

Polymorph 2



Dee Dee Perri



A "New Woman" Novel



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Becoming Whole

By Dee Dee Perri

Chapter 1

I hadn't been on the west coast in southern California since, well, nine months in the future when I went, as a marine, to Camp Pendleton for advanced training in '05. It was a rugged piece of cliff side landscape just north of Dana Point overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Twenty acres of prime oceanfront deemed too unstable to allow building structures upon it. Such property was unavailable today, not with the California Coastal Commission's mandate to preserve and protect the coastline. But Marty had bought the land long before the Coastal Commission existed, shortly after the Civil War. And the house, embedded into the cliff, did not legally exist in this era. The fiction that it was a pristine undeveloped strip of land was just that, a fiction paid in ordinary currency to ordinary mortals. Most *People* had such a hobbit hole hidden away, a refuge in times of uncertainty.

Marty was certain that by this time Ruth was alerted to the fact that he had stolen *her* polymorph and would by now have figured out something of his intentions. It wouldn't take long for her to go the next step and to conclude that Marty intended to harvest that ocean of raw magic. And once she did that, the whole Council would direct all of its considerable powers to stop him. And when that happened, he, Marty Meeks, had better have solved the problem of securing and manipulating that raw magic or he would be destroyed. He'd understood the risk that he was running from the first instant the idea had formed in his head but the allure of Godhood, to be Thor or Zeus re-born, how could he not aspire to that goal? Even the *People* would bend their knees to his will, his perfection. And the Counsel? He didn't need no stinking Counsel, they would be the first to be destroyed if he succeeded.

And thus began his experiments to discover how he could get this goose to lay her golden eggs. The most immediate problem was my polymorph state, that profound passivity. And yet that spell was formed of pure raw magic. To tamper with that was to risk everything. He floundered around for several weeks, it was now near the end of March, and he was no closer to a solution than when he began.

He finally began giving me lessons in 'conjuring' of the most elementary sort. As a polymorph I was passive and unlikely to take advantage of any significant advantage I might gain and the fact that he was male gave Marty overwhelming influence over my desires, I was his to command. But one cannot command what one cannot see, those flaring incandescent ribbons, so vivid to Marty, were and remained invisible to me. As Ruth had predicted, I was capable of enhancing my physical charms but only by following Marty's guiding words. It was more like a blind woman painting a landscape guided by Marty's eyes and mind. I had always wanted to be beautiful ever since the polymorph spell had been first applied back in

twenty-fourteen. And I became beautiful but the craftsman was Marty.

Different cultures had different ideas of what constitutes beauty. The hourglass figure so common in human culture, if not entirely universal, signifies both fertility and the capacity to bear young. For the *People* the female ideal was more languid, more focused upon achieving gracefulness than proving the female's adequacy for carry babies. Slender shoulders, hips, thighs and noticeably longer legs that when taken all together created a more willowy figure reminiscent of high fashion models of mortal construction. Indeed it was entirely likely that the *People* had created or controlled the fashion industry for a long time. Few mortal women looked like the *Peoples'* ideal. And those mortals that could achieve that effect had to half starve themselves continuously.

Half-starved mortal females seldom could achieve the fullness of breasts that I now had. Perhaps that was significant. Marty had created in me a physical assemble that no mortal woman could have short of plastic surgery. My breasts were a full 'B' cup and perfect half spheres without the slightest hint of droop. Set against the extremely slender frame, those breasts seemed positively huge without the physical limitations that really large breast would have created. They were effective signals of my femininity without being a burden.

But the ultimate hallmark of beauty for both mortals and the *People* did reside in the face. My eyes were overly large as were my vivid light gray irises. Ghost eyes I called them, haunting and mysterious. Long, thick and very black lashes that would never need mascara, would draw the males attention to those wondrous eyes were they not already drawn to them. And once drawn, they could capture a man's soul, or at least that is what Marty said.

Full lips sat pursed below a well-formed nose and high cheekbones. The latter nose and cheeks gave el-



egance to my face that collided with the obviously sensual nature of the mouth and that conflict only heightened the antagonism between the face and those ghost eyes. Mixed signals of predator and prey; a femininity that hinted that she could be mated by the right male, and yet she would demand his worship as well. As Marty said, a beautiful woman of the *people* was no mere reproductive machine but a force of nature.

Alas, I was still a polymorph; that woman I had become was but a symbol and not my reality. Or to put it more bluntly, I was still a broken baby machine. As close to Marty's sexual ideal as I had come, he still showed no interest in coupling with me. Indeed, the physical perfection he and I had worked out only seemed to make my inadequacies, my mortal human essence, all the more apparent. The only physical change I made in myself without Marty's direction, was my hair.

My hair was outrageous. Thick and full yet perfectly straight, it fell all the way to my round sculpted butt cheeks. It was jet black with natural blue highlights much like one might see on a crow's wing. All that sweet elegance, mystery and sophistication of my face was made vividly more exotic by that wild cascade, not mere hair but a statement. Even Marty thought it was too much, though he liked the effect. He asked me to tone it down but I was no more capable of modifying that spell than Marty. And once completed, he wasn't about to touch the raw magic upon which it existed. Attempts to change the color or to merely cut it off failed, of course. This wasn't ordinary hair but by this time there was really nothing ordinary about my physical being. Or, as Marty said, I had more raw magic wrapped about my person than probably existed in the rest of the world. I was laying those golden eggs for Marty if only he could find a safe way of stripping away that wealth.

He finally focused on the one spell casting that I was able to achieve, my ability to enhance a male's

physical equipment and his libido. We repeated the experiment a half dozen times but Marty learned nothing from those efforts other than the obvious. It was when the male was flagging and I wanted more. It was the greedy little mommy-me seeking seed and yes, that process was working at a very primitive level without my conscious control. I could no more make this happen deliberately than could I not perform this little miracle when the conditions were right. I will always wonder what happened to these subjects after Marty was done with them. He never said and I never asked.

I'll never forget when he brought that woman to me. It was after he'd given up on learning more from the males. A woman? I wasn't designed that way. She was experienced enough and seemed to enjoy the assignment. I was frankly disgusted, revolted and would have fled the encounter had Marty not been there. I was his to command but even he could not make me want her.

I remember lying there, eyes scrunched tightly shut as she worked on my clit. The sensations were pleasurable enough taken out of context of course. But a polymorph was designed for making babies and nothing else and we certainly were not making babies. I was so tense and unresponsive that the woman finally ceased in her efforts. I heard her and Marty talking. It was Marty who suggested that she use a dildo. I heard her slip the device on and I waited for the unwanted intrusion into my personhood.

I gasped when she entered me. The feeling was familiar enough as long as I kept my eyes closed. She began to thrust and retreat with that dildo and I felt my body finally begin to respond. This went on and on, the woman was tireless in her efforts or so it seemed but perhaps even she had her limits. Had Marty been seeking to determine whether or not another female could arouse a polymorph, he had indeed succeeded though only by the greatest efforts. However that was never his ambition, of that I am

sure now. As I began to approach a tentative climax, a fact marked by my more ragged breathing, Marty ordered her to stop her movement and to begin to slowly remove the dildo.

I reacted as I would have to a real male inside me. That loss of motion and the slow retreat triggered that now familiar flow of magic from me to that dildo. The woman shrieked and then leaped away. Her screams continued until Marty spelled her into dumb silence.

I was up on my knees now, eyes wide open, as I looked at that poor woman. Her face was blank, frozen into semi-consciousness by Marty's spell. She no longer held a dildo. An oversized and rigid penis stood where her clit had been. And there, just below that new piece of equipment, hung a hairy pair of balls where her vagina should have been. "I'm so sorry." I said to that blank face. There was no register of input. I looked at Marty, "This is what you wanted, isn't it?"

He shrugged, "You got to break some eggs to make an omelet."

Later, after Marty made some mental adjustments to the poor victim, we completed the sexual act. I never saw her again, but if Marty's left her alive I was sure her whole life would be forever changed. I was but a one-trick pony and Marty, after all his efforts, had still failed to find a way to open the gate to that vast resource to which I was connected.

By the end of April Marty could sense the closing circle, for no matter how much power he personally controlled it was but an insignificant dollop compared to what the Counsel could bring to bear. It was the first of May, two thousand and four, early evening, that the wards surrounding this house began to respond and then abruptly cease to exist. Marty had failed and the Counsel was closing in... tonight. Time had run out. There was one and only one option

remaining; to remove the spell from my body without breaking the connection to that vast pool of energy up time and become a *god*. That he would probably fail was a given. That he and I would die in that act was almost a certainty. So why bother?

Not trying was out of the question; the Counsel would certainly destroy him given what he had attempted. And if he tried and failed... all of this was taking place in a time loop. The loop would re-open and nothing that he had done would have existed... yet. Thus there was no death in that act but a 'do over'. The odds were probably less than one in a million that he would become a god and almost a certainty that the time loop would start over. The potential rewards high and the cost almost nothing.

He bent over me, thrusting his hands deeply inside my body, much as Ruth had once done, my skin was no apparent obstacle to his penetration. And then I felt my essence literally being pulled apart and I screamed.

Chapter 2

It was cold, dark and snowing, which was bad enough since I was standing in my bare feet wearing only the terry cloth robe that I had on when Marty murdered me, but when I turned my head and saw that yellow light from Bobby's room that fell across the snow covered back lawn of the Fenton's house I knew it was worse than merely bad. "Fuck me!" I swore. The temporal loop had started over; it was February 15, two thousand and four, near midnight.

Ok it might not be that precise day and hour but then why not? Why not indeed, those tattered jeans and tee shirt were gone, along with my old body and that was a certainty. Other than the cold everything else was merely hypothetical at that moment. My toes were already numb as I sprinted across the lawn and down the street and, to add insult to injury, my

robe flew open exposing my dancing tits, naked belly and my womanhood as Bobby stepped out on to the front porch of his house. He didn't follow, except with his eyes, as I turned right and headed down Tenth Street. It was more than two miles to my old man's place and I would never make it.

Two blocks later I turned left heading toward the town center. But I already knew even that goal was also out of reach as my feet had become completely numb and my teeth chattered wildly in my mouth. Most of the houses were dark this time of night, ignoring the occasional porch light. But directly ahead I could see the dancing light from a TV in the front room. As if my fate was not already set, a few feet short of that particular front door, I slipped on a patch of ice and fell heavily against that same door. The loud bang was the last thing I remembered for a few moments.

It was an older woman who helped me to my feet and led me into her front room. She was clucking away like an old hen with more questions and comments than I could process. I wasn't just groggy, I was also completely unsure about the whole situation. It would be better to keep my mouth shut or at least to give away as little information as possible. That I was that 'babe' that Marty and I had created was almost a certainty. That magical hair was everywhere, in my eyes, across my face and chest. So telling her that I was Lenny Snider was definitely out for the moment. So who was I? Actually that was a question I would have to ask myself eventually and in depth but certainly not now.

The woman had me wrapped in a warm quilt that seemed a couple of inches thick and had placed my poor feet in a pail of room temperature water which felt really hot, at least initially. Having inspected me for frostbite she concluded that she could safely go to the kitchen and put on some water for tea. All the time she continued to talk and me, I sat there mute.

A couple of minutes later I heard her on the phone. I assumed she was calling the police.

“There,” she said placing a large mug of black tea on the coffee table in front of me.

“That’s very kind,” I said, my first utterance since my timely rescue.

She plopped herself down beside me and patted me on the shoulder, “I’m Mrs. Phillips and you are?”

“Um... I don’t remember.”

“Oh my,” she exclaimed. Her eyes were wide now as she added, “Oh just like in the movies.” And then added, “I never really believed *that* could happen to anyone. You poor dear. Um, where are you from?”

“I... I don’t know,” I responded trying to sound hurt and scared but an actor I wasn’t. “Um ma’am, what year is this?” That was a serious question for me at this moment.

She looked startled, “Year? What a strange question. Two thousand and two.”

“Month?”

“Heavens child, February fifteenth,” She looked at her watch, “um, the sixteenth to be exact, it’s just after midnight. Perhaps I should get you to a hospital?”

“No, no I’m fine, but thank you.”

“We’ll have to wait for my son anyway, I don’t drive. He should be here in a few moments. Um, I don’t want to appear nosey but what the heck is a young lady like you running around in the middle of the night wearing just a bathrobe?”

I let out a long sigh. Questions like this were all too obvious and, frankly, potentially too dangerous until I could fully grasp the situation. I was what, five blocks from a house full of wizards? Well, two and a want-to-be wizard. I laughed, "I would really like to know the answer to that question as well."

That didn't seem to satisfy her at all. She sat there now more nearly on the edge of her seat and didn't seem to relax until the sounds of feet stomping off snow came from the back porch. She turned and yelled toward the kitchen, "Paul, we're in the living room."

That is the moment that I connected her name Mrs. Phillips with that of her son, Paul? The rabbit! I was wide eyed as I listened to his approach.

"Hey Mom, what's the problem?" And then he saw me, or rather, my face - everything else was covered. The look in his eyes said that he approved of what he saw. "Oh...Hi."

I was expecting to hear and feel the freight train of lust and romance; certainly Paul was a hunk now as he had been in high school. The silence inside me was deafening. He was just a guy. No, not just a guy, it was me looking at him as just a guy. I mean it was like... the world before I had been turned into a polymorph. I mean, not only could I say 'no' to this handsome hunk of manhood if he became sexually interested, I wasn't even slightly aroused. Finally I found my mouth, "Um, Hi." He took the seat opposite me and leaned forward with an expectant look on his face. Our gaze met and for the first time in what seemed like eons, my eyes didn't retreat, I held his gaze. Yes, it was obvious he was attracted to me, but then I remembered what Marty had said about my ghost eyes: eyes that could capture a man's soul. His was captured, I could see that. Oh this was looking at the world from a whole new perspective indeed.

Almost as if answering my question he said to his mother, “Mom, she got the prettiest eyes I’ve ever seen.” And then he caught himself, “Sorry,” He extended his hand, “Paul’s my name and you’re...”

“She doesn’t remember,” interrupted his mother and then looked me in the face with more than a little disbelief and added, “Right dear?” She then looked back at her son again, “I heard a loud clunk and when I went outside to see what was happening, she was just laying there on my porch nearly half frozen.”

Paul stood up, “We should call the police.”

“Just my thoughts exactly,” she replied giving me now a decidedly suspicious look.

~000~

Sally Burkhart, I gasped as the young woman in the police uniform entered the living room. She was still a fine looking woman even though that uniform did nothing for her, I’d always loved her wide blue eyes and that luscious smile that rode so readily on her sweet lips, though at the moment she wasn’t smiling and seemed all too much playing the cop to my victim. That she was now a police officer in Perryville wasn’t so much of an odd thing considering her Uncle was the Chief and her old man was a police Sergeant. The whole force probably didn’t amount to more than ten-twelve members. And the look that she threw toward Paul also suggested that their relationship was still ongoing. It also suggested that taking one look at me and then at ‘her’ Paul, I was competition of the worst kind. She need not have worried.

I was far more interested in her than I had been in Paul. I hadn’t looked at a woman this way since I became a polymorph. I was now all but certain my ‘polymorph’ spell was too damaged to function in any meaningful way. On the other hand, that the time loop had been re-initiated, suggested that that con-

nection between me and the future was still functional. I smiled back at her with more lust than friendship. On the other hand, nothing between my legs gave me any encouragement that more than friendship was possible. Heck, screwing Sally was always an impossible dream anyway you dolt!

We were kind of back where we started when she asked me the necessary questions. A total memory failure remained my only defense. And then she reached across and took one of my hands in hers, "You didn't get this manicure here." And before I could respond, "You wouldn't find a job this swell in any of the towns near about either. You, my mysterious lady, live or lived in a big city: Cleveland? Pittsburgh?" She waited for me to answer. I just shrugged. "First things first, mystery lady," she said just before unclipping the radio that rested just below her left shoulder. "Sonny, where in the fuck are you?"

~oOo~

My visit to the local ER went smoothly, that is to say there was no sign of concussion or frostbite. It had been my first ride in a Fire Department emergency vehicle, me laying on a gurney and the lights flashing. Using the siren was a bit over kill considering the roads were utterly empty and I'm sure they woke half the town. Talk about making a quiet entry back into Perryville, well this entry hadn't been exactly quiet thus far. By breakfast time almost everyone would be talking about the Angel-that-fell-from-the-sky. If this didn't get the Fenton's attention, nothing would. On the other hand, it was my impression that wizards had a rather low opinion of mortals in general so perhaps this unwanted attention might very well pass unnoticed.

Probably the most notable event during those hours before dawn on the sixteenth was when Sally Burkhart returned to the ER bearing clothes for me. I was sitting on a gurney wearing a hospital gown, you

know the type, open at the back, when she pushed aside the curtain which was used to divide the ER into 'cubicles', "Here," she said thrusting a paper bag into my hands.

I peeked inside, "Clothes?"

She laughed, "Unless you want to wear that?" She said referring to my hospital gown.

I laughed in response to that comment. I looked up at her waiting for her to leave before getting dressed. But she didn't move. Several seconds passed and still she stood there.

I think she finally caught on to what was happening, "Look were both females here, right? The Chief wants you over at the station, pronto and me personally? I could care less, now get dressed." She folded her arms below her breasts though she did shift her gaze slightly toward the ceiling.

I hopped down off the gurney and untied that gown, letting it drop to the floor. I looked over at Sally. She wasn't looking at the ceiling anymore. I blushed and turned my back. It was like a dream come true, me stripping in front of my mega wet dream. Ok, ok, this particular dream had an odd twist to be sure. Me being female had never been a part of my particular masturbation fantasy.

"Shit," she said.

"Huh?" I half turned, my hand covering my breast as I looked over my shoulder.

"Sorry, um..."

"Um, what?"

She laughed, "I'd trade bodies with you in a heartbeat."

Coming from Sally that was quite a compliment and, to be entirely honest I found her hourglass figure very, very satisfying. I'd also been partial to women with a nice ass and full hips and, for a fact, her tits were probably twice the size of the ones I now sported. She had no reason to feel inadequate. I was pulling on a pair of panties now with my back toward her. "I would make that trade, Officer Burkhart." I put on that bra which must have been one of hers, my breasts rolled around inside with room to spare. I turned as if to show her how wrong she was.

A loopy smile hung on her face, "Unfortunately that isn't going to happen, now is it?"

I was pulling up the blue jeans. Everything was more than a little too large except these jeans. Not that the jeans were tight but rather about three inches too short. They would come almost to mid-calf and I would definitely need a belt to hold them on. I was smaller than Sally in every way except height.

"You make me feel like a cow," she sighed.

"That's hardly true."

She rolled her eyes, "You have the body most girls would die for, sleek and slender. A regular high fashion model and the way you move..."

"What's wrong with the way I move?" I felt suddenly uncomfortable. As a polymorph I was decidedly sluttish at least when a male was present. Was that still true?

"Cat like," she said, "feline, perhaps a snow leopard?"

I laughed in relief; cat-like was cool, way more cool than sluttish. Cats can be both elegant and yet dangerous. If that was what she saw, I could live with that. I slipped into a pair of shoes. Like everything

else they were too big but it sure would beat walking bare foot in the fresh fallen snow. "I'm ready."

~oOo~

More cops were there in the station than would have normally been the case. Most looked like they had been called out of their beds, tasseled hair and bleary eyes suggested that their presence hadn't been entirely voluntary. The Chief was taking this seriously, exactly why I wasn't sure. And my 'continued' memory loss wasn't helping to lower the tension.

It was obvious that I wasn't a local; I had the kind of good looks that would have been noticed years earlier. Ditto that I was here on a visit, unless of course I had just arrived. I'd been there at the station for nearly an hour. Time enough to get finger printed and to have DNA samples taken. Digital images of my face and prints had already been sent back to the FBI facility in Maryland and my DNA would follow via snail mail. It all seemed too intense to me, almost like in this backwater community the cops finally had something to do.

It was during breakfast in the Chief's office that I learned what was going on. Sheriff Sanders and one of his deputy's had just arrived. After introductions, I'd assumed the role of wallpaper, as the gathering became a working group. They'd already gone door to door in the neighborhood and no one yet had reported a young woman as missing. Even highway patrol came up blank. Apparently it was my excessively long, vividly black hair that had so energized Chief 'Sammy' Burkhart initially. He had convinced himself that I was a victim of some human trafficking villains and that my appearance, nearly naked on the streets of Perryville, confirmed that. What better way to transport involuntary sex workers than to keep them ill dressed for the weather?

The more they talked, the more I learned. Such a hypotheses wasn't so farfetched at all. I learned that

there were more human beings in slavery today than any time in the past, more than two hundred million worldwide. Ok, so that hypotheses was notably wrong in my case but telling them I was one Lenny Snider transformed by magic into this luscious babe was slightly more farfetched and, well, it was rather better that I appear as an honest victim.

“I think my name is Mary,” I said interrupting the ongoing discussion. All eyes swung in my direction. I knew that this was the tricky part. The more I said, the more that could be checked against the facts. “I don’t remember my parents at all.” I drew my hands to my lap and interlaced my fingers. Now I realized that I wasn’t ready for this. I needed a story, a good story that might hold up at least long enough for me to disappear. There was no way I could remain here in Perryville for the next twenty months without the chance of being discovered. Drawing in the local police had been almost the worst thing I could do, so much for hindsight.

It was time to retreat back to my initial defense, I covered my face with my hands and sighed, “I just can’t remember anything, ok? I think my name was Mary, I mean, its sounds familiar, maybe it is the name of a friend or even my mother. Heck, I wish I could be of more help. Um, Chief, I’m really exhausted.”

~oOo~

I was going to sleep with Sally Burkhart! Ok, not in the same bed but in the same room. She had twin beds separated by the width of a small table that held a lamp and an alarm clock. What did I do to deserve this? There was a God and he had finally smiled down at me.

It was the accumulation of numerous small things, starting with Sally had been working the night shift and now was the time she would normally sleep. What place better to keep this stranger than in

the Burkhart household for a day or two, with both her and her father on the police force, she would be well protected. And finally, the Chief had assigned Officer Burkhart to keep a vigil on yours truly until something approaching a resolution as to the actual situation was at hand.

We were both still dressed as she pulled down the blinds creating a false twilight. I began removing my clothing but I was far more focused on the beautiful woman on the other side of the second bed, though I pretended to be completely uninterested. I heard the drop of her heavy utility belt as I turned to lay the sweater on the chest of drawers before unhooking my bra and placing it on top of the sweater. I looked over my shoulder and saw her, now all but naked, with her back to me as she hung her uniform in the closet. There was absolutely nothing wrong with what I saw. The slender back fell to well-rounded hips and a bottom that I had always wanted to see thus exposed. That penis in my brain had awakened but between my legs the response was so out of step, so completely wrong. My male mind wanted to stick something into her sexy body, that was a pretty normal experience, but my female groin was only capable of receiving such attention.

She must have caught me looking at her because in the next instant I was returning her gaze. I so wanted to look down at her breasts but I felt compelled to return her gaze. "There are night clothes in the second drawer. Um, nothing very sexy I'm afraid."

"Oh," I said turning away and opening the drawer. There were a couple of flannel nightgowns, "which one do you want?"

"Whatever," She said.

I turned and tossed the red one across the two beds, and enjoyed the view. Large conical breasts capped in with what looked like brown sugar, both breasts had a distinct downward cast as gravity did

what gravity did. Welts from her sports bra were still evident on her chest. As I examined her she examined me.

“Still willing to switch bodies?” She said with a laugh.

“You bet.”

“Aw, that’s so sweet Mary.”

I grinned and climbed into bed. I could show her exactly how sweet I could be but honestly I knew that wasn’t going to happen. I’d hardly fluffed up my pillow and adjusted my gown, sheets and hair when I heard a soft snore coming from the other bed. I lay there for the longest time. At first I was thinking of her and what it would be like to take her into my arms, to suck those delicious breasts and explore that cleft between her legs. But as time passed my thoughts shifted more to me, that is to say who I was now.

As a polymorph I was forever reacting like one of Pavlov’s dogs, salivating at every male I was near. More than salivating, utterly consumed by my passions. Now? Not once this morning had I felt overwhelmed with sexual and romantic need. True, I would have had sex with Sally had she shown any interest. In fact I still would were she to awake and show interest. But to be really honest with myself, there was such confusion between my brain and my body I had no idea of how I would behave. My desire to play the male role was nearly balanced with my desire to be what I was physically, a female. Looking on the bright side however, I was no longer the passive victim, I could say *no*. I was, once again, the captain of my own boat though the seas were uncertain.

A few minutes later I got up and went to the bathroom. With the onset of the light, there against two mirrored walls stood my naked figure. It was an image I’d gotten familiar with over the past six weeks,

subjective time that is, and yet it was like I was seeing myself for the first time. My male brain understood what my polymorph brain could not have comprehended. Perhaps trading bodies with Sally wasn't a fair trade at all. I'd found Sally's body delightfully sexy to be sure, but not overwhelming so. And I was at this moment, overwhelmed.

I was Narcissus re-born; I was both my male teen-aged youth and my adult male self standing mere feet away from an image of womanhood that demanded my attention. My mental penis was almost instantly rock hard as my very real clit formed an erotic knot. I was decidedly 'into' women or at least this woman. Were she to approach me for sex I could not have refused. Ironic, right, she was me and what a tangled web that created. How could the polymorph-me have been so blind as to not see what Marty had created: a goddess. Had Venus been one of the *People*? Or was this merely an ancient archetype he'd carried in his brain, a fit companion for a god?

One thing seemed certain, I would have no difficulty finding lovers and yet would any of them be adequate companions for this perfection? I read once that men found women to be sex objects, that is the woman's form stimulated their reproductive drives. That was a no brainer. But what was interesting, many women found their own beauty to also be stimulating, that is to say they imaged themselves being made love to by the male. Their own bodies were actually part of the driving stimulation. It wasn't uncommon for them to watch themselves in a mirror while making love both figuratively and, often, actually. Now this made sense to me, I was my own sex object even if I had to share her with others.

~oOo~

It was late afternoon and Sally had gone downstairs leaving me alone. I had spent entirely too much time in the bathroom in front of the mirrors and utterly self-absorbed with my naked reflection; even I

knew this was unhealthy. I was at the end of my tether, so to speak, without money, clothes or even valid identification. A subject of a police investigation that now reached well beyond Perryville, a creature that surely had awakened local interest and, worst of all, might draw the attention of the Fentons. The latter was particularly bothersome considering I was literally draped in raw magic or at least that is what Marty had said. It would be like wearing a neon sign that said 'take me'. But for all of that, the female I had become had totally pre-occupied my male consciousness.

Never had two lovers been so closely united. Ok, not quite true. I needed her and wanted her but as far as a relationship, it was decidedly one sided. She had given no hint of her sexuality other than she was the center of mine. Hell, it was only a body, right? Magically enhanced yes, but just a biological machine. Neither Paul nor Sally had stimulated 'us' significantly, which suggests what? Well the good news was she was no polymorph, no lust driven slut. And that is exactly what I had wanted all along, the ability to just say 'no'.

I finally got dressed and headed downstairs to the smell of food cooking in the kitchen. "Hey," I said as I entered the kitchen. Sally was wearing jeans and a sweatshirt; the latter was several sizes too large.

"Sleeping beauty has finally arisen. You want to help me?"

"Sure." And for the next few minutes I was free to pretend that I was a normal person, free to ignore my internal conflicts and the potential disasters that lay about like a messy minefield. If anything I was less well equipped to deal with my role in this damn time loop than I had been in the first pass, but least I had a sense of free will.

~000~

Six o'clock that evening found me at a used clothing store over in Crawford. The old me, the polymorph, would have been delighted pawing through the vast mountains of garments. That I was sharing the experience with Sally would have been an even greater plus. But I wasn't that polymorph any longer, there was no woman inside and, frankly, clothes were just clothes to my male consciousness. I certainly had no fashion sense but that was a role that Sally was eager to fill. All in all, pretty boring until we carried our initial finds back to the dressing room. There before the mirrors with my beloved on display, my excitement bloomed. I tried on a push up bra that actually fit and the image thrown back at me was actually erotic. Cleavage where none was evident in Sally's oversized bra. The garment was used, to be sure, but the satin covered interior cups and the fine lace on the outside felt and looked spectacular on my lover's body. From that moment on, this exercise became an erotic delight, the ultimate stage for a transvestite.

In the end it was casual clothing mostly, the kind of stuff that a four hundred dollar allowance from the county welfare office would allow, eventually, which is to say Sally was footing the bill that evening. She kept harping on me to do something about my hair. I couldn't tell her that a cutting it to a more reasonable length would prove useless, read impossible. I think she eventually assumed that the excessively long hair was somehow essential to my image, a fetish of sorts. Anyhow, having convinced her that all that hair was going to stay, she finally focused on clothes and only clothes, thank God.

We stopped at a discount store on the way back to buy nylons, ordinary cotton socks and makeup. Again she was a life saver. Though I had become relatively good at putting on makeup I didn't have the eye for the exact shades needed. The colors Sally picked out for me seemed garish but once applied, the

makeup really did bring out the essential 'me'. Brown eyes and black hair, I really did need some color in my face unless Gothic was the goal. It was over coffee that she admitted to me how jealous she was.

"What?" I said. This was getting old.

"Clothes," she said. "You look great in whatever you put on. Me, half the stuff I tried on tonight just... didn't look right."

I let out a long sigh. I had no desire to make her feel inadequate but apparently I did. "I bet Paul would disagree."

She snorted, "Like that would say anything, he prefers me buck naked. All he wants to do is make babies."

"Um, and that's a bad thing?"

She laughed, "Well no. Just not now, ok. I want to live, do things and then... Anyhow, I call Paul 'Bunny' you know," she said with a laugh, "all he wants to do is make baby bunnies."

I immediately flashed back to ten years into the future, with Paul leaping around yours truly crying out: "Making bunnies your Lordship, baby bunnies, oh my." It was like someone had stepped on my grave.

Concern sat upon her face, "Is there something wrong?"

I shook my head to clear that vivid image from my thoughts, "Um, no. Just a stray thought." The truth was the opening of that gate would take more than its share of victims. It wasn't all about me and it never had been.

"What?"

“I will not live on welfare, I just can’t. I need a job, a life. Sally I don’t even have a legal identity for Pete’s sake.”

“Surely when your memory comes back...”

“But what if it doesn’t?”

She didn’t respond. She just reached over and laid her hand on my wrist giving me comfort.

Well my memory wasn’t going to come back any time soon. Admitting that I was Lenny Snider was clearly out and I still wasn’t ready to make up a story, to invent this girl. I had twenty months to live, probably less, and I planned to enjoy every precious minute. If Bobby did or did not open that damn gate, it was not my concern. Either way I was probably fucked. No, I wanted to use the time I had just being ‘her’. A message in a bottle, which is what Bobby had sent back, I was refusing to deliver that message.

~000~

“I talked to Daddy while you were in the bathroom Mary.”

“And?”

“Everything is coming up blank.”

I wasn’t surprised. “So what happens next?”

“Uncle Sammy wants to keep you close until the DNA results come back but close doesn’t mean in custody or anything. Anyhow Daddy suggested that we might be looking in the wrong data base.”

“And that is?”

She went past the exit for Perryville on the interstate, “Papa Goody?”

“Who?”

“Professional photographer.” She looked at me, “Daddy was right, someone with your looks and mannerisms might be a high fashion model. Damned if it doesn’t make sense. Some of those girls make high six figures and up.”

I laughed. Talk about detours. A high fashion model? “What, kidnapped?”

“Could be.”

“You’re joking right? Anyhow, high fashion models, that’s like Paris, New York but here?”

“Papa Goody had twenty years in the business, first class.”

“If he’s so first class why is he here in the boon-docks? I mean the nearest big city is Akron Ohio for Pete’s sake.”

“Internet,” She said. “Photography is all digital now.” She shrugged, “Anyhow he’s more of a talent scout. That’s why they call him ‘Papa.’”

“Huh?”

“Most of the future supermodels are discovered and developed back in their early teens. Waiting until they come to New York, well by that time they are usually already under contract. Anyhow, Papa knows the business and if you are a player...”

“A model?”

“Yeah. He’ll either recognize you or have the database to find you. Especially that hair of yours, it must have taken ten years to grow all of that.”

I laughed. No problem, just a waste of time. It was after nine. "A little late for a visit?"

"With Papa? He's a night person, trust me."

~oOo~

It was after two in the morning and Sally had just pulled away from the curb in front of that old man's house. I swore, "Too fucking old?"

Sally laughed, "How old are you anyway, Mary?"

That was a trick question. Was I eighteen or twenty-eight? Thankfully I didn't need an answer. "Um, I have no idea."

"Well you certainly are not in your early teens. And super models are considered long in the tooth by the age of twenty, ok? It's all about youth." She glanced in my direction, "I'd guess you are, oh um, early twenties?"

"You're saying all those super models are just kids?"

She laughed, "No, some of them are still working into their forties and beyond but they all had made a name for themselves in their teens. Anyhow, Papa didn't say you were too old to model, just too old to become a super model. Hey, that check says something, right?"

I looked at the personal check in my hand made out to Mary Burkhart for the amount of two thousand dollars. It wasn't just the money but two thousand dollars would go a long way, it was the invention of a new persona: Mary Burkhart. It had been Sally's spontaneous idea, that is she and I were now 'cousins'. Tomorrow I would have an account at the bank, money and a name. Burkhart, how strange

that sounded to me. “Um... does this mean that Papa owns me or something?”

“It’s a retainer fee, that’s all. And yes, any modeling you do will be under his control. So, um, yes he’s kind’a like a boss and agent and parent all rolled into one.”

“He went nuts over my hair, didn’t he Sally?”

“And why shouldn’t he? Heck if my hair was as long as yours, it would be a freaking tangle of knots. I mean, I’d be spending half my day just brushing it out.” She rolled her eyes, “And split ends and... no, you are one lucky broad to have hair like that,” she laughed. “and hair commercials pay top dollar, ok? I wouldn’t be surprised if you get to do some TV ads eventually.”

“How much would that pay?”

“I have no idea, thousands probably.”

“I guess I’ll find out soon enough.” The old man had spent three hours taking pictures of me tonight and the images would already be circulating electronically by now. Jobs would follow, the old man seemed certain of that. Now I had money, clothes and a new identity. Getting out of Perryville was certainly next on my list.

“Well, another dead end.”

“What?”

“I was so sure that you were like this world class super model, Mary.”

“Oh, that.” If she only knew that sitting beside her was that pseudo-nerd Lenny Snider. It was a strange world.

~000~

It was only four in the morning and, considering Sally and I had slept until about three o'clock yesterday afternoon, it was simply too early to go to sleep. Sally was well adjusted to the reverse sleeping cycle having worked the late shift for a couple of months now. And me, I was all but super-charged. In a few hours I had gone from penniless and no identity to 'almost' a real person. And, to be absolutely honest, Sally was evolving into one of the closest friends I ever had. Well let's be entirely honest, other than Tommy in the previous cycle, I'd never really had *anyone* that I had been close to in Perryville. Ok, I was close to *my* people in the Marine Corps but that now seemed like another life entirely and the way things were going, a life that I might never have the chance to experience.

I was lying in my bed wearing only an oversized tee shirt, I hadn't cared much for Sally's heavy nightgown this morning and I'd discovered that bras had been invented by a male, surely. Even the best fitting bra was less comfortable than nothing at all. Sally agreed with me but I suspect that for her a bra was a bit more necessary. There was a hidden cost to big boobs which was indeed the topic under discussion. "Stretch marks," she said as she held out a breast for me to inspect.

"Umm," I said as I took another sip of brandy. The alcohol was going to my head and I felt my inhibitions sliding away. Of course the polymorph-me had no inhibitions that I was aware of unless, oh yes, the time Mr. Meeks had forced me to have sex with a woman. Nor was I the old male me, Lenny would have had a raging hard on at this moment with Sally waving that boob about. I liked the intimacy that we had and that was a profound insight. I wasn't 'in-to-her' as a sexual object, that is to say there wasn't the slightest response from my body that said otherwise. Mentally, well that was another thing entirely. Mentally I was Lenny and Lenny couldn't get over his good fortune,



this opportunity except... there was no fire in the gut. Desire without lust was just that, desire. She merely pleased me. "Um, Sally?"

She just looked at me.

"I want us to be friends."

She grinned, "We already are, you twit."

"No, I'm serious. I really do care for you, a lot."

She grew pensive. "Can I ask you a personal question," she said as she pulled down her heavy cotton nightgown, covering her breasts and the rest of her naked body once again. She didn't wait for me to respond, "Are you gay?"

That caught me by surprise. Had she read into my feelings for her and come up with the wrong conclusion? Which is to say what exactly? "Um, I seriously don't think so. Why?"

She colored brightly, the blush spread up her neck and to her cheeks. "The way you look at me sometimes..."

I shrugged and took another sip of brandy. "I find you very attractive but, um... not in a sexual way, ok?"

"Good...good, I mean..." she colored even more brightly, "if I was attracted to women and I'm not mind you, I could see how a woman might actually be attracted to another woman. Um... I mean, well heck, Mary you are the sexiest woman I've ever known."

And then she did the unthinkable; she slipped off her bed, sat beside me and offered me her lips. How could I refuse? Our lips lightly touched like butterfly wings against a flower. I felt no instant passion, no up welling of lust. Nor did I feel disgust. Perhaps a bit light headed though that could have been the

brandy. I returned her kiss and then her tongue entered my mouth. I moaned slightly and she became more aggressive with her lips and tongue. She was taking the active role and I easily slid into the passive.

We kissed for an eon or so it seemed but little else happened. My nipples hardened and my crotch grew noticeably wetter, I was responding to her sexual advance but I felt like a remote observer. I'd known serious passion and this just wasn't one of those times. Finally she just put her arms around me and held me close, cheek to cheek. The experiment was over.

"Gosh," she whispered, her lips almost to the entrance of my ear, "I never done that before." And then she giggled, let go of me and climbed back into her bed. She remained flushed and her eyes danced. "My bad."

"That was nice," I said as I fell back against the pillow and pulled up my end of the blanket. "I love you Sally."

"I love you too Mary."

"Best of friends?"

"Best."

Chapter 3

Tuesday was a lot less eventful than Monday. With Sally's dad's help I got a checking and savings account at the local bank. That and a temporary photo ID and I was about as legitimate as local law enforcement could make me. I would have to take a driver's test to get a license but I was in no hurry. It would be awhile before I could afford a car or even a place of my own. It was obvious that I could stay with Sally for as long as I needed but staying in Perryville didn't seem to be a smart option. It was a small town and sooner

or later I was bound to run into Ruth. From what Marty Meeks had said, all this raw magic I was wearing would stand out like a neon sign, at least to creatures like Ruth and Willard.

This Tuesday was so unlike that horrid Tuesday of the last cycle. That was the day Tommy and I became best pals, sisters. And on this very night, Ruth would show exactly how ruthless a monster she was. Just the thought of that night sent shivers down my spine. Later that night I had sex with both my old man and then with poor Tommy... the images were too painful to focus on. It wasn't all bad of course. I missed the passion that I had felt in those encounters and, to be entirely frank, those few hours with Bobby earlier in the evening that night, tonight actually, I had never felt so complete, so perfectly content. As I was now, I was very much in control of my life or so it seemed. I was no longer that butterfly blown by winds too great to control and yet... my very lack of passion, of sexual and romantic desire had left a huge hole, a void in my existence. To achieve all that you desire only to discover that you gave up almost as much as you had is ironic, isn't it? There was no happily-ever-after, leastwise not for me.

Thank God, Papa had driven over and picked me up a little after six o'clock, else I would have been in a real funk. We drove over to Canton so I could meet some people and then from there to Akron for a late dinner and some frank talk and to sign some papers that made our relationship official. I'd be flying back to New York City late next week. Lord had things changed.

Sally was up, of course, when Papa delivered me back to the Burkhart residence. As I came through the front door, she swept me up in a big hug. "You got to tell me all about it," she giggled.

I felt her lush body pressed against mine own and I replayed in my mind my depression over my lack of passion and romance. I returned her hug and found

her lips. There was just the slightest pause from Sally and then she responded with greedy lips and a hot, wet tongue. After a few seconds I twisted my mouth away, "And your father?"

"Gone to bed hours ago," she said in a husky voice before taking my face in her hands and reclaiming my lips.

We made love that night but not there in the entry way. What questions she had about that night vanished like the morning mist. For both of us it was like a first time thing, neither of us knew exactly what to do. Taking turns of playing the aggressor but neither of us really wanted the male role. The only man that she had been with was Paul and she had never even imagined being with a woman. The male inside me was hardly a novice when it came to love making but my body was so ill equipped to play the male role and so inclined to be the passive partner in spite of my male perspective.

I can't speak for Sally but for me it proved to be the least satisfying sexual encounter I'd ever had and I'd had more than my share. I faked a climax several times but I never came close to any kind of resolution. Perhaps Sally was faking hers as well; I guess I will never know. We eventually went to sleep in each other's arms and frankly that was the best part of the encounter for me. I loved Sally but I wasn't in lust with her. The funk I'd felt earlier in the day deepened as I sought and finally found sleep.

We didn't get up until a little after eleven o'clock the next morning. We were in the kitchen having coffee. Neither of us were ready to talk about last night and yet that was the only conversation we could have had when the phone rang and Sally got up to answer it. I sat there drinking coffee as she talked to her dad. I wasn't really listening being too focused on the gorilla in the room.

“Well,” she said as she put the phone back into its holder, “you are no longer the big story in Perryville.”

“What?”

“One of the boys at the high school... wasn’t a boy at all, and never had been it would appear,” She laughed.

I jumped to my feet. “HOLY SHIT!” I yelled. I ran upstairs to get dressed. Sally ran after me in confusion but I ignored her questions. The first cycle had begun with my appearance at the Fenton’s house last Sunday night, as Lenny Snider the polymorph. It had been me this time, no longer a polymorph but... I turned and grabbed Sally by the shoulders, “A NAME!”

“Huh?”

I caught my breath but my chest with heaving and my heart racing full tilt, “What was the boy’s name.”

She looked at me with wild eyes, “What’s happening to you Mary? What’s going on?”

“Damn it, was it Lenny Snider!”

Eye’s now wide she just nodded, “Yeah, that’s what Daddy said.”

I hadn’t expected this, there were now two Lenny Sniders in this loop And if the sequence was following exactly as it had done the first time around, Ruth was already well aware of the time loop and the ‘door stop’ that kept it open, one polymorph name Lenny. “What time is it?”

She was clearly shaken but she looked at her watch, “Um, twelve-thirty? What’s going on Mary?”

“I’m too fucking late. I need to get to Chester.”

“Huh? Where?”

~oOo~

If things played out as they had, Marty Meeks would eventually kill Lenny and thereby start the cycle again, only this time there would be three Lenny Sniders, two of which would look like identical twins. My mind reeled as I imagined six or ten or fifty copies of what I was now. It would never get to that but it wasn't entirely impossible either. A nightmare. I had to disrupt this sequence and to do that I had to save the second Lenny from the clutches of Mr. Meeks. I had time on my side, weeks and weeks, but little else.

I tried to explain to Sally what was going on but I hadn't even come close to that goal. It was all too insane from her frame of reference. I finally decided to show her that magic was not only possible but actual. “My hair,” I said. “It's magical, ok? A spell made from raw magic. Are you listening?”

She nodded her head but her eyes said otherwise. There was fear there as if she was in the presence of a nut case. She's already said that she realized now that she didn't really know me.

I grabbed a pair of scissors and she shrank away from me, eyes now wide with fear as if I was going to attack her with that instrument, “Here,” I said shoving the scissors into her hand. “Cut off my hair.”

She took another step back as if edging for the bedroom door but then stopped. “Why?”

“It will grow back.”

She looked confused, “Sure, of course.”

“I don't mean eventually, Sally. It will return in seconds, trust me. Seconds.” I turned my back to her, Go on grab a hand full and cut.”

“This is... crazy,” she stood there rooted to the spot.

I turned and grabbed the scissors back, flipped my long tresses over my shoulder and began to cut a good two feet of hair. My cuts were angry and very uneven. I felt the heavy weight drop from my head as my hair was little more than mid-shoulder length now. I let the mass of hair fall to the floor. “Now watch,” I said as I shook my head swirling the remaining hair about. And I waited. Nothing happened. “Seriously Sally, just wait for a few more seconds...”

She had continued to back away now looking down at all that fine black hair on the floor and back at me with my mid-shoulder length tresses now raggedy seared. “You escaped from some kind of institute didn’t you? You’re... psycho, right?”

I stood there in horror. What had gone wrong? The absence of magic suggested that I was no longer the ‘door stop’, that connection to uptime had been broken. Which meant what exactly? That the second Lenny was still very much the key to everything. And me? What was I? Some junk, trash left over from the last cycle? If true I had nothing to fear from the likes of Ruth or Willard and yet my existence was tied to what happens to the new Lenny.

Without a car, there would be no quick dash to Chester. But I had time, lots of time to connect with my other self. I packed what clothes I had and prepared to leave the Burkhart house hold. Would Sally try to stop me? I had no way of knowing.

~000~

Sally did stop me at the front door, “You’re not going to just leave, are you Mary?”

I didn’t try to push past her; it wasn’t like I had anywhere to go, other than Chester, and without

transportation, even that would be difficult. Unless of course I could convince her to take me to Lenny. “I’m not a nut case,” I growled.

She got between me and the doorway, arms now crossed. “You must think I’m some kind of moron Mary. Time travel, wizards and... magic hair?”

“It’s alright if you don’t believe me, ok? I have trouble sometimes believing it myself.” I looked at her and her lovely blue eyes that were now unnaturally scrunched with obvious suspicion. “If I don’t rescue Lenny this whole damn loop will start over again in a few months.”

She just rolled her eyes and then laid a hand on my shoulder, “You just don’t give up, do you. You want a ride to Chester, right?” I nodded and she looked deeply into my eyes. “Let’s finish that coffee, ok?”

As we walked toward the kitchen, she started to put her arm around my waist but then changed her mind. “About last night?”

“Um,” I said. I had been dreading this particular conversation.

She waited until she had re-filled our coffee cups and sat down at the kitchen table. As soon as I took a seat, she sighed. “You weren’t that ‘into me’ last night, were you?”

“It was obvious huh?”

“You don’t really love me do you.”

“Gosh, no. I mean I do love you. It’s a mind-body problem, um...”

“A what?”

“Inside I’m very much Lenny Snider, ok? I think you are just about the sexiest gal in the whole world but... my male mind and my female body aren’t exactly working together. I got a penis in my brain and a clit between my legs and they aren’t on the same page. What I mean is, mentally I desire you but physically...”

She laughed, “Ok, you are a nut case. Sorry Mary.” And then she added, “So inside you is that nerd Lenny Snider, one of two Lenny Sniders I might add, and outside is the most beautiful women in the world.”

“Something like that,” I agreed.

“A heterosexual male in a heterosexual female body, now if that don’t beat all. Of course that’s not enough for you, is it. No. Of the two Lenny Sniders, one is a magical slut?” I just nodded. “Ok, let’s say I take you to Chester, then what happens? You rescue this slut thingy...”

“Polymorph.”

“Ok, polymorph and then what?”

“Um... I don’t have a plan yet. We’ll go into hiding for the next twenty months and ah...”

“Paranoia, right? Systematic delusions? I feel so sorry for you Mary.”

This wasn’t going to end well, that was obvious to me. “Maybe I should just leave.”

“And do what? She laughed but there was sadness in her voice. “Let me trim that hair, ok?” She got up and came back later carrying a brush and a pair of scissors. “This will just take a second.”

I think that she really was attracted to me, that is the outer me. The way she brushed my hair was more

of an act of love making than not. The unnecessary touch of her hands on my person, the gentle tug on my locks as she gripped the hair and began to trim the mess I'd made. As she finished, she whispered into my ear what had now become a familiar refrain, "Still want to trade bodies?"

I felt it as I had never felt it before, magic flowing like a mighty flood but not from inside me, it was very disconcerting. I'm sure Sally felt it as well for she let out a short but shrill scream and the two of us flew apart like identical poles of two magnets. In an instant, the two of us were sprawled on the kitchen floor, about as far apart as was possible. My breasts felt entirely too heavy as I twisted to an upright position and then to my knees. And there, fifteen feet away was me or at least the image that I had enjoyed in the mirror the last few days. "Sally?" I cried out in an altered voice.

The beautiful creature in the gorgeous long black hair and ghost eyes twisted about to look at me, "Whoa!"

~oOo~

What had Ruth said, even ordinary mortals can use raw magic. Well that hadn't applied to me but apparently Sally was one mortal that could indeed manipulate reality with raw magic. Of course she was an instant convert, end of discussion. But there was something bigger going on, for Sally that is. The ability to use magic implied the absolute need to do so; that is to say, it was like giving a drunk a full bottle of booze. It didn't happen instantly but after she was able to pull herself away from the mirror, and yes she was as absorbed in her new image as I had been but a few days earlier, it was too late to close the barn door.

There is no such thing as perfection, of course, but those ghost eyes became brilliantly green cat eyes and that long black hair became a wild tangle of reddish-gold like a lion's mane of fairy tale proportions.

Having used up all the loose hair from the kitchen she hurried into the bedroom and bagged the treasure there.

What was the old saying, ‘power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely’, well I don’t think that mere mortals are very well equipped to have such power leastwise Sally wasn’t. She was soon dressed in a magnificent green silk dress and literally draped with diamonds of substantial size. Sally, who I knew to be level headed and yes, a responsible person, was none of that now. Her eyes had this crazy look and when, finally, I tried to intervene by grabbing for that paper bag full of my hair, she seemed to flip out completely. “MINE!” she screamed.

I backed away holding my hands out front defensively. “I just think that you need to...”

“Mine,” she said again more quietly but with malice evident in her voice.

“Sure, fine. Look Sally I can’t use that stuff myself anyway it’s just...”

“All my life I wanted to go to Paris...”

She just vanished. I stood there for the longest time looking at that vacant spot where she had stood. Paris? As to the emergency I was facing with Lenny, I think she was just too caught up in the magic to give it or me a second thought. Eventually she would come back to earth, or at least I thought so. Throwing all that raw magic around however could get her into some deep trouble. Did she have any idea of how risky that was, I didn’t think so.

~000~

We hadn’t just traded bodies, Sally had unilaterally instituted a trade of lives or at least that was the initial consequence of her decision to go to Paris this

afternoon. I'd made dinner for her dad that night and would later return to the midnight shift as a police officer. I now had the means to go to Chester but that trip would have to wait until tomorrow or later. Daddy, as Sally called her father, hadn't noticed a difference in his daughter except to say that was the best meatloaf I'd ever made, meaning Sally of course. He gave me the beetle brows when I told him 'Mary' had taken off but otherwise didn't seem too upset.

He was almost done with dinner when he dropped the bombshell. "The DNA results came in. From Mary?"

"Um?"

"That gal was no gal at all."

"Huh?"

"XY, male. If that don't beat all."

"You could have fooled me," was my only reply. I didn't say another word. Later, while washing the dishes in the sink, I had plenty of time to consider the implications. That strange disconnect between my mental and physical self was no longer apparent. When Sally had swapped bodies with me that certainly included my brain as well, that is to say there was a very real connection between that 'clit' in my brain and the 'clit' lower down. There was no 'mommy' voice screaming in my ear yet, but my natural urges were definitely stronger and in line with my female body.

Having had a number of bodies already one would think that making the adjustment would come more readily. This was decidedly not the case. These breasts were big and heavy and seemed to be constantly in the way. I felt a strain in my lower back that I'd not felt in the other female bodies and, well, some resentment that they were there at all and that was odd. And I was very conscious of the greater mass in

my butt and hips. The idea of slender 'boyish' hips now seemed substantially more attractive as if I'd acquired some of Sally's misgivings about her own form. Go figure.

Later that evening I started my period, for me the first one I'd ever had. Thank God for tampons. Anyhow that answered another question, I was good to go if the goal was making babies. That was a sobering thought, especially with Mr. Bunny hanging about. Twenty months was more than enough time to get pregnant and how did I feel about that? It made me a little uncomfortable. Apparently Sally hadn't been all that eager to get pregnant and neither was I.

It was almost ten o'clock and Sally hadn't re-appeared. If I was to be Sally for the time being I had to show up at the station before eleven. I was in the bedroom getting ready to change into 'her' uniform when Paul appeared. I hadn't heard him knock or anything, he just came upstairs and pushed the bedroom door open and caught me all but naked.

"Hey," he said and then quickly crossed the room and swept me in his arms.

I didn't know if this was normal or not but when his hands began fondling my breasts and his lips sought mine, I twisted out of his arms and gave him my cheek instead of my lips. "Honey, I got to get ready for work," and then I added, "I'm on the rag."

That seemed to stop his pawing but he did manage to find and take my lips. I let him kiss me but I remained passive. "What's got into you gal?"

"What do you mean?"

"Don't give me that. Ever since Mary got here..."

"She's gone, Paul. She just took off this afternoon."

“Good. I mean, well heck sweetheart, it was like she was coming between us or something?” He now gripped me by my shoulders rather tightly and added, “I think she was queer for you. Even the Chief said as much. How do you like them apples?”

I was feeling anger now, “It’s none of your damned business, Paul.”

“Oh I think otherwise.”

“You don’t own me Paul and you never did. Now get the hell out of my room.” For a moment I thought that he wasn’t going to leave. In fact I wouldn’t have been surprised if he had attempted to strike me but that moment passed. As he turned to leave I called after him, “Don’t you ever barge into my room like that again.”

He laughed, “There are plenty of fish in the ocean Sally, plenty.”

As he sauntered out of Sally’s bedroom I felt nothing but relief as he left. Was that just me or was that possibly some reflection of Sally’s true nature. She and Paul had been a couple like forever. What had she said, she’d wanted something more out of life than what she had. Being a wife and mother wasn’t enough. The way she responded to the opportunity offered by that raw magic now made more and more sense. For the first time I realized that Sally might never return to this Hobbit house in this tiny mid-western town in the middle of literally nowhere.

As I finished getting dressed I had plenty of time to inspect my feelings starting with Paul. I felt more or less threatened by his presence and certainly not passion. Revulsion? I think not but equally certain I felt neither love nor lust for him. And as to ‘her’ profession, the heavy police utility belt said it all. It pulled at me in a most uncomfortable fashion; it was so unflattering, unfeminine as was the uniform.

And there it was before me, Sally's life. A trap. And she had used that magic to escape into a world of glamour, wealth and freedom. I might have done the same thing.

~000~

The next morning after my shift I told Uncle Sammy that I was looking into the 'Lenny Snider' situation. He gave me a blank stare and then said, "I rather you wouldn't."

"But..."

"I really don't want you to bother Mrs. Fenton on this matter."

"Why? I mean she knows where the victim is and we don't. I talked to Perkins and he hasn't been able to finish the report, not without interviewing Ms. Snider."

"Some things are better left alone."

I couldn't believe my ears. Here we have a case of serious child abuse and endangerment, the latter raising a girl as a boy. Of course I knew that was all bull shit but it played into my evolving plan. "That girl may be eighteen now, but all those years she was abused she was a minor." I was getting hot but mostly out of frustration. "I know for a fact that she was raped by her father."

"Oh you do, do you? Look if you have any information give it to Perkins, sweetheart. He's lead on the case and, well heck honey, you're not ready for detective work."

"But if Ms. Snider just happens to show up..."

Now the Chief's anger was apparent in his face, "Little Lady, I don't want you to go anywhere near this case," he snapped.

"Right chief." I backed out of the office more than a bit stunned. Sally's Uncle Sammy, the police chief of Perryville, was either afraid of the Fentons or perhaps working with them? It made sense, maybe too much sense. If the wizards were so interested in Perryville, meaning 'Hell's Gate', they certainly might want to control the local authorities and who better than the police. I didn't know that was a fact but it seemed a reasonable guess. My plan to simply return Lenny to the police station wasn't going to happen, back to the drawing board.

~000~

The next morning, after my shift was over, it took me less than thirty minutes to drive over to Chester but almost another hour to locate first the gravel road and then the dirt track back to the cabin. Had I come a few hours later I would have never found the latter track because it had begun to snow near mid-morning. I went as close to the trailer, on foot, as I could go. The wards did not recognize me and the first threat signal was an intense desire to throw up. I immediately retreated back until I felt better. It was a hell-of-a-protection system, much better than barb-wire. I called out: "Lenny? Lenny Snider?" Nothing. I tried again, yelling as loud as I could. Still nothing. I knew she was there or at least she should be there assuming that the events of the first cycle of the time loop were being followed. It was an open question as to how exactly fixed the events would be. It had snowed on this day, I remembered that. This was the last big snow of the winter. And I had huddled in that trailer for almost two weeks right? But human behavior was less predictable than the weather. Had she made the trip down to Crows now instead of later?

I had gone down and checked out that place hadn't I? Early on? It was just a brief inspection. I remember thinking that Crows was shit-kicker heaven, right? I swung wide around the wards and headed for Crows. And there they were, tracks in the fresh fallen snow leading away from the mobile home. I followed them to the last rise before the hill fell away. There below was Crows and here at the top of the hill huddled almost at my feet was Lenny. "Hey," I said."

She turned and looked up from her crouched position behind the bush in which she was hiding, her Bambi eyes, big, soft brown orbs caught me emotionally and that was unexpected. She was so vulnerable, so helpless. Call it a reflex, but I was instantly captured. Part of my reaction was of me experiencing what I had experienced as a polymorph, an instant sharing and complete understanding of what it felt like to be her. We were one and the same and yet now so different. I'd forgotten who I was now and was momentarily surprised by her reaction.

"Sally? Sally Burkhart?"

I knelt down into the snow beside her, a grin on my face. Oh I remembered how 'we' felt about this blond with the big blue eyes. "Pretty cool huh?"

Of course she didn't understand. She just looked at me in vapid amazement. Not that she was turned on by me in a sexual way, not as a polymorph, but Lenny Snider inside her mind was probably doing flips about now.

"I'm here to save you from those bastard wizards."

She blinked even more wild-eyed, "You...you know about them?"

"Honey, I know everything. The time loop and you, Sergeant Snider the polymorph from two thousand and fourteen, everything."

And then she began to sob. I remember pulling my arms around her, giving her comfort. "It'll be all right, I promise." But could I keep that promise? "Com'on, lets blow this popsicle stand."

~000~

"You have a plan, Sally?" Lenny called me Sally simply because it kept things less confused. She and I were both Lenny. The fact that Sally had actually used the raw magic to switch bodies with me, we both found that doubly ironic. All of our problems would have been less enormous were we able to actually use that power that we carried, especially the polymorph 'Lenny' for she was still very much connected to that lake of energy. But the really ironic aspect was that we both had long desired the woman who I had become and if that wasn't ironic, what was?

"Before this morning, I was planning on hiding you at Sally's house until I could think of a better option."

"But no longer?"

"Hell's bells, I'm pretty sure that the Chief of Police is, well, tied in some how to this whole thing."

"Um."

"Yeah, um. I suspect that for every wizard there must be a dozen mortals that are working for them either of their own free will for profit or not."

"Golly."

I laughed, "And fuck me!" We both knew what that meant.

"Sally? I've been thinking. You've been at this for months now, right?" I just nodded. "Anyhow, for me it's been what, five days? Anyhow, maybe I have a, um, less fixed notion of what needs to be done."

“Ok, Sergeant Snider.”

“That’s Gunny Sergeant Snider and don’t you forget the difference.”

I laughed, “Ok, Gunny.”

“We kill the bastard.”

“Whoa, who?”

“Bobby J. Fenton.”

“Bobby? He’s just a fuckup and you know it.”

“Yeah, but with him dead, the gate will not open and let’s say it does open anyway, ok? He’s not there to send us back to ‘04. I mean, dead is dead.”

“Just kill him?”

“You got a gosh-darn nine millimeter strapped to your belt, if that isn’t God’s will, what is?”

“Shit, that definitely has possibilities.”

~000~

We pulled into a Motel Six about eleven that morning. I was exhausted. It had been what? More than twenty-four hours since I last slept? And if we were going to assassinate Bobby, my old pal, a few hours of shut eye would help. It was snowing with serious intentions now so an ‘attack’ would be better made on another day. Also there was the problem of keeping Lenny alive for the next twenty months. With Ruth’s son’s death she might be less concerned about stopping the temporal loop from re-starting. So even though we had the beginnings of a plan, it had more holes than Swiss cheese. As to what would happen to us if we succeeded, well it seemed certain there would be only one Sergeant that would make

the long walk up Ellsworth Street in two thousand and fourteen. And none of this would have happened. I'm not saying that the notion sat perfectly well with either of us. We both had a sense of 'self' that didn't really want to just 'not be', go figure and yet neither of us were exactly happy with our situation. Lenny wanted to make babies and there was no doubt about that and I was intrigued with being Sally.

Lenny watched me as I got undressed, that was understandable she being me that is. We'd both harbored memories of masturbating to that image, that was all they were now, male memories. As a polymorph, Lenny was no more capable of making love to a real female than she was able to say no to a male's sexual advance. But just like me last Monday morning when Sally and I had slept together for the first time, she must be thinking along the same lines that I had. "This is so darn twisted, isn't it Lenny?"

I raised an eyebrow at her mention of my real name, "In what way?"

"Heck," she said as she unhooked her bra and threw it across the room. She had nice breasts and she knew it. As she rubbed them it was less about relief from wearing that device than it was to draw my attention to what she was displaying. "You know what I mean, I always wanted to see those puppies. Are they as nice as mine?"

"You be the judge," I pulled the sports bra up and over my head setting free my double D's and yes there were both stretch marks and marks from the bra I'd just removed.

Poor Lenny was glassy eyed as she watched them bounce and swing for the next several seconds. "Holy Heck, they're nicer than I thought." She let out a long sigh, "Pity."

I wasn't as tightly connected to a heterosexual game plan as was Lenny, I was no polymorph. And

my sexual experience with the real Sally suggested that I could swing both ways, well, to a degree. It hadn't been the best experience in my life but hadn't been chopped liver either. "You want to touch them?"

Lenny blushed and looked, well, anxious. "Um... not really my thing right now."

I laughed, "I know what you mean. You and Tommy 'made it' though, right? I mean that was a girl-girl thing. And that went ok as I remember."

"Oh Jesus, I completely forgot about Tommy. She must be going through hell right now."

"Sorry," I said feeling equally guilty at that moment. I slipped out of my pants and then pulled down my panties. A second later I was under the blankets. "Wake me before five, ok?"

I felt her climb into bed beside me and then I felt her breath on my neck. "So dang twisted," she sighed. And then her groin pressed against my hip and all hell broke loose. Naked flesh against naked flesh and then from her groin I felt the flood of raw magic...

~oOo~

"Lenny, Lenny, it's really for the best ok?"

"Shit, I'm so sorry."

"No, don't you understand, we are both connected again." It was obvious that she didn't comprehend the implications. "Look Marty Meeks killed me in the last cycle and zap, the cycle started over again. But now with two of us holding that loop open, I suspect we'd both have to die before that son-of-a-bitch cycle is reset. I mean we have twice the chance of..."

“That’s not what I mean. This is really stupid, ok? I look just like you and we both are um, Sally?”

“What, I thought you loved those big jugs.”

“Um... they are darn heavy.”

“Yeah, welcome to the club. Anyhow, it will be a lot harder for Ruth to find you now, right? Or me for that matter. But you are right, it’s pretty obvious the world isn’t ready for two Sally Burkharts.”

“And what if the real Sally comes back?”

“That’s probably less of a real problem than you think, Lenny. Anyhow, here’s what we’re going to do.”

Chapter 4

I gave Lenny Sally’s photo ID and the checkbook. Being on the road, she’d need both more than I would. Something like six thousand dollars were in the savings account which I transferred as soon as I got back to Perryville. We paid cash for a month long bus pass and hopefully she’d travel a long way before stopping. I specifically did not want to know where she was going. Since I was planning to remain in Perryville more or less to keep an eye on things, I was far more likely to be the Lenny that didn’t survive until October ‘05. On the other hand, I wasn’t a full tilt polymorph and my survival chances might actually be better than hers.

Oh I was connected again to that lake of raw magic, which made any contact with the Fentons a highly risky adventure to be sure. I told Sally’s father as soon as he got home that evening about my decision to resign from the police force. He seemed shocked at first until I told him I was old enough now to settle down and eventually raise children. That little lie made it easier for him to understand why I wanted out of the law enforcement profession. I as-

sume he thought that Paul was going to be the daddy, but that wasn't going to happen. Dropping out to make babies? That would sure cut the connection between Sally's Uncle Sammy and me or at least that was my plan.

Actually there was more to this sudden shift in 'careers' than just finding a lower profile, that contact with Lenny had done more than just re-connect me to the pool of raw magic, I was eight-tens of the way to being a full bore polymorph, that is to say, my sexual engine was running nearly wide open. But thankfully just being in contact with a man didn't fill my head with honey the way it did with poor Lenny. I was probably doomed to be a slut but at least I could still say no. Not that I particularly wanted to say no.

I'll never forget the following night with 'Daddy' as we talked about things, grandchildren mostly. Thank God that mommy voice inside me wasn't screaming but she was whispering and yes I was listening. Sally's father was a really swell guy, unlike my old man. He would have been horrified had he been able to read my mind. He was in his mid to late fifties and certainly not in the best of shape but you got to give the polymorph credit for one thing, we could find something sexy about any man. And I wasn't even the slightest bit horrified, indeed, for the last five days I'd rather missed the absence of passion in my life. Well no more, passion was back and in spades.

Having worked the eleven P.M. to seven A.M. shift for months, that is Sally had, not me, it came as no surprise to 'Daddy' that I was going out tonight. It was after all Saturday and I hit him up for a few bucks. Oh I had plans for tonight but it wouldn't be here in Perryville. I even packed an overnight bag, a fact that Daddy pretended not to notice anymore than he 'noticed' that slinky black cocktail dress cut low in the front and held up by my substantial boobs. He probably thought I was hunting for a father for his grandchildren, that wasn't likely to happen, I was sterile again thanks to the raw magic surge, so eat

your heart out mommy voice. I was a magical slut on a mission that might just increase my chances of surviving the next twenty months.

~oOo~

I didn't have the natural feline moves of my previous body nor the classic elegance that body exuded so readily. What I had was a natural earthy sensuality that most men could appreciate, I had fertility written into my every feature, from the wide hips and oversized breasts: here was a woman in her reproductive prime. That I got into the Goodyear Country Club, which was an exclusive members only facility, was hardly a surprise, what healthy young woman dressed as I was would have been questioned. A male yes, but a babe? I swayed through the front door, heel-toe, heel-toe, my ass and hips tightly clasped by my tight black dress spoke the rhythms that had been sung around the campfires of our earliest ancestors when caves and open fire pits kept out the cold. Once I removed my overcoat and handed it in at the cloak room, blond hair flowed like water across my shoulders and bright blue eyes flicked here and then lingering only long enough to detect the appreciative gaze of men, both young and old but, to be honest, the old men seemed to be in the majority.

I hadn't even reached the bar when a glass of champagne was handed to me. I stopped and turned, taking in the scene. There were a handful of women scattered about nearby and then I felt my heart in my throat. All the women I could see looked far more like that glamorous woman I had been, tall and slender with hardly any hips and reeking of elegance. There probably wasn't a dress in that group that cost less than ten thousand dollars and yes... diamonds. I felt like a big Mac burger inside an exclusive ritzy restaurant, I felt cheap and tawdry and, what had Sally said, like a *cow*? I felt a hand on my elbow and turned to see whom it belonged to. And there was nobody there.

“Oh!” I said with a start when I found the owner of that hand well below my line of gaze.

He was short to the point of tiny and bald but bright blue eyes looked up at me and not at my bosom. “I don’t believe we’ve met.” He said taking my fingertips in his hand, “I’m Mr. Winfield but you can call me Reggie.”

“Pleased,” I said. He had to be in his sixties or perhaps the sixties were but a distant memory. He was loaded, rich. I don’t know how I knew but I could just sense that he was. Perhaps it was the watch on his wrist that probably cost more than a watch should cost or perhaps it was the way he looked at me as if to say price would be no obstacle and yes I was for sale, who wasn’t.

“My dear it is refreshing to see a young woman that looks like a young woman. And your name?”

I was blushing now, “Sally, Sally Burkhart.”

“Burkhart, hum, I’m not familiar with that family.” And then he gave me a wink; “Let’s keep that between us, hum?” He put his hand on the small of my back and began to guide me across the floor, “Perhaps you could fill an old man’s heart and sit with me for a while Ms. Burkhart?”

I’d already decided that he was cute in a nebbish sort of way. I concentrated on being elegant at least until we made it to his table. I had no idea of where this was going, but I was sure it would be an interesting evening.

~000~

Honestly coming from a near-polymorph, saying that Reggie was a delightful old man or should I say a delightful dirty old man because he had his hand high up on my thigh almost as soon as we sat down,

wouldn't carry much weight in a courtroom but he was all of that. Too old to be a sexual partner but I knew with my magic that his age really wasn't a problem; I was expecting to give him quite the unexpected pleasure of intercourse. I wasn't here to fuck an old man, though that would be the initial route to my goal, what I was looking for was power. That is to say someone of influence and, of course, money and the very exclusive Goodyear Country Club was at the very hub of the excessively rich and powerful in North-eastern Ohio. Once Reggie experienced what I could do for him, would others not follow? Old men talk and a sexually successful rich, powerful old man would talk to others of his kind. Against the wizards having a cadre of such men behind me might very well be the difference between success and failure, life and death.

But the fact was I was enjoying playing the coquette to his Don Juan. He was delightfully funny and very, very fascinated with yours truly. He had a confidence and a self-assuredness I'd seldom experienced. Though I'd planned upon seducing him, it was I that was being seduced. All this was abruptly ended when a man came over to the table and handed Reggie a note.

He paled and looked shock, "Excuse me," he said as he stood up, "I must take care of something, um important." And then he gave me a very confused grimace and hurried away.

Before I could respond in any fashion, he was heading across the floor following the gentleman who had delivered the note. And before he was out of sight, a man in a tux loomed over me.

"Miss, we can do this the hard way or the easy way."

"Huh?"

In mere seconds I was escorted rather briskly to a side entrance and all but dumped on the sidewalk outside, sans overcoat. I was mortified and frankly quite cold as the February air hit my exposed chest. I regained my balance and tried the door; it was locked of course. “Fuck me!” I swore.

“My pleasure.”

“Huh?” I whipped around and there stood a rather chubby middle age man wearing a tweedy jacket and brown rumpled slacks.

“Here, ” he said helping me on with my coat that obviously he’d retrieved from the coatroom from the other side of the building.

As I struggled buttoning the coat I gave him a stare that pretty much said: what’s going on? “Thanks,” I mumbled. I was very, very confused.

“My pleasure Sergeant Snider.”

~000~

“Wizards?” he laughed and then shrugged, “well I guess the term seems appropriate enough. We call them the Faey.”

“Fey?”

“Um, yes, F-A-E-Y. A very old race, very, very old. Fables are filled with hints of them: fairies, elves and the like depending upon one’s culture. But they are decidedly not magical beings, mortal like us.”

“They must live a long time,” I said thinking of Ruth and her comments about the black death.

Professor Morin nodded, “Some live up to a thousand years and yes, relative to us, they seem immortal but just flesh and blood. They are a dying race,

nearly extinct. That would be a terrible shame if that were to happen Sergeant Snider, a terrible shame indeed.”

“Um... they don't like us much, I know that for a fact. They call us animals and worse.”

“They are just afraid Sergeant, not wishing to go into that long, dark night. One can hardly blame them.”

“So you are on their side?” I said with more than a little disbelief in my voice.

“Sides? It's thinking like that that is the root of the problem. I'm a nuclear physicist, I study sub atomic particles and their behavior.”

“And that means what, Professor?”

The manipulations of time-space-energy that the Faey do almost without effort is a priceless talent, one that we could and eventually will master, I hope.”

“You're losing me Professor but that's ok. So you know about Hell's Gate?”

He sighed, “All too well.”

“And the time loop?”

“Yes and we are learning a century's worth of laboratory research. My God, a working ‘worm hole’.”

“And um... this is all ok?” He didn't need to answer; the response was on his face. “Are you for or against that gate being opened?”

“Very much against. Heavens, the universe as we know it could die in a few thousand years if it were left open and as to earth and humanity, we wouldn't last ten minutes. Unfortunately there are those

among the Faey and our own people that think otherwise. We will protect you to the last drop of our blood, Sergeant Snider, to the very last drop. The gate must not be opened.”

Every thing he told me seemed to evoke yet more questions, like who did Professor Morin really represent and... “Why did you have me removed from the Goodyear Country Club tonight?”

He looked surprised, “Do you not know exactly where you were? That was the very core of the Faey community.”

“I had no idea.”

“We were frankly terrified, Sergeant Snider. You must know that you are the key to holding this loop open.”

“Um... then you don’t know about the other Sergeant Snider, um, also connected to the other side of the time loop.” I watched his eyes grow wide.

I looked outside; there was nothing to see as the SUV sped through the night, we were on a secondary road and in the country. A few minutes earlier we had been joined by a pair of SUVs that had taken up positions in front and behind the vehicle I was in. The movement was all too much like a well planned military operation. I was in custody but by whom? “Where are we going?” He didn’t answer and I wasn’t surprised.

~oOo~

I’d been held in relative isolation for the better part of two weeks if counting meals was a reliable measure of the passing time. I didn’t see Professor Moran again. I suspect he was just a member of whatever organization that was involved and certainly not one of the higher ups. Now I say I was in relative isolation,

aside from the individuals who brought me food and drink, I met no one of importance. I very much felt like I was in a prison not unlike that isolation that Ruth had tried to impose upon me, that trailer behind the Crows Restaurant. Having said that, there was nothing about my current situation that seemed to bode well for yours truly. I might as well have been the captive of the Faey as far as I could see. I was obviously just a chess piece on a larger playing board.

Professor Morin had debriefed me rather extensively when I first arrived. I had told him all I could about the other ‘Sergeant Snider’ so I assumed that an extensive hunt was on for her and I also told him about the ‘real’ Sally. Interesting but the professor only seemed mildly amused by the latter story, so perhaps Sally wasn’t a major concern. No, what really seemed to get the professor’s attention was the fact that the cycle had been reset, that is this was the second time through. It was obvious that he and his group were unaware that this was the second pass through this narrow slice of time. He didn’t say it but I knew I was unique in that I had memories from both cycles. Neither his people nor likely the Faey could stand outside the temporal loop, which was to say I held the high ground for whatever good that did for me.

I knew something was finally going to happen when they led me out of that cell and back into the bright light of day. My treatment hadn’t, of course, earned them any bonus points but then this was the only game in town for me. “Hi,” I said as I was ushered into a meeting room. The long table was four cheap card tables pushed together and the chairs, mere metal folding chairs. Obviously the room was not set up to impress me nor were the men and women who sat around that table particularly noteworthy, at least in the way they were dressed. Blue jeans and sweatshirts seemed the costume of the day.

“Please have a seat Sergeant,” suggested an older man who apparently hadn’t shaved for several days. Indeed, all the people around the table looked a bit haggard, over worked. He waited until I sat down before returning to his seat. He ignored the rest of the group as he fixed his gaze on me, “Let’s get to the nub of the problem, shall we?” He cleared his throat, “We have run every simulation possible Sergeant using the best mathematical engines available and um... it is improbable that we are getting out of this temporal loop.”

I just stared at him, what was he trying to say? “I don’t understand.”

“Of course not, none of us really can understand.” Again he cleared his throat, “There are too many players working at crossed purposes, the probability of avoiding a re-set of the temporal loop is currently less than one in, um... a thousand and um... it will only get worse. For the human race, existence as we know it has statistically ended, that is to say, the world functionally ended the moment Mr. Fenton send you, Sergeant Snider, back in time.” The room was totally silent except for the sound of breathing and the occasional squeak of a chair as an occupant moved ever so slightly.

“How can that be?”

“The appearance of the second Lenny Snider actually reduced the odds of avoiding the re-set by half, that is to say, the termination of either of you will re-set the temporal loop. And,” he held up his hand, “upon the next reset there will be four and then eight Lenny Sniders... you follow my point? This is just about the best shot we have and it is a piss poor one.”

“There is something? Right?”

“That’s why your here Sergeant. A one in a thousand shot and the best chance that we will ever have.”

“Ok, you’re asking me to do what?”

“We don’t have the technology to build a worm hole but you Sergeant are standing at the mouth of one. We can send you back to the future, moments before Mr. Fenton sends the future ‘you’ to the past.”

“And?” I said but I already had an idea of exactly what would be asked of me.

“Kill your future self. The loop is never initiated.”

“And me?”

“Probably not a good outcome as you can well imagine, Sergeant. And Sergeant, you will have but a fraction of a second to complete the task, do you understand, a few hundred milliseconds for the loop will already be attempting to reset. You will have to come out literally firing at the one and only target available, yourself. And one more important fact, the other Sergeant Snider is already in the hands of the Faey. We may have but hours to initiate this operation, do you understand? At best we can give you but a few minutes to think this over.”

I laughed, “I guess I did re-up.” It was obvious that they didn’t understand, they’d never been in combat. One chance in a thousand? My old buddy Mel Granger had given his life for a lot less. Saving the human race? “UuuRaaah!”

~oOo~

It was obvious that I would come out of the wormhole with an M-16 set on automatic, that I would come out firing. What wasn’t obvious to the scientists was why I had to do so dressed to the nines. No combat vet would knowingly go into danger without all utilizing all the gear and resources available that might give him or her the slightest edge. What they didn’t appreciate was the potential impact

of a beautiful young woman in full 'combat' gear. I was wearing my little black dress, three-inch heels and tons of makeup. My blond hair had been carefully brushed out and set to flow freely across my bare shoulders. I even had a demi bra with 'un-necessary' padding, to push up and out my more than adequate breasts. I knew that Bobby had 'lusted' after one Sally Burkhart and let's be frank; poor Bobby had languished there between dimensions for a decade. He might not be physically capable of such an interaction but sex was as much a function of the mind as it was of the body. I was trying to buy time and time, in combat, is everything.

Nor was it clear to me that my future self would just be standing there ready to be taken apart by my slugs. In both transitions I had appeared alone and never with another sample of 'me'. It was one of the advantages I had that the others did not. Instead of an M-16, I carried a small snub-nosed thirty-eight, which at close range would be more than adequate. The latter I held behind my back, out of sight before transition. And yes, my purse that contained items I might need if I was successful: a dozen uncut diamonds and about three thousand dollars. My fingers were on that purse clasped in my left hand as my right held the revolver behind my back. I looked at the scientists standing a few feet away, "Don't look so glum, if we fail this time we can always try, try again."

They didn't understand, how could they? It was very much like it had been with Marty Meeks, what's the worst that could happen? The loop would simply re-start and the next time... well the next time I would not fail.

Chapter 5

BLAAM!

I dropped the handgun before stepping over the dead body of the polymorph, my future self. Bobby

was there, of course, but I couldn't make out his features. It was a full moon but we were under the trees and in shadow. I took another step into a patch of brilliant moonlight and just stood there. I was sure he could see me now as I turned and faced in his direction. Enough time had already passed; well beyond the fraction of a second the scientists had given me. I was still here, up time. We were still in prime time, that is to say this was no re-run.

“Sally? Sally Burkhart!”

I smiled; this was the best possible outcome. I had his full and undivided attention and every second that passed changed the past. Trust me, simply killing my future self was not in itself enough. The longer I could delay him, the more uncertain the past became. He could still send me back or some other victim at an even later date. No, things were not done. “Not quite what you expected, huh Bobby?”

He was still all but invisible, a mere form in the darkness, “You know who I am?”

Thank God he didn't have a clue as to who I was, not yet. I was still his teenaged passion, the hottest gal in town. I don't know whether or not he could be horny in his condition but he was surely deprived of sensual pleasure. “You are a real fuckup, Bobby. And you have absolutely no idea of just how really dumb you are.” I hadn't meant to say exactly that, in fact it probably wasn't a smart thing to do, but damn it he really was a major fuck up.

“I am a wizard!” he snapped with obvious anger in his voice. “And if I wanted...”

“Shit!” I said as I began to walk across that lawn toward the ruminants of Ellsworth Street. Walking on the lawn in high heels was not an easy task. “You don't even know who or what you are.” I continued walking and he started to follow me.

I think I got his curiosity aroused for the anger was no longer apparent in his voice, “What?”

I kept walking. “You are a Faey, ok? F-A-E-Y As was your mother and father.”

“A what?”

“A people that freely uses magic.”

“Magic.”

“Yes, you are not special Bobby but you know what is really sad, your dad and mom were sent to guard Hell’s Gate. The Faey, your people, wanted to have nothing to do with the dark matter and dark energy on the other side of that gate. And you opened that gate and killed them, but you already know that.” I’d reached the street and walking in those heels was considerably easier now. I stopped and waited for him to catch up. “Sending that creature back...” I could see his face now, in the moonlight.

“That was Lenny Snider you murdered.”

“Pity,” I said without emotion. “He was just one of them, not Faey like us.” I turned my back and began to walk now briskly down the street, past other ruined houses. The click of my heels sounded loud in the dark of the night.

He hurried after me, “You’re Faey?”

I stopped and faced him, hands on my hips, “Are you saying that you can’t tell?” I laughed and turned back, walking faster toward the limits of the woods and that pool of raw magic.

He had filled in the blanks that I had wanted him to fill in, “So....um.... they sent you back to stop me from...”



I hissed, "From fucking up time itself, you little dickhead." I hadn't broken stride but continued down the street.

"Wait," He called out. He appeared to slump, "I... um... can't go any further."

I realized now that I was safe or at least as safe as I could be with Bobby still very much the player astride that ocean of raw magic. I stopped walking and turned and faced him. "I have a pretty good idea of what you have been doing these last ten years Bobby. Hunched over this pool of magic like a dragon guarding its treasure. Others have come to harvest this magic, have they not?" He nodded. "Yes, of course they have. Humans and Faey would have been drawn to this as if it were a solid gold mountain, but you kept them away, right? Bobby if this lake of magic is consumed, and it would be eventually, you would be at last free."

And in a small voice he said, "Free to die."

"Yes, Bobby."

"I... I don't want to die."

"But if you let them work with this force, perhaps you might be saved? It certainly beats hanging about as a ghost... until the end of time." He said nothing. "I'll come back tomorrow Bobby and we can talk some more, if that is ok with you." I didn't wait for him to reply but turned and headed back into town.

"Sally?"

"Yes," I said, not stopping.

"You want to take Lenny with you."

"Huh? You want me to carry a dead body..."

“Oh, heck no. It’s pretty simple to bring him back to life. And he was my pal you know.”

I turned and headed back toward Bobby. I couldn’t admit that I was surprised that he could bring the dead back to life. I had to play this carefully. “Sure, whatever.” I said as if it was an everyday thing. Holy shit! There looming out of the darkness was that polymorph, sans hole in the head. “You just going to leave Lenny like that?” I added as I watched the obviously female figure walking down the street.

“Sorry, that’s not my spell. The polymorph curse, that is. Can’t do a thing about it. You know about this spell, right?”

“More than I ever wanted to,” I let out a long sigh. “Come on Lenny.” As the figure emerged out of the forest shadow I could see those passive-receptive Bambi eyes. “Um, Bobby how about some clothes and um, whatever he was carrying, you know like his wallet?”

“You can’t take care of that yourself?”

“You’re the one with all the surplus magic, be a sport.” I rolled my eyes and said, “Whatever!” as soon as I saw Bobby’s idea of clothes. A tight skirt that barely covered Lenny’s crotch and a halter top that did not controlled those loosely flailing breasts. I slipped my arm into Lenny’s arm and called back over my shoulder, “See you after sunset tomorrow?”

“Looking forward to it Sally. Hell, I really am.”

~oOo~

“How are you doing Lenny?”

“Um... I don’t know. Is it just me that went crazy or the whole world?”

I laughed, "The whole world is closer to the point."

"This magic stuff is real, huh?"

"Sorry pal, it is and tomorrow you'll wake up and discover that it is still real. Ah, do you have that hotel key?"

She fumbled around and then found it in her wallet. "You mean this?"

I snatched the electronic key card from her fingers, "Yeah, we'll have a place to sleep tonight. Bet you never thought that you would sleep with Sally Burkhart, did you?"

"Seriously?" she said with interest in her polymorph face.

"It's not going to be as swell as you might imagine Lenny, not nearly as swell. Ah- hold on for a second." I stopped and removed my high heels, "Walking in these things can be a bitch," I said as I grabbed her arm and walked in my bare nylons, my shoes I carried in my other hand. "The thing is, good buddy, you'll go ape shit over every man you see and I mean every single one. And not just crazy with passion, ok, I mean you will fall head over heels in love."

"That doesn't sound very good to me Sally."

"It sure the Hell isn't a good thing, pal. There's not a creep in the world that you wouldn't willingly shag, trust me, I've been there."

"You?"

"A long story. Anyhow don't get too pissed off if I get in the way of your love life, it will be for your own good. Anyhow, you don't do dames, ok? Tonight I'll shake my pussy in your face and you'll not feel the slightest interest."

“Gosh. I find that hard to believe.”

“Yeah, I’m cool all right just not your kind of cool. We’ll be like sisters and that’s all.”

“Golly-gee-wiz.”

I laughed, “What you meant to say is ‘fuck me’, right?” She giggled. Yeah, been there and done that. Keeping Lenny out of trouble was going to require constant attention.

~oOo~

I did make it back to the edge of the woods the following evening at about eight fifteen. The sun had already set but the sky was still brightly illuminated with streaks of pink and purple. It had been a busy day for both Lenny and I. I’d placed part of my cash and all of Lenny’s money in a joint checking account and Lenny had his savings account transferred to the bank in Perryville, though it would be at least three working days until we could access all that money, over thirty thousand dollars. And I still had my un-cut diamonds for a rainy day, so, for the short term, we were good.

We rented an overpriced furnished condo less than three blocks from the end of Ellsworth Street and leased a car using Lenny’s credit card and then for good measure, we spent over three thousand dollars on clothes for the two of us. At about six o’clock we were settled into our new digs and I was exhausted. It wasn’t all the running around that had done me in; it was mostly keeping my new charge in line that took all the effort. As I had warned Lenny, there wasn’t a man alive that didn’t pluck her heartstrings. At first she thought I was being unreasonable but eventually she began to understand. No matter how special the man seemed, the next one erased the last one in the race for her affections. What was the old expression:

there are a lot of fish in the sea and even Lenny couldn't eat all those fish.

Her behavior and mannerisms when we were alone was quite reasonable. Indeed she was almost masculine in her behavior which was to be expected but the simple presence of a male and voila' she transformed into a complete bitch in heat, which she was. I'd been that way of course but it was more dramatic watching her. Hips rolling and arms all askew she was, well, pathetic. And those 'fuck me' eyes, well it was a wonder that we made it thought the day at all. And we almost didn't.

"I'd ordered a pizza after we got home and then went for a shower. That was my first mistake of the day. When I came walking down the stairs wearing only my bathrobe, there on the floor sat the pizza box and nothing else. I hurried to the back bedroom, Lenny's room and stopped by the closed door. Inside I heard the sounds of a sexual frenzy in progress. I rapped on the door and called out in a loud voice, "The pizza's getting cold." Not that it mattered very much to Lenny and her current boy friend.

It was about a quarter to eight when the delivery boy finally left. Lenny came into the kitchen and picked up a slice of cold pizza. It was obvious that she didn't mind eating cold pizza. A lazy smile rode on her face and she was still swinging her hips somewhat excessively, "Pretty gosh, darn cool."

"You pregnant yet?"

A startled look came over her face, "Huh?"

"Polymorphs are designed to get pregnant."

"Cool," she said, "but, um, he used a rubber?"

Thank God for little favors, I thought. Of course a pregnant Lenny would be a lot easier to control. Ex-

cept I wouldn't be the one in control. "Um... I got to visit Bobby for a while."

"Can I come?"

I laughed, "I'm sure you already did, Lenny. Anyhow, I'd rather you stay here, at least for tonight." I started to get up and then stopped. "I'd rather you not answer the door until I get back, ok?"

"And if Dickey comes back?"

"Especially if Dickey comes back." Her face fell but she seemed to understand. "Look Lenny, I'm just looking after your best interests, ok?"

A few minutes later I was standing just outside the forest and a few feet beyond the outer limits of that field of raw magic. I called out "Bobby!" But nothing happened. I called again and this time I heard crashing through the underbrush, it certainly wasn't Bobby that was coming to the sound of my voice. I almost took off on a run but then held my ground. "Hey." I said as Joe-Joe emerged from the forest. Of course he didn't remember me, in fact we had never met in this temporal sequence.

"Are you Sally?"

"Guilty." He looked confused, and so I added, "Yes, I'm Sally."

"Good, um Master Fenton sends his apologies."

"He does?" I said quite surprised.

"He's um meeting with some wizards and doesn't want to be interrupted."

"Wizards? You mean Faey?"

He looked blank faced. “He didn’t say nothing about Fay.”

So they were here all along, why wasn’t I surprised? As soon as he lifted his shield over the pool of raw magic they’d come. It was to be expected but surely not so quickly. “Tell Bobby I’ll drop by tomorrow night.”

“That’s Master Fenton.”

“Um... yes, of course, tell his wizard-ship I’ll be here after sunset.” As I hurried away I realized that tomorrow would be another busy day. Man those Faey were like flies on a cow paddy.

~oOo~

The influx of Faey into Perryville turned out to be the least of my worries. The Faey were interested to be sure in the potential of raw magic but interested wasn’t the same as stupid. They would not go willy-nilly wild with the stuff, not until they fully understood its properties. Their only guide was Bobby and to be entirely honest Bobby was still a rank amateur, a self-taught backwoods Faey hack that couldn’t even undo a simple polymorph spell.

No, the problem was ordinary human beings, locals that for years had systematically avoided those ‘woods’ had now discovered the wonders that could be had at a mere wish. I’m not saying that that the whole town migrated into the woods that first evening or even a majority of them nor did the ‘would-be-wizards’ all possess the ability to manipulate raw dark matter, in fact most didn’t, but enough did. And those that did behaved exactly like Sally back in the temporal loop, they went absolutely nuts. First it was things of value, especially gold and jewels, but what is a diamond worth if it can be easily created with just a thought? Very quickly the focus centered upon what was important, youth and good health, which

in turn became astoundingly fine looking specimens of homo-sapiens. Had it ended there, all might have been ok except it didn't end there.

What is the most potent, most satisfying goal of all to a human being? Happiness? Get real. Power! Power over others. Slavery would be re-invented but first there had to be a war between those who could manipulate raw magic, each seeking to gain ascendancy over the others. Folks like me who had no talent were simply victims, not players. And how did the Faey respond to this: with contempt mixed with irritation. Humans were but animals and in this case I suspect that the Faey were more right than wrong. The Faey's tactical solution was to let the humans go wild for a few days and then destroy the 'victor' when he or she emerged.

In the mean time the town of Perryville would come apart at the seams. The Faey had isolated the town from the outside world as one might lockup the inmates in an asylum. It was in their best interest to do so and having the human population burn itself out, which was what was really happening, would in the end solve their immediate problem, taking total control of that vast pool of raw magic.

I hadn't contacted the scientists yet which meant that I would never be able to contact them. All cell phones and land lines were out and what was really impressive, to leave would require man's oldest form of transport, shanks mare. Of course I wasn't aware of the pending disaster when I returned from my attempted meeting with Bobby but I was pissed that my new smart phone no longer worked. That was my first hint of the things to come.

It was dark outside now as I opened the door into the condo. Inside sitting on the couch was Lenny and on the coffee table a candle that was the sole light in the room. "What's wrong?"

“The electricity is out,” she said looking a bit anxious. “It kind of scared me being here all alone and in the dark.”

I laughed, “Sergeant Snider? Afraid of the dark?”

She forced a wan smile across her lips but then nodded yes. “I feel better knowing that you are here. Um... Sally?”

“Yes?” I said as I took a seat on the other side of the coffee table.

“I don’t want to stay here.”

“In the condo?”

“No, in this town, ok? It just doesn’t feel right.”

I looked at the newborn polymorph, “I need to stay at least a few more days. In the temporal loop I met some scientists... that is to say I need to let them know that the lake of dark matter is no longer guarded and um...” My voice trailed off, the fact was I’d never met them, not in the ‘real’ time frame. And it was ten years later, just tracking them down could be a bitch. “Does the internet work?” She shook her head no. “No surprise, I guess. Ok, tomorrow you and I will drive up to Kent State University. There is... was a professor there I need to contact.”

We went to bed that night not knowing that it was already too late to leave. One of the ‘would-be’ wizards had found a way of transporting dark matter from the woods to the downtown. The need to go into the woods was no longer an issue. All hell quickly broke out but we slept though it all.

~000~

“Wake up, wake up!” Yelled a frantic Lenny.

I rolled over and squinted at the window, it was early in the morning, pre-dawn to be exact. "What?" I said with irritation.

She sprang away from the bed and stood at the window, "You got to see this."

"What?" I grumbled as I tossed aside the covers and came to my feet.

"Look."

I put my hand on her shoulder and looked out. "Holy Shit!" There was a fucking huge castle setting where downtown had been. It covered most of what had been the center of town and, well, a fantasy building, you know like the illustrations one sees in a child's book of fairytales. Impossible turrets that climbed high into the sky with elaborate flags and... "Look," I said, pointing out the obvious, Ellsworth Street was gone. It had been replaced by a simple dirt footpath. Moments later I was standing outside wearing only my bathrobe. The car was gone, even the garage was missing. No driveway, nothing but a dirt path leading down to the other slightly wider dirt path.

When Lenny came down to join me I said, "Yeah, it's time to get out of Dodge. It's going to be a long walk out of here Lenny, so dress appropriately."

Twenty minutes later we left the house carrying enough food and water to last a couple of days. It was obvious that going down the path would lead eventually to that fairytale castle so we went up the hill. Shit, that would take us to the woods. "Whatever happens, stay close to me Lenny, we're going cross country." Crawford was roughly to the East and only about five-six miles as the crow flies, how bad could that be, right?

Less than three minutes later we encountered a naked male. “Ladies, where do you think you are going?”

Well Lenny was captured instantly. The fact that this guy looked like a seven foot tall Greek God had caught my eye as well but I wasn’t enraptured and for all his good looks, the latter was wasted on Lenny; she would have gone bonkers had he been a little fat man. “Um... Crawford?”

He laughed, “Not anymore.” With a flick of his hand both Lenny and I were standing there buck-naked. There was certainly nothing wrong with either of us as physical specimens of the female variety. Under normal conditions that man would have been fully satisfied, especially with Lenny’s attitude, which was fully receptive, but conditions were far from normal. I think humans use magic just because they can. With another flick of his hand Lenny was no longer a polymorph and I was certainly no longer Sally with the blond hair, go figure.

~000~

It was kind’a like an old fashion cowboy round up. Where the bus and train station had once been was a large corral into which all the ordinaries, that is folks like Lenny and I who had no measurable skills at handling raw magic, were eventually herded. Several thousand people milled about crying and cursing and none of them had the bodies that they had started the day with. That they were predominately female and very young said more about how magic was being employed than it did about the true sex ratio of the town of Perryville or the mean age of the population. And we were the lucky ones, the last of the ordinaries it would seem.

The number of ‘freaks’ running, crawling and flying about indicated that the majority of the town’s population were either lacking in the ability to use magic (i.e., victims) or had come out losers in one

contest or another and, more importantly, had already been seriously transformed. Pixies hardly bigger than my thumb flitted about in the air like so many oversized dragonflies. Perfectly formed human females with wee, tiny brains. There was little evidence of intelligence in these creatures. Which only seemed to state the obvious, there was no purpose being served in creating pixies or most of other 'creatures' that now roamed about the crazy quilted landscape.

A man with the head of a pig? His behavior suggested that the head was all pig without even a trace of humanity in 'its' behavior, possibly this outrage was the result of an act of revenge or merely a random curse. And did it matter, not at all. And apparently someone had been making 'cat women' for a while, there were enough of them slinking about the corral and some were downright sexy once one ignored those feline teeth, the latter act suggested pure whimsy at play. No, it was a mad house run by the insane. The good news was that the novelty was rapidly wearing off, that is just doing magic for the sake that one could do it wasn't enough any longer.

Milling around outside the corral were the 'wizards' if the term applied to ordinary mortal humans with more power than common sense. There were probably less than sixty of them. Most wore improbably perfect human bodies, male and female, and all of them had adopted, like our 'master', heroic height and mass. Bigger was better, it seemed. Here the sex ratio was nearly normal with slightly more male than females. They were in the process of dividing up the remaining subjects, that is us, when a fight broke out between some of the 'wizards'.

We were but chaff in the whirlwind, collateral damage and of no significance. Miss-thrown spells and random curses swept the corral but the wizards were now too occupied with each other. It was quickly evolving into a civil war in which winners

eventually turned on other winners. It was winner take all.

The seething mass of humanity inside the corral broke out eventually and headed in all directions, that is those that still had the sense or capacity to do so. Lenny and I spent the night back at the condo before starting our long trek out of town one more time. The castle was gone, well, wrecked, and so were most if not all of the so-called wizards. The town of Perryville which once had a population of approximately five thousand souls, probably had fewer than a thousand that remained, more or less human and more or less in control of their faculties.

~000~

Lenny and I parted company the following night, we were no longer compatible. Lenny was the lucky one, she had come out 'almost' normal, a regular gal next door sweetness with a pair of breasts that were certain to add to her appeal. She had a pretty loud 'mommy voice' in her head which I could certainly appreciate but at least she could utter the word 'no'. She was no polymorph but her biological clock was ticking so loud that the difference was more apparent than real. Anyhow, that first day in Crawford she hooked up with a fairly ordinary young man and seemed pleased that she had done so. When she didn't return to our motel room that evening, I wasn't surprised. I left the next day, by bus, for Akron, Ohio.

I was wearing blue jeans and an oversized sweat-shirt but even such a dowdy costume could hardly hide the excessively female figure underneath. Some brain over loaded with testosterone had created this caricature of the sexy woman. Legs too long and a waist too tiny to be natural was offset by a mane of red hair that hid most of my face most of the time. I would have to get used to peeking out at the world with one eye. My makeup, which was as magical as the rest of me, created a vestige every bit as erotic as the body and hair. I moved like the polymorph in heat

though with these hips and ass any movement was probably successful in projecting pure sexuality. But unlike the polymorph, I certainly wasn't in heat. All this sexuality was a lie.

My body screamed for attention, that was the way it was designed, but my mind, that was another thing entirely. In this last metamorphous, all the accumulated feminization I had under gone had been stripped away leaving the stark, raw Sergeant Snider at the controls; that is to say I was a heterosexual male again with all that comes with it. The last thing I wanted was to turn men on in a sexual manner and yet I was so perfectly suited to perform precisely this function. Indeed it was this newly discovered manhood that had so abruptly tarnished my relationship with Lenny. She found nothing sexy about me nor would another woman help her to quiet that 'mommy voice'.

Before getting on the bus I'd shaved my head and removed that magical makeup, though there was nothing I could do to the rest of me. I must have been a remarkable sight when I got on the bus, this fantastic creature with a bald head, sans makeup, not that it saved me from drawing the male eye. Before I got off the bus an hour later, all that effort had been erased. That great mane of hair and that too perfect face were, after all, of magical constructions. Thank God I still had those uncut diamonds else I would have been reduced to using my considerable charms for the basic needs.

~000~

The next month and a half passed remarkably uneventfully. I sold nearly a third of the diamonds and acquired a rather comfortable apartment and some nice furniture. I spent little on clothing and what I bought was motivated by a sincere desire to mask as much as possible my exotic femininity, the latter effort was not completely wasted. No high heels or tight skirts for yours truly. And a hood did a fairly good job

of hiding my lush tresses. It was easy enough to get hooked up with females in a social-sexual way. I was perfectly fitted to be an active lesbian, or so it would seem.

But I faced the same problem I had once encountered with Sally Burkhart when I was that sexy lady 'Mary', there was just no connection between my mind and my body. That penis in my brain wasn't talking to the clit between my legs. That I was more functionally a female than a male was made all too evident one night when a lady friend strapped on a dildo. It still wasn't the best sex I've ever had but it was better than what I had grown used to over the last few weeks. And then there was one more thing that surprised me, female chatter.

The fact was being a lesbian wasn't really working for me. I missed male companionship. Things like 'relationships' and clothing just... weren't my thing. I really was a guy trapped inside a woman's body, at least intellectually. It was more or less a spur of the moment thing when I went down to a sports bar to watch football on a Monday night.

I was not the only gal there to be sure but I was the only one who wasn't making an effort to be seen as a sex object, not that it mattered given the body and face I had. Even a hoodie and sweats couldn't hide the obvious and yes I was still wearing that all too perfect makeup, I was a head turner. And when I tried to communicate that I really just wanted to be friends, well that brought more scowls than smiles. Anyhow, I sure didn't have to buy any drinks and I was never alone.

The first man to ask me my name, I told him the truth, "Lenard Snider." That got a blank faced response. I followed up with, "That's Gunny Sergeant, U.S. Marines." By that time the guy's eyes all but crossed.

"Ex-marine? You see combat?"

I laughed, “Five tours in the middle east.” Man, that felt good. I was Gunny Sergeant Snider and proud of it. “Three hundred plus days in actual combat,” I added. “UuuRaaah!”

There were a half dozen men staring at me by this time. “Women don’t serve in combat units, not yet anyway,” a guy commented from a couple of tables away.

I gave him my best beauty queen smile, all teeth, “I wasn’t a woman then.”

The man who had been nearly sitting in my lap jerked back, pulling his hands back where they belonged. All eyes quickly turned back to the game and a few minutes later, I had more than ample room to breathe, go figure.

Was I shocked at their reaction, not in the slightest. I would have responded in the same way myself not so long ago. But more important, the man inside felt relief, I felt relief. It wasn’t like I was trying to get fucked by these guys nor did I want to play the sexy lady any longer. I simply wanted to be treated as just another human being.

Later one of my distracters came over and chatted me up. He was army national guard and had served in both Iraq and Afghanistan. He tried to trip me up with trick questions and such but I soon had him believing me. One of our tours had overlapped and the stuff I knew wasn’t the kind of things shown on TV. We even had a common friend, “Sergeant Gulliver?”

“Gully? J.J. Golly?”

“Shit!” He exclaimed, “You’re for real.”

I patted him on the hand, “Thanks, I needed that.”

He looked at my hand but didn’t pull his away, “J.J. lives in Cleveland now.”

“No shit.”

“Maybe we could get together sometime?”

“I’d like that, I surely would.”

We exchanged phone numbers before I left that night. I felt a hundred percent more human that I had felt in... however long it had been since being transformed into a polymorph by a random curse.

~oOo~

“Can I come in?”

He looked like an accountant, big glasses and an oversized brief case and he was wearing a tidy but in-expensive suit. “And you are?”

But instead of answering me he simply pushed past me and stopped once well clear of the door. “Nice apartment, Sergeant Snider,” he said as he slowly turned on his heels checking out the living room before settling his gaze upon me. “If I may so bold, Sergeant, what the fuck made you decide to contact the Veterans Administration?”

So that was what this was about, “I’m entitled...”

Now he was in my face, “You’re a fucking broken, nearly shattered polymorph!”

Shit I thought, he said polymorph that means... “You’re Faey?”

The man snorted, “No, but I work with them. And I emphasize work-with-them. I don’t work *for* them.”

“Oh,” I said backing up. “Um...”

“Look you twit, none of us wants the Federal Government to stick its big nose into what happened at Perryville.”

I nodded, I could understand that. “And other than being rude and crude, who exactly are you?”

He dropped his brief case; it landed with a heavy thump, and then crossed his arms, glaring at me, “Your worst nightmare.”

I swallowed, “Um, can I get you some coffee?”

He ignored the offer, picked up the brief case and sat it on the coffee table. As he opened it he was muttering to himself until he pulled out a piece of paper. “Here,” he said shoving the formal looking document in my direction, “is the real nature of our problem. The DNA sample you sent the VA matches that of one Lenard Snider and as you can see, such a match is clear and sufficient evidence that you and Sergeant Snider are one and the same person.”

I smiled, I had hired a lawyer to make my case with the VA and the DNA sample had been his idea. “That’s nice to know.”

His glare intensified, “Is it now? It is less than nine weeks since one Sergeant Snider, male, went on leave.” He flipped a copy of my military photo I.D. in my direction. What part of you now matches this physical description?”

I glared back at him, “You already identified me as a polymorph so you know exactly how this disparity could exist.”

“Of course *we* know, but that is the whole point, you dim wit. Talk about waving a red flag and drawing unwanted attention...”

I laughed with delight, “But of course, you can fix this right?”

“That’s why I’m here. The Faey still refuse to work with un-bonded sub-atomics.”

I was going to be a male again and that pleased me greatly, “Um... so why are you my worst nightmare?”

Chapter 6

What that man did to me should never have been done. Oh yes I was a man again, that much was a given. I had the standard dick and balls but none of my ‘junk’ looked all that healthy. He’d simulated years of sex-reassignment hormones to justify my more feminine curves. My beautiful breasts were inflated with silicone implants now and my nose had a small and relatively fresh scar to simulate recent facial surgery. And that beautiful red hair? It was a wig. The hair under it was brown and about as long as a buzz cut would have grown in two months. Oh yeah, I was four inches taller and my shoulders; well they were no longer slender. I’d gone from a 32 to a 40 inch chest.

I had way too much body hair, though less than had I not had the ‘fake’ hormone treatments and I was still suffering from unwanted facial hair which would have to be removed the old fashioned way. And why? All that time I’d spent in Akron ‘passing’ as a female. My image was surprisingly consistent with that ‘real’ female body I’d had as long as one examined me from afar. My lawyer wouldn’t know the difference, for example. I’d established myself as a trans-woman and that didn’t require any magic to be sure.

What he did to me mentally was far, far worse. The raw male me, the old me that I’d so recently re-discovered, had been properly ‘fucked’. I was the very essence of a struggling and confused transgendered person. I wanted to be made complete as a real female and yet, unlike poor Tommy, my dick was my friend. It was a deadly conflict to be sure and one that I might never resolve. Pussy or penis, I wanted both.



At least I was no longer a pure passive-receptive personality but a blurred mixture of male and female with the female element somewhat stronger.

There was no doubt that I had acquired some fetish urges for my interest in clothing had taken on an implicit sexual valence. I spent the next several days shopping and yes my tastes were very, very sluttish. Those tits I'd worked so hard to hide were brought out for the whole world to see. I really liked tight, clingy clothing that showed off my tush and I'd hardly get out of bed without first putting on a pair of exotic high heels. And yes, I had to do my own makeup once more. And like my clothes, I chose rather excessive themes when doing my face.

I still had that fantastic red wig and it was almost my constant companion. And, finally, I'd acquired a taste for jewelry, mostly flashy, cheap stuff; well cheap was what I could afford. All dressed up and that was the norm now for me, I was as loud as the worst drag queen to ever join a rainbow parade in West Hollywood. Indeed, I was one now for there was not the slightest difference between my sisters and me. Oh yes, I shouldn't forget to mention my voice was a full register lower, a manly voice that I tried to cover up by talking softly. Sweet Lord, I'd gone from a really sexy lady to a male want-to-be babe. It was Monday night when I made my third trip into that sports bar and my first night out as a full tilt queen.

I was wearing, of course, a not so little black dress. It was an off the shoulders number with absolutely no back and the minimum in the front. It clung to my every curve and of the latter, they were all in motion. Especially my breasts, my silicon enhanced tits didn't need no stinking bra to keep them pointed straight out, so they were free to bounce and quiver with my every stride. I minced in on five-inch heels with my wild red hair flowing every which way, the latter was achieved by random and unnecessary head tosses. I was more than a little let down that few heads turned to catch my entrance, they were mostly

fixated on the football game: mesmerized. The male me would have instantly understood but the new chick-with-a-dick didn't or rather she didn't want to understand. Was I not the hottest, sexiest thing on God's little green earth? Well, probably not because the heads that had turned had revolved back toward the screens.

I finally found a seat near the back and sat there in a bit of a huff. The football game meant nothing to me. One couldn't even get service, for the whole bar crew was, for the moment, as mesmerized as the customers. I left a few minutes later and I never returned. That short page in my life was totally gone now.

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I found myself at a female impersonator's club later that night. The club was pretty dead perhaps because it was a Monday night. It had shows Thursday through Saturday and was closed Sunday and it might as well have been closed this Monday as far as I could tell. It hadn't been an easy trip having to drive from Akron to Cleveland in my clunker which had threatened to die more than once so I wasn't particularly eager to just turn around and head back to my apartment. Nor was there anything there at my apartment or rather anyone. I was as horny as a son-of-a-bitch, another sweet treat granted me by my benefactor. At least here one could expect to meet a guy that might appreciate my special nature. At the moment that seemed like wishful thinking.

The guy working the bar was obviously gay but I strongly suspected that I wasn't his type. In fact I rather suspected that he was looking precisely for the same thing I was, which was... a manly man. God knows the way I was feeling at the moment, I wouldn't be too picky. Even a gal would do me just fine as long as she accepted me as I was. It had been weeks since I'd gotten laid and that was well before my latest transformation. And yes, that had been with a

woman. You had to go all the way back to the temporal loop to find the last time I'd had sex with a man. I was pretty sure I could handle it but sure wasn't like certain.

"Um," I said trying to strike up a conversation with the barkeep, "does she still work here?" I pointed at a large poster of one of the impersonators. It was the name that had struck me: Brandy Volt. That name was too damn close to Tommy's name; Volts and it made sense this being ten years up time that Tommy might be working at such a job. And she had been partial to the name of Brandy, right? I certainly couldn't tell from the face or the body that she and Tommy might be one and the same.

The guy jerked his head toward the woman who was sitting with her back to me. She was going over receipts or something and pecking away at a calculator. "Ms. Volt, you have an admirer."

"Great Jimmy, I'm busy, ok?" She didn't turn around or otherwise acknowledge my presence.

"You wouldn't by chance be from Perryville, would you?"

The clicking stopped and she half turned, "And you are?"

Ironic when you think about it, Tommy and I had never met during this temporal sequence and yet she and I had, for a brief time, been the best of friends. I mean that friendship was, for me, only a few months back, subjectively speaking. "Ah- I'm sure you don't remember me Tommy but we went to school together."

That brought forth a scowl. There had been literally no one that she had been close to and thus no one she wanted to talk to from Perryville except she couldn't help noticing that I was an obvious queen

and that peaked her interest. “I sure don’t remember you.”

I thought that she was going to turn back to her work so I added, “Lenny Snider. I was a bit of a nerd back then, um... I used to hang out with Bobby Fenton? The guy that always wore the black rain coat?”

“No shit,” she said. “I... I kind’a remember you.”

I laughed, “I didn’t think anybody did but I was sure you would remember Bobby.”

She laughed along with me, “Fucking nut. Why would you bother with a crackpot like him?”

“I had issues.”

She looked me up and down, “I can see that. You have the surgery yet?”

I knew exactly what she was talking about, I shrugged. “I’m not sure if I really want to...”

She started to return to her work and sighed, “Whatever.”

“Um... I think we could be friends.” That last comment fell on deaf ears or at least she didn’t respond.

~oOo~

Tommy and I had sex that night, sometime after two in the A.M. It was never apparent that such a thing was going to happen. We hadn’t hit it off all that well initially and we were both sexual predators hunting for the same prey but as the evening went on, most of what came through that door were loud, aggressive queens. That we had sex later in the evening was more of the result of booze and, well, our identical needs. Like the first time Tommy and I had

hit it off, we had all too much in common. Apparently she had never returned to Perryville after getting her implants and yes, she was still pre-op. There was damn little money in her line of work, which included whoring.

I think it was while we were slow dancing and my prick began to poke her that she started to change her assessment of the possibilities. Her penis hadn't 'worked' in years, not that she'd wanted it to, and that mine was still obviously functional was... interesting. I found my response to her to be equally interesting if not completely unexpected. It was that odd mix of male and female that made this possible. Her femininity was so certain that I never doubted my sexual role in this encounter.

It turned out to be a ridiculous attempt at sexual congress; we were like two people drowning. We both needed to be saved and neither of us could adequately hold ourselves above the surface let alone give aid to the other. As far as my prick was concerned, it was more of a thermometer that registered my arousal than an actual device to be employed sexually. Unlike Tommy, I wasn't averse to receiving a blowjob. On a one to ten scale I would rate this sexual encounter about two. I doubt that Tommy would have even given it a one. My 'maleness' was entirely superficial.

When I left in the wee hours of the morning, I was certain that we would never meet again. Whatever history I'd had with Tommy was just that, history. And worst, it was my unique history, a relationship that had never happened in this temporal sequence. It was a sobering experience.

~oOo~

The VA doesn't do sex-reassignment surgery but access to hormones was another thing entirely, that and psychotherapy. There were actually a number of vets that were 'transitioning' along the gender dimen-

sion. Well, a number is a bit generous, but I was hardly unique. I was active in a VA transgender psychotherapy group for several months, all were vets like me and all were transitioning. The hormones I received from the VA actually helped, I no longer got an erection every time I got aroused. There is nothing like a tent pole forming on the front of one's dress to screw up an evening.

I was also learning to be more successful in 'passing' as an honest-to-goodness female. You'd think given my extensive background that I would already know how to do that in spades but such wasn't the case. I eventually got rid of my more extreme heels, for example. At five foot nine inches adding another five inches was way, way over the top. Ditto the slut-tish clothes. As my therapist had said, those clothes said more about my insecurities than anything else. Yes, I was finally learning to accept myself as a woman and that was the fundamental secret to passing.

During this time I was taking classes at the local community college, not for an eventual degree, that wasn't going to happen, but for job training. When my veteran's benefits ran out and the last of the uncut diamonds was sold, I'd have to make a living as a woman. And no, I never thought of prostitution or any other career using my body. The hormones were working wonders but I would never be that exotic, sexy babe that I had been. Perhaps that was good, I would have to make my way as a real person unsupported by magic.

I met Terry in my real-estate class. He was a loser like me; a high school dropout who was only now at the age of thirty-seven realizing that there was more to life than just hanging out. He was still living at home and working part-time at a Wal-Mart for less than minimum wage. There was nothing special about Terry other than he was attracted to me. In all the bodies I'd had, I was always this sexy bitch that men fell in lust with but now, well I was pretty

enough from a distance but I was terrified of being found out. Allowing a man to get close to me was a very, very difficult thing for me to do.

I kept him at a distance for most of the term which was reasonable enough. I guess playing hard to get must have done a number on Terry because the less responsive I became, the more he put into his efforts to seduce me. Of course it was my fear and not the man that was the central problem. After the final exam, he cornered me in the hallway. He all but surrounded me with his arms, one to each side of me, not touching but clearly indicating that I was not free to go on my way. "Why don't you like me?"

"Huh? Honest Terry I like you. I mean you're swell, ok?"

He looked confused, "Then why can't we date?"

I looked at him, he was about my height and I was certainly not the shrinking flower. "Because... I have a penis?"

I expected him to either get really angry or to laugh. He did look startled however and his arms no longer surrounded me, indeed he stepped back. "Oh."

I felt very sad at that moment, "Yeah, oh."

He started to turn away and then stopped, "Um, I still think you are cute."

Jesus my heart all but burst, "Thank you." I waited for something to happen but it didn't. I watched him walk away and my heart began to return to a more natural pace. He was halfway down the hallway when he stopped and turned around, "How about we go for coffee, my treat?"



When I came back from Afghanistan, a lifetime ago, but less than six months in linear time, I was uncertain about my future. Staying in the Marines seemed like my only option but even then I wasn't sure that I wanted to re-up. I'd seen too much death and destruction, enough for a lifetime. Little did I know that Perryville Ohio would make Afghanistan look like a cakewalk. And however evil the human terrorists seemed at the time, they were at least 'understandable' threats, ordinary 'human' threats. The existence of magic both of the bonded and un-bonded variety, had completely changed my perspective. One could easily hate and certainly fear the Faey but having seen what happens to 'ordinary' humans given access to un-bonded magic, even the terrorists and the Faey were but a pale force in comparison to the immense threat imposed by the existence of the raw magic sitting there in Perryville. And imagine if say terrorists and un-bonded magic were ever to come together?

I have to be completely frank, but if my life were even a little happier, I'd probably let well enough alone. That pool of un-bonded magic was certainly not my responsibility and contact with it had most surely screwed up my life. I was not happy being a pre-op trans-woman, who would be? And as far as the surgery, that was tens of thousands of dollars out of my reach. Terry had been but the first of three relationships I had as a transsexual and obviously none of them had worked out to anyone's satisfaction. Still without a job, let alone a career, and so utterly alone, what did I have to lose? UuuRaaah!

"Dr. Morin," I said as I entered his office. I think it was my voice that caught his attention being masculine which was, superficially, out of sync with my physical appearance. I was wearing jeans and a sweater and still had on a heavy coat, it was late December and very cold outside. "I know that you don't remember me, we met about ten years ago." He

frowned. And then I added, "We were in a temporal loop at the time." I shrugged and removed my coat, taking a seat in his office.

"A temporal loop?"

"I was connected to a worm hole at the time." I was losing him, it was obvious. He must think I was nuts. "Sorry," I said, I know this sounds crazy." He just nodded. "Um... I was a victim of the Faey."

He jerked up in his chair, I had his attention now. "Anyhow, with your help, I was able to terminate the temporal loop."

"The Faey? What do you know of the Faey?"

"So at least that hasn't changed," I laughed. "And Hell's Gate?" Oh no, I thought, that term went right over his head. "The pool of un-bonded magic?" Another blank. I would have my work cut out for me. He and therefore 'they' were much less prepared in this time line. "Um... It's a long story."

He smiled and there was eagerness in his voice, "Tell me what you know of the Faey?"

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It was dark outside when we left Dr. Morin's office. I had told him everything that I could remember and he became more and more excited the more I talked. He slammed his hand down on his desk and said, "I need to get the whole Society to meet on this."

Society? I had no idea of what that was, like-minded men and women, scientists I assume. But it was comforting to know that they existed in this temporal sequence. "I still carry a considerable quantity of raw magic on my person," I added.

He grumped, “Pre-matter and pre-energy, please. The word magic makes me decidedly uncomfortable.”

I just smiled, whatever, I thought, whatever. “When?”

“I’ll get back to you on a meeting with the Society. But first, would you like to see my laboratory? It’s just across the campus?”

“Um, that’s not really necessary, Dr. Morin.”

He laughed, “But I must insist. I mean if I can ascertain the presence of or even a trace of pre-matter or pre-energy on your person, that will certainly decide the issue regarding the Society’s future cooperation.”

That put me off just a tad. Had I not given him enough already? Still... “And you can do that?”

“Oh yes,” He beamed. “My device operates on principles very similar to the MRI... you are familiar with the standard MRI?”

The obvious answer was that I had absolutely no idea of how an MRI worked. “Um,” I lied, “yes of course.” That seemed to work. The last thing I wanted was another lecture on some obscure technology.

~oOo~

It was a huge metal tube and, after Dr. Morin activated the machine, a horrible rumble seemed to be emitted from inside that very tube in which I was supposed to go. “You sure this is absolutely necessary?” What I should have said was that being sealed up inside that rumbling tube was likely to freak me out. I never liked enclosed spaces, let alone noisy, enclosed spaces. Of course he was oblivious of my anxiety or, more likely, excited to actually use his ma-

chine in this situation. It would most certainly be the first sample of pre-matter ever collected if what I claimed was true. That alone would have been enough. To go from theory to fact would be the very height of his career. Oh yes, Dr. Morin was not to be deterred by my attitude or anxiety. I think had I actively resisted he would have persevered nonetheless. I was no longer simply a volunteer, not in his mind, but more like what Marty Meeks had seen, a goose that laid golden eggs.

Rather than answering me, he simply pushed my head back onto the gurney and activated the little sled that drew my body inside the tube, head first. I called out, "Ah- I...I changed my mind, doctor..." And then I was sealed inside that great throbbing metal beast. The outer door clicked shut with a loud clang. I overcame my initial impulse to scream and frantically try to escape, though I was panting like a trapped animal and my heart was racing. I'd been through worst, right? Be a man, I said to myself which was an odd thought coming from a trans-woman. And that thought brought a smile to my lips, I would survive, right?

A loud electronic click erupted just next to my right ear, "Can you hear me Ms. Snider?"

"AH- YES!" I shouted back.

"No need to shout, I can hear you loud and clear, can you hear me?"

"Yes... of course Dr. Morin. Will this take long?"

"No, in fact... we are almost done."

That brought a smile to my lips. And then suddenly I felt that familiar flow of magic or as Dr. Morin would have said pre-matter/pre-energy. "Ah- Doctor, are you getting that?" No answer. "DOCTOR!" I became frantic when he didn't answer. Seconds became minutes but felt like years. I'd completely lost it

and then I heard the door click open and the machine began to draw me out of the chamber.

I was no longer that trans-woman. The clothes I had on were much, much too large for me and if that cascade of wild red hair was any sign, I was that babe that had escaped from Perryville. And yes, that mommy voice was utterly silent. As I popped off that motorized gurney and turned toward the instrument panel where Dr. Morin stood I knew instantly where my old trans-woman spell had gone. Standing there was a sixty something trans-woman, Dr. Morin to be sure and under that red wig probably resided a nearly bald scalp. Everything that had been done to me had transferred to the professor. The pseudo hormone treatments, the pseudo-facial surgery and breast implants, all imposed on his old body. It was sad, really sad. "Doctor?"

"Um..." She looked at me. She was probably less startled by the changes in her body than what was taking place in her brain. He, or rather, she was trapped inside a male body and yes; there must be a mommy voice inside her head. "this is... magical." She walked about the laboratory in an aimless path and then finally stopped and turned toward me, "None of this..." she waved a hand toward the equipment and then the big metal tube, "seems at all relevant now, oh my." Her eyes grew much bigger when she saw how much I had changed, "You're lovely my dear."

"Thanks," I groused. I was a prick magnet again and certainly no longer a trans-woman. "How are you doing doctor?"

"I'm very confused."

"I was afraid of that, what happened?"

She just shook her head, "It doesn't matter anymore. Funny isn't it?"

“What do you mean it doesn’t matter anymore? You are going to contact the Society aren’t you?”

“Oh? Um, no. I think I’ll go to Perryville and see if they can make me whole.”

“All woman?”

“Yes... yes of course and maybe younger, perhaps?”

I backed out of the laboratory leaving my one and only hope of fighting the Faey or securing the raw magic. She was now focused on the only thing that mattered to her now, to be made complete as a woman. Everything I’d hope to accomplish had totally backfired. Dr. Morin was no longer a potent ally nor even a useful connection to the Society, whom-ever *they* were.

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To be absolutely honest, it is better to be a man inside the body of a magically enhanced babe, then to be a want-to-be babe in the body of a biological male who is only superficially female. I’d made a total muck of my situation the first time around, me trying to hide that which I had become. Refusing to go with the flow had only led me into conflict with the Faey. My attempt to resurrect Sergeant Snider had been a fool’s errand. I would not make that mistake again.

And just to be on the safe side, I needed to disappear, utterly vanish. I would take this fantastic body and use it as currency in building a new life, far from the Faey. The fact that Dr. Morin would seek out the Faey made my immediate disappearance mandatory. That night, still dressed in the clothes of the trans-woman, clothes that were many sizes too large, I drove east from Kent Ohio. I could not go back to Akron, every hour might matter. I had less than a hundred dollars in my purse and I certainly could not

use my credit cards. And the un-cut diamonds were in my apartment back in Akron. If I were to survive I would have to use this body to do so. And to use this body would mean I had to ignore my sexual preferences, not that I had ever really found any being 'her'.

Her? A name please? Mary was... ok. Last name, something totally common, um... Jones. Why not? I'm Mary Jones. I was soon on the road heading east. To where? A random walk, no place I'd ever been and no place that I ever wanted to go. Eventually, about midnight I stopped in Altoona Pennsylvania, a small city in the middle of the mountains. It met all the criteria.

I read once that a lot of prostitutes had a rather callous attitude toward 'Johns', indeed it was almost an essential survival trait. I had that in spades. I turned five tricks that night in less than three hours and yes it was even more horrible than I had imagined it would be. I lost count over the weekend exactly how many men I serviced. I was making good money but I couldn't do this much longer, it was so not right. That experience certainly hardened me to the role of being a prick magnet. And no, it wasn't 'fun'.

As soon as I had enough money, I left town with a couple of suitcases full of clothes and every ambition to be 'normal'. It would be nice if I could find a man or woman that I really liked. It would be unexpected to find a man that I wanted sexually or a woman that could satisfy me in that department. And I was certain that I would never find any relationship that would trigger, in me, romantic feelings. Having set the bar sufficiently low, all I had to have was a situation that offered nominal comfort and security.

And I found that situation in Beaver Falls, which is a little town just outside Pittsburgh, working as a common cocktail waitress in a high-class restaurant. The money wasn't as good as working as a whore but the tips sure beat flipping burgers. And I was in a po-

sition to meet lots of men and women, all of whom were well positioned in this small community. It was like working at Crows without all the shit kickers and because it was a small town, I had high visibility very quickly. And I played hard to get, which was more or less my natural inclination. I was no slut and I could afford to be very picky. I was the hottest babe in town and single. More important, I wasn't in a hurry to establish a long-term relationship, in fact, it might never happen and that was ok by me.

~oOo~

I was too drop-dead gorgeous to continue alone in this town unattached and my very sexy deportment was a red flag to all too many males. It was like I was asking to be fucked or at least that was a common misunderstanding, certainly nothing could be further from the truth. After the third attempted rape I realized that I needed someone if only for protection. Lucas Banks was perfect, too old to exhaust me sexually and too married to be my constant companion. I became his full time mistress, thus ended my second career as a cocktail waitress. This for me was but a halfway station in my life. It gave me time to reflect and consider my options while living in a silken cage. Odd but I was almost back to the same point in my life that I had been when I returned from the wars. I had been wondering exactly what I would do with the rest of my life and that question was just as relevant now as then. Could a gorgeous babe find happiness and fulfillment? I could certainly find security and comfort as that woman but trust me; I already knew that wasn't going to be enough. This was but the beginning and not the end of the life of Mary Jones.

The End?