket down on the room’s floor tiles instead of the carpet, “I wanted to wash some of my delicates. It’s even true. I’ve been meaning to wash out some of my pantyhose and delicates that I shouldn’t do in the washers. I’ll use the water when you’re done with it. No one will suspect a thing.”

“Except I’ll have wet hair.” I didn’t even want to consider what would happen if this didn’t work. I tried to ignore my frazzled nerves as I stripped out of the robe I had borrowed.

Cindy seemed to feel the same way. She got out a towel, folded it a few extra times, and set it on the floor tiles by the bucket. She looked at the confusion on my face and shrugged. “It’s for you to kneel on. The floor is pretty hard. You can use it to dry your hair when you finish, and have a hair drier too.”

We were standing pretty close. I was more than a little reluctant to get started. We had thought that the makeup was only thing preventing me from changing back. I didn’t even want to think about what it would mean if nothing happened

after I rinsed out all the hair products that were holding the curl and styling in my hair. I lingered in the moment, basking in Cindy's comforting proximity. Even the fact that she was taller than me made me slip backwards ten years. It was like she was my mother, tall and all made out of soft curves, the epitome of feminine comfort. Only my nudity and the stark reality of my own feminine curves kept me from hoping she would embrace me.

I did eventually kneel. I stuck my head in the bucket, half-tempted to put my head all the way in and drown myself out of pure shame at what I had done to myself. I could try and fool myself that it had been Cindy's doing, but I knew in my heart that I had been just as eager as she had been to find out what would happen when I put on her clothes.

Washing out my hair was like an echo of waiting for Cindy to take off the makeup. We both scooped water and scrubbed at my scalp, but after several minutes, it was obvious that my body wasn't reverting back to normal.

Eventually, we had to give up, and I pulled my head out of the bucket. Not caring about her carpet, the floor or how much of a mess I was making, I sat back on my heels and tipped my head back staring at the holes in the ceiling tiles. "I'm stuck like this," I said simply. I didn't let myself sob, but I could feel the tears leaking out of my eyes, running backwards along my raised cheekbones and into my ears. I hoped that the water from the bucket hid the fact that I was crying.

I was still kneeling on the towel Cindy had told me I would be able to use to dry my hair, so I was a little surprised when I felt the plush warmth of a towel wrap around my shoulders from behind. Cindy must have gotten another one out of her closet while I had scrubbed frantically at my hair, hoping in vain for a return to normalcy.

She cooed to me like I was fragile, which I suppose I was. "It will be OK, Mark. We'll figure something out." Rubbing my shoulders gently, she used the towel to blot away the rivulets of water that were streaming down from my head and began to dry my hair for me.

"Before your roommate comes back?" I droned hopelessly.

Cindy didn't answer right away. "She won't tell. Tracy is my friend, and she knows how to keep a secret."

"This is an awfully big secret," I pointed out. I looked down at my chest and snorted. I worked my way around on my knees until I was facing Cindy, who clutched the now damp towel to her own chest. I cupped my large breasts and held them up for her to see, as if she could ignore their presence. "Get it? It's an awfully big secret." The laugh that bubbled out of my throat was one step away from a sob.

"Oh, Mark," she said, and I saw that like me, tears were running down her face. "I'm so sorry. This is my mistake. I did this to you."

"No," I said, vowing not to let her feel bad about this. "I did this to myself. You may have made suggestions, but I could have said 'no' at any point. You even asked me if I wanted to stop. Remember? Right after our first scare with the

shorts. After I took off the thong and changed back, you asked if I wanted to stop, and I said ‘no,’ remember?” I put my hands on my face, willing my tears to stop flowing. “I didn’t want to stop. I wanted to see what it would be like if we went all the way.” I wiped my face and reached down to stroke my lower abdomen, wondering if periods and the risk of pregnancy were in my future. “I wanted to see what it would be like to be a woman, and now I know. I will always know, because now I am one.”

She opened her mouth, and I thought for a moment that she was going to argue with me. Instead, she reached around my shoulders, draping the towel over my shoulders like a cape. “It’s still before midnight, but I think you should sleep. Maybe all this will seem more manageable in the morning.” She rubbed my shoulders, then like a dam giving way, she seemed to give in to sadness. “Oh, Mark.”

We hugged then, there on the floor of her room. I suppose if I had been myself and able to watch what we looked like, I would have been aroused by the sight of two women embracing each other tightly, one of them dressed only in a towel that was draped around her shoulder. But I wasn’t myself, and it wasn’t sexual at all.

The two of us cried on each other’s shoulders for several long minutes. Both of us were sobbing like someone had died. Then again, I suppose that was how we both felt. It was that “uh-oh” feeling of dropping a glass and watching it fall, knowing it would shatter when it hit the floor. It was that feeling multiplied by a million times, like the light of a candle made of sadness next to a sun made of despair tempered with pain.

We took our time crying ourselves out, and neither of us seemed willing to be the first to let go. In that time of winding down, I let myself notice how the embrace felt. The plush softness of our four breasts was trapped between us. We leaned into each other, heads on shoulders and arms that bound us with a gentle, unwavering firmness. That part of it felt less like an embrace and more like leaning into someone.

Eventually, we did separate. I could feel the warmth of Cindy’s tears on my neck, just as I could see my tears on hers. Neither of us moved to wipe them away. We knelt there and stared at each other, smiling dumbly at each other and the tears we wore proudly on our cheeks. It made me feel like we were sisters, of a sort. Like being blood brothers, only it was our tears that had mingled and bound us together.

Finally, Cindy wiped at her face and stood up. “Come on. Time for bed. We’ll share mine. I don’t think either of us want to be alone tonight.”

I stood up, blinking in surprise at having forgotten for a moment that she was taller than me now. “But I ... you ...” I stammered, feeling suddenly awkward, wondering if I had misinterpreted our embrace.

“What?” she asked.

“Are you hitting on me?”

I winced as soon as I said it, knowing how stupid it was once I said it out loud. She laughed at me gently. “Don’t be silly, Mark.” She leaned in and spoke to me in

a stage whisper. "Trust me when I say I'm not interested in you that way. Especially not now. As for you coming on to me ..." She looked me over and winked. "It's not like you have the equipment to try anything."

I felt foolish, knowing she was right. "I don't normally sleep in the nude," I said, trying to change the subject. "Do you have some nightclothes I can borrow?"

"Sure," she said cheerfully, and I began to wonder if she was in a little bit of denial. I certainly wasn't feeling chipper yet. "Let me just clean up the water that spilled. Why don't you put my robe back on until I can find you something to wear."

While she got on her hands and knees to mop up water with the towel I had kneeled on, I put her robe back on and used the other towel to rub my hair dry. Even with every last trace of hair product washed out of it, it was still loosely curled. Still avoiding the full-length mirror on the back of the door, I stood near where Cindy worked and used the mirror over her dresser to look at myself. Even without makeup, my face was like a feminine parody of the face I was used to seeing every day. As for my hair, the dryer it got, the more it looked exactly like it had before I used the water to rinse out the gels and mousse that had been used to style it. I wondered if it would grow in with more of the loose curls or if it would grow out straight.

It was then that I saw the ring sitting innocently on the dresser.

I almost fell tripping over Cindy in my rush to get to it. My memory gets a little confused then. Not a big surprise, considering Cindy's shock at being tripped over, my excitement, and my inability to do much more than babble like an idiot. Somehow I ended up clutching the ring in both hands, the bucket tipped over and drenching the carpet, with a shocked, concerned Cindy standing next to me as we both ignored the puddle of water we stood in. I eventually managed to make enough sense for Cindy to understand at least one or two words of what I was saying.

"The ring?" she said, finally understanding. Her eyes widened with understanding. "The ring! It didn't fall off until we finished getting you all made up. That's got to be it!"

"Yes!" I said, practically screaming, clutching the ring in my hand and pressing my hand to my chest, afraid to lose the ring. "Yes, yes, yes!" Cindy and I began to laugh. She clutched my shoulders and we both began to jump up and down like a couple of overexcited high school cheerleaders. It made my breasts bounce too. Each landing made me aware of the way their weight yanked at the skin of my upper chest and neck. The bottom of each bounce ended in a surprisingly non-elastic tug, like the sharp pull of long hair refusing to come out of the scalp it was attached to.

I didn't care. I was certain the ring was my way back to normal.

Eventually the two of us calmed down enough for me to try to slip the ring back on the finger it had come from. Cindy only interrupted me long enough for a quick hug and to untie the belt of her robe which I was still wearing. With that

done, it hung on me loosely enough that there was no way it could restrict a return to normal for me.

As I slipped the ring back on my finger, I stared up at Cindy's face, looking deep into her eyes.

In the instant between one moment and the next, it was Cindy that was staring up at me, and me that was staring down at her. The front of the robe was still slightly open, the belt tie hanging loosely from its loops. The resulting gap left no doubt that I had been returned to normal.

"Mark," Cindy began, her voice husky with the intensity of the emotions and experience we had just shared.

She didn't get a chance to finish whatever she had intended to say. With the luck that had been plaguing me all day, her roommate, Tracy, chose that moment to return from a night on the town. The door opened, the door closed, and suddenly there were three of us standing there in the room. It was the most awkward moment of a night filled with awkward moments.

The silence stretched like a single, flimsy thread. "Cindy," Tracy finally said, her lips turning upwards at the corners, "Isn't that your robe?"

"Um, yes." Cindy casually gripped the edges of the robe, as if to hold on to me. I had my back to Tracy, so she couldn't see the way Cindy used the motion to hide the fact that she was closing the robe, making me aware of how I was exposing myself to her. Without needing any further prompting, I tied the belt of the robe around myself, careful to not make it too tight, unsure of what effect it would have now that I was wearing the ring again.

There was another awkward silence then before Tracy shrugged. "What happened with the water?"



“I was going to wash some delicates. Mark and I ended up goofing around, with me threatening to throw the water at him. I tripped, drenching him for real. See?” She pointed near her feet by the desk. My clothes and sneakers were right where I had put them earlier. They had been drenched, probably when the bucket got tipped over. “I let him borrow my robe, rather than have him sitting around in wet underwear or being naked. He and I were just trying to decide what to do about getting his clothes dry.”

Tracy nodded. It was a plausible enough story, and she seemed to buy it. Then again, aside from the truth she couldn't possibly guess, the only alternative was that Cindy and I had been fooling around. I wasn't handsome enough or cool enough for that to have been very likely. Besides, the ironing board was still out, and the basket filled with Cindy's laundry was still on her bed, adding to the plausibility of her deciding to wash her delicates with me present.

“This could end up looking really bad if somebody finds out,” Tracy said. She looked at me smugly. “Not that I think it would hurt Mark's reputation any.”

“I've been the center of enough rumors and talk for ten lifetimes,” I said for Tracy's benefit as much as for my own. It was certainly true. “I'll do whatever you two want to help fix this.”

Tracy looked at me, then at Cindy. “Any ideas?”

“Just one,” said Cindy. “You were going to do laundry tomorrow, right?” Tracy nodded. “Well, why don't you do it tonight instead? Only one load.” Cindy grinned slyly. “Just some jeans and T-shirts.”

It worked like a charm. Cindy and I did our best to clean up the mess the water had made while Tracy did a load of jeans along with a few T-shirts. Once the load was in the washer, no one would have guessed that my jeans, underwear, T-shirt and socks were mixed in with her clothes. By the time Cindy and I had the water cleaned up and the carpet mostly dry by using hair dryers, Tracy returned with my clothes, still warm from the dryer. My underwear had turned blue from one of her pairs of jeans that had bled dye. All in all, I told her it was a small price to pay for her help.

Cindy and I still had things to talk about, but it wasn't going to happen with Tracy around. Instead of raising any suspicions after we had covered up the truth so well, I left as soon as I gracefully could. We would have many more chances to talk about what had happened. Later.

I had experienced more than enough drama for one night. I was emotionally wrung out, physically tired from helping clean up the water, and ready for bed. Doubt the tired part? Keep in mind that I had to move various pieces of large, heavy furniture so that we could get to all the wet spots with the hair dryers. I also had to move them while wearing a robe that kept trying to expose me by opening at odd moments, as well as by being too damn short. And then move them back.

Cole spoiled my plans for going to bed. He was lounging fully dressed on his bed with his hands behind his head on the pillow. “Hey, buddy,” he greeted me

with a smirk, “that must have been some talk the two of you had. Alone. Together. In her room with the door shut.”

“Stuff it,” I said sharply. “Nothing happened.” I stripped off my T-shirt and threw it in my laundry basket. It took me a moment to remember that the clothes that filled the basket were clean, not dirty. I thought about putting them away, then decided to leave it for the next day. “We just talked.”

“About what? You were in there for almost three hours.”

I checked the clock, thinking he must be wrong. He wasn't. The three of us had done laundry from about 8:30 PM to around 10:00 PM. It was a little after one in the morning. Knowing that doing a load of laundry took an hour and a half to do, that meant that Cindy and I had been alone together for about an hour and a half before Tracy showed up and for another hour and a half while she did her load of laundry. Most of that time had been spent cleaning up the mess the water had made. “She spilled a bucket of water. I was helping her clean it up.” That much was true, and the three of us – Tracy, Cindy and I – had all agreed that we could tell people that much about what happened. I yawned. “It took forever to get it dry with just the two hair dryers. Plus I had to move every piece of furniture in their room. Twice.”

“Sure, Mark. Whatever you say.” He seemed more than a little dubious.

I sighed and played my trump card. “Ask Tracy. She told Cindy it was her mess to clean up and went to the basement to do a load of laundry. I had to help or Cindy would still be trying to dry things out by herself.”

That part made Tracy look a little bad I thought, but it had been her suggestion to tell people that. In fact, that had been why she hadn't come back upstairs after she put her laundry (and mine) in the machine. She really did feel like it had been Cindy's mess to clean up.

“OK then, what did you talk about before that?” Cole asked, still pushing.

I shrugged and started to take off my jeans, thinking better of it when I remembered that my underwear had turned blue in the wash. “Classes. Our professors. Normal stuff. I think she just wanted someone keep her company. You heard her yourself in the laundry room when she said she wasn't really up to spending time with any big crowds tonight.” Leaving my jeans on, I sat on the edge of my bed to take of my shoes and socks. “I think she just wanted to have some quiet conversation without any of the social pressures she usually has to put up with.”

“She closed the door, Mark. She could have had a quiet conversation with you with the door open.”

I laughed, knowing I was on firmer ground now. “Aside from the fact that she was putting her underwear away for at least part of the time and I don't think she wanted to make a show out of it, you know as well as I do that her room doesn't remain empty for long when she's in it with the door open.”

It was true. People from every floor of our dorm and even some of the other dorms managed to find ways to end up in her room if she left the door open. I felt

a frown form as I thought about it. I wondered how many people besides Cole had been outside the door to her room while we had been having our odd little adventure.

Cole conceded the point. "True enough." He seemed about to let it go, then pulled himself upright with a sigh. "Come on, Mark. At least pretend you made out with her, for my sake. I need something to dream about. Throw me a bone here!"

"Don't you mean 'a boner?'" I teased.

"Come on, Mark," he pleaded, "be a guy. Dude. Buddy. Bro. Don't leave me with nothing!"

Pushing my shoes beneath my bed with the heel of my foot, I punched my pillow two or three times and then put my head down with a sigh. I curled into a loose ball on one side and closed my eyes. I wanted nothing more than to sleep, but I decided to take pity on him. "I got to hold one of her bras."

"Really?" he said, thrilled by my revelation.

"Really," I confirmed.

There was a long pause, and I began to think I was off the hook for the night. "What size was it?"

I almost told him. The words, "It was a 32 C," were right on the tip of my tongue, but I held back. I wasn't sure why at first, but then I thought about the second bra I had worn. That one had been a 32 DDD. How happy would I be if I was a woman and every guy in the dorm was whispering my bra size to each other behind my back whenever I walked by? I could almost hear the debates of super-size versus anything-more-than-a-handful-is-a-waste. "I don't know," I heard myself lie. "She didn't say, and I wasn't going to ask her."

"Didn't you check the tag?"

"No," I said simply, hoping that would be enough.

"Oh," he said, obviously let down. After a long silence, I heard him get up and take off his clothes. The light went out, and he went to bed.

It was a long time after that before I finally fell asleep.

That was a long time ago. It wasn't the only time I tried on women's clothes. In fact, Cindy and I spent more than one weekend at a hotel alone together, testing the boundaries of what the ring could do. We never did find a limit, no matter what we did.

After that day, I found that I could take the ring off whenever I wanted to. I suppose it would be more interesting for me to claim the ring had a mind of its own, but after the first time I was able to take it off, it never seemed like anything more complicated than an on-off switch. With it on, I had the strange ability to be transformed by whatever piece of clothing I happened to be wearing at the time. With it off, I was stuck with whatever proportions I had at the moment I removed

it. At those times, I wore the ring on a matching necklace I bought just for that purpose.

Not that it was a happily-ever-after kind of thing. I had to get a haircut the next day to avoid questions about my missing sideburns. Luckily, Cole hadn't noticed that I had shaved them off. Harder to hide was my lack of armpit hair. My hair there didn't finish growing back until after the end of the semester, forcing me to wear at least a T-shirt at all times until a few weeks into summer vacation. Basketball with the guys was out until the fall semester of my Junior year.

More difficult for Cindy and I to explain was why she had borrowed the 32 DDD bra from Sherrie. We ended up begging her to keep it a secret, which she did ... mostly. Some of Cindy's close friends found out what Tracy had seen and what Cindy had borrowed from Sherrie and came to the conclusion that I was a cross-dresser. It worked out OK, because they always made excuses for both of us when we went on one of our weekend hotel excursions. I even suppose it was true in a way. I was wearing women's clothes in private with Cindy, although it was hard to think of myself as a crossdresser when I had breasts and a vagina.

And yes, we eventually gave in to curiosity and experimented with sex. Looking back, it's odd to think the only times we were physically intimate where when we were both women. Not once did she show interest in me as a man. As far as I know, I was the only woman she was ever with, and I know more about her than most people. Even her husband can't understand why she and I were so close.

During summers and after college, I kept the ring on its chain around my neck. After a few years, it occurred to me that I never used the ring anymore. I didn't need to. I had outgrown the wonder of it, worrying only that I would lose it, or that someone would catch me on those few times I did use it. I got a safety deposit box and put it away. I haven't even thought about it in years.

Which brings me to today. I just got home from the cemetery. The grass and the rain have finally erased the last signs of the hole they made there. The flowers I took her will keep for a few days, I hope. I refuse to put plastic flowers on her grave.

A woman so beautiful deserves to live forever, or at least to see old age, but she won't. With a husband, three small children and a garden filled with flowers that will miss her loving care, Cindy passed from this world she loved so much. She was my friend, and she helped me through the most difficult experience of my life. We found humor in the shared memory of it, and a sisterhood no one else will ever fully understand. If not for her, I would have gotten rid of the ring as soon as I learned what it could do.

She was only thirty-five. Thirty-five! It's too much for me to bear. Please God, take it back. I know she was in constant pain from the cancer that was eating away at her insides, but I want my friend back. Her family needs her. I need her.

Please.

Her will was read earlier this week. I'm sure her family wondered about the oddity of the sealed, oversized suitcase she left me. It was the only thing be-

queathed to anyone outside of her immediate family. I finally worked up the nerve to open it earlier today, just before I went to the cemetery. It was filled with an assortment of dresses, shoes, lingerie and makeup. It also contained a simple note:

*Tell her that I want her to come visit me.*

*I love you both.*

*Best friends forever,*

*Cindy*

How can I refuse my best friend's last request? I know she thought I worked too much and played too little. Maybe she knew that I would miss her, and that dressing up in her clothes and watching my body become a near duplicate of her own would let me feel closer to her somehow. That it might be the best, and maybe the only, way for me to grieve her death.

In college, I was average, and she was the woman that every man wanted. In spite of that, we became as close as two people can become. As friends, she was loyal and kept my most precious secret as her own. As family, she insisted that I become the godfather of her children, even though neither of us were Catholic. I was, she had once confessed to me, more dear to her than anyone except her husband. "Maybe not even him," she had added with a wicked grin.

In spite of our differences, our friendship always seemed to work without any effort at all. After that one night, it was as if we had always been best friends, sharing one another's secret hopes and dreams. Maybe it was the ring that made it happen. Just as it could change my body to fit into the skimpiest thong or the tightest dress, maybe it changed my mind to make me into the kind of man that fit as Cindy's best friend.

Not that I believe that in anything more than the metaphorical sense. My family never noticed anything different about me. Neither did any of my friends from high school, and I'm still close with several of them. If anything, I think it was a catalyst that forced me to be more honest with Cindy than I've ever been with anyone in my entire life. It's hard to hide your true self from someone that's watched you change from a man into a woman in the space between one heartbeat and the next.

It had to have happened the way it did, or I would never have shared this burden, this most dangerous of secrets. Only now, for the first time, am I alone with it. Only I know the truth, and now these words, this ink stained paper. Each letter is a tear, a memory of the beauty that was a one of a kind friendship.

How can I say no to her? It was her final wish, the last thing she will ever say to me. Tomorrow I will go to the bank and get the ring out of the safe deposit box. I will put it on, and change into the clothes she packed so carefully for me to wear. I'll go to visit her, and make sure that the flowers I left today are still fresh.

But the ring isn't the only thing in that safe deposit box. The pictures she took of me I will leave behind for safekeeping, although I don't doubt that I will linger

over them for a while. Especially the one I left on top, next to the envelope with the ring inside.

It's a picture Tracy took of Cindy and me during spring break of our Senior year. We are on a beach with our arms wrapped around each other's shoulders. Cindy was wearing a bright red bikini, and I was wearing a bikini that was identical except for its tropical floral print. To anyone except me or Cindy, it would look like a picture of two close friends having fun on the beach on a beautiful day. That's exactly what it was, too, except that it was also so much more.

Cindy told Tracy that I was a high school friend of hers when she dragged me along. I didn't expect Tracy to fall for it, but she did. So did the other six girls that went with us to Florida. All of them knew me as Mark, and yet not one of them suspected that the petite, curvy brunette with the short hair that Cindy bought along was really me. I thought for sure that my voice would give the truth away, but it didn't. It was a good thing, too. Concerned that the ring might get lost or stolen while we were in Florida, Cindy talked me into leaving it at home. If any of them had figured out the truth, I would have been stuck as a woman until we got back to school.

I spent the whole week as a woman named Marla. A lot of things happened that are too precious and too secret for me to put even on these pages. Cindy and I both had a lot of fun, but she could tell that for me, it had been more than just a good time. When we got home, Cindy and I had a long talk about what it would be like if I lived out my whole life as a woman. I decided against it in the end, but it was a near thing. Cindy was there for me every step of the way, letting me sort out my feelings and letting me know that she would be there for me no matter what.

The picture is a memento of that week, the best week of my life. Cindy and I both have a copy of it. I signed hers, and she signed mine. Hers is buried with her, just like she wanted. The note I wrote reads, "For Cindy, my Best Friend Forever. Love, M." The note she wrote on my copy of the photo reads, "Best Friends Forever. - Cindy. PS - Here's to a perfect fit!"

And we were.

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