



*Reluctant Press presents:*

# **Rebecca**

## **A Tale of Ghostly Possession**



**Dee Dee Perri**

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A 'NEW WOMAN' E-BOOK

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# **Rebecca:**

## **A Tale Of Ghostly Possession**

**By Dee Dee Perri**

### **Chapter 1**

“WHAT? WHAT?” I yelled in a voice still thick with sleep as I jerked into a sitting position. I scooted back until my shoulder slammed into the oak headboard stopping further retreat. The first wave of adrenalin was just now making its presence felt as my heart shifted from the slow, sluggish pulse of deep sleep to that of a jittery pony that threatened to break into a full, runaway gallop. My breath was already coming in shorter, more labored gulps as my hands clenched and unclenched and I shifted from a half reclined defensive

posture to one of active defense. My feet, now firmly planted on the mattress, and my thighs coiled tightly ready to spring, I crouched and raised my hands forming them into hard knotted fists and bellowed: "I KNOW YOU'RE THERE!"

My eyes searched the depths of the looming darkness and found no identifiable form. I listened but all I could hear was the accelerating beat of my heart hammering in my ears and yet I was *certain* I was not alone. That moment hung for a crystalline eternity, an eon of subjective time but only milliseconds of objective history. That sense *I was not alone* was a certainty; that I was being watched by someone or *something* sent the first *conscious* thrill of sour fear rushing through my body. I was now fully awake and terrified.

I was a city boy, born and bred and this old farmhouse sat out in the boondocks, without neighbors or streetlights. I knew that. I could yell until the pigs came home, as the locals would say, and no one would hear my cries or come to my aid. I was utterly on my own. Cell phone? Somewhere, probably downstairs. It was too late to worry whether I'd left a door unlocked or a window unlatched. Someone was *already* here in this dark bedroom with me at this very instant, and that was a fact. My position was awkward but the headboard against my back was somewhat comforting. I shifted my weight as I prepared to spring to the floor and then I saw *him*.

It is often said that an invisible threat is more frightening than the visible. This was one of those instances. The *man's movement* had allowed my eyes to resolve his form from the surrounding darkness, a silhouette that defined a mass of amorphous gray nearly identical to the background. My initial assessment was realized:

some son-of-a-bitch had broken into my house, my bedroom to be exact. Childish thoughts of monsters in the night fled and disappeared as if they had never been but an intruder, even a human intruder, in the middle of the night was no less shocking.

“SON-OF-A-BITCH,” I yelled, “I HAVE A GUN AND I’M NOT AFRAID TO USE IT!” I didn’t, of course, have a gun. Always thought it was a stupid idea, that is keeping a gun for protection, but at this moment, well, my threat would have been better backed up by actually having one, that was for sure. There was definitely someone in my room but not a hulking brute: slender. I tensed, ready to defend myself, he wasn’t that big. I could handle this, right? Unless he was armed. Damn, even if he had just a club, I could be in trouble. At five-seven and hundred-thirty pounds I wasn’t exactly King Kong nor did I know squat about fighting. I felt my palms go slick and my stomach rolled into a knot.

Should I go for the light switch? I was new to this house, it being my first night here so quickly finding the wall switch was out. I needed to keep my focus on the intruder. My warning had no apparent impact other than to cause him to move slowly now in my direction, that wasn’t good. It was clear that he knew where I was now. Should I move, jump down and... my thoughts were interrupted. This was most certainly not a male intruder as adult feminine contours became evident. The movement of well formed conical breasts that wobbled from side to side as ‘she’ walked toward me confirmed my latest observation, tiny waist and full hip, a babe, trust me on that.

While it made the situation no less weird, my sense of threat dropped noticeably. A female? Her arms outspread and her hands groping blindly in my general direction, more like a sleepwalker than not, she was

surely as blind in this dark room as I was. My mind flashed through the possibilities, there weren't many. My current girl friend was in Boston. Other than her, what woman would just appear unannounced in my bedroom and trust me, those boobs and hips of my uninvited guest didn't belong to Gloria. The stranger was utterly naked, of that there was no longer any doubt. Between and below those well-rounded hips, at the point where her thighs met, a darker patch of gray suggested pubic hair precisely where one would have expected it to be. A naked woman in my bedroom? "Hey?" I said, terror having twisted into alarm and now simply confusion or was it expectation? She stopped. Full, pouty lips quivered but a fraction of an inch away from mine. Her face was oval though half obscured by what had to be a mass of hair. If this was a gag, well it had been pretty well pulled off, it sure had had me scared shitless. As to my benefactor, I could think of none, which in its own way made the moment all the more delicious. Some scamp in the programming group had bought a prostitute and sent her here as a house warming gift? Unlikely, that wasn't their style. An unknown female admirer? That would be like the second coming of J.C. Possibly a local slut working for the village of Fernwood's Welcoming Wagon? None of these hypotheses had the slightest possibility of being correct. I had plenty of time to consider these things for my uninvited guest just stood there in the dark, so close and, need I say again, naked? Finally I open my mouth to say something entirely stupid, like: hey good looking. Our lips met.

I was engulfed, surrounded by what could have been a cloud of flies. Bits of 'her' got into my eyes and nose and a scream which had sprung unbidden from my throat was cut off as my mouth filled with a horde

of those little nasties that wiggled and walked or so it seemed at the moment. I tumbled head over heels off the bed and onto the floor with a jarring thump. By this time I was fully encased in whatever this was, like a man being eaten alive by a swarm of army ants in the jungle of the Amazon basin perhaps? This was no naked woman but some kind of scary monster from a cheap horror flick. I leaped up carrying that swarm with me, the latter was now a living robe, a frenzied second skin. I stumbled back toward the door. All the while I was trying to scream but no sound issued forth, for obvious reasons. Whatever 'it' was, was now clawing its way down my throat both blocking my airways and cutting, seemingly, effortlessly into my open body cavity as if it were going to devour me, from the inside out. There is nothing quite like the inability to draw in the next breath or feeling that one was literally being eaten alive for triggering mindless panic, either experience would do nicely. I think it was my elbow that hit the light switch on the wall, that response was certainly not a defined act on my part merely accidental contact and nothing more. And abruptly there was nothing. Nothing at all. I sucked in a lung full of air with all the delight of a nearly drowned man and staggered away from the wall.

I blinked in the blinding light, dazzled both by it and the abrupt cessation of the attack. My breath now came in frantic gulps as I looked around still ready to fight or flee. I fully expected to see the insects, for that was now what I thought them to be, in a swarm. I flicked my eyes around the room but found nothing. I examined my body, ran an exploring tongue through my mouth and even dug my fingers into my nose and ears looking for some trace of the attackers, Nothing.

Not even one tiny body to examine. And, oh yes, no trace of a naked woman in my bed room existed, pity.

A dream? A nightmare. Tell that to my heart which continued to slam against the walls of my chest as if it were trying to escape. "Whoa," I muttered to the empty room and myself as I stumbled back to the bed on weak legs and eased down on the edge of the bed. My body was still hanging at the edge of a full blown flight reflex, it was ready to run screaming out of the room and into the night, like that was going to happen. "Hells bells," I muttered as I reached inside my jockey shorts, the only clothing I had on, and scratched absent-mindedly at my balls for a few thoughtful seconds.

I drew in yet more air and waited for my heart to slow. I withdrew my hand from my shorts and held it out in front of my face; my hand quivered like it belonged to a drug addict needing a fix. "Hell of a way to wake up," I sighed, feeling, well, silly. And me a grown man, what next, a night light? I looked at the overhead light and then at the light switch on the wall. A reasonable person would walk over and turn it off, right? That wasn't about to happen, not at this particular moment. My rational mind had already written off the attack as part of a nightmare but my rhinencephalon was of a different opinion. The latter was the same primitive "old" brain, untouched by education or rather untouchable by verbal input that my long dead caveman ancestors relied on, it, my preverbal brain, was, well, illiterate, un-modern, it still accepted the *possibility* of boogey men and other dreadful creatures that lurked in the dark. Better to be safe then... *dead*, right? I jerked my legs up and onto the bed as if by dangling them over the edge was somehow dangerous: an image of *that* ill defined but decidedly creepy nightmare poised

under my bed just waiting to grab me had triggered my latest reaction. God knows I'd always checked under the bed when I was a little kid before going to sleep. I rolled my eyes in disgust with myself. Get over it Brian, it was only a dream. Why didn't that thought comfort me?

There was a solution, of course, though it took a modern, rational brain filled with notions that there were no strange things that went bump in the night to solve the issue. I gathered my courage like a gardener might pluck a few ripe tomatoes off the vine, choosing only those that were ready and, when thus prepared, I sprung lightly to the floor and dropped down on my hands and knees and looked under the bed. God only knows what I would have done had there been *anything* but dust balls there. I wolfed, "Idiot!" And then I stood up. My rational brain was both satisfied and a bit embarrassed.

It still took me five minutes to walk over and turn off the overhead light, two seconds of activity and four minutes and fifty odd seconds of indecision. The experience had been too damn vivid to not be real. Funny, when I first woke up, I had felt mortal terror, ok? Mortal terror. It was like I was five years old again and not a grownup. I really had expected to see a monster, something *clearly* not human. I could see where I was going with this if I continued. Finally I had squared my shoulders and marched over to the light switch and, after an additional moment's hesitation, flipped the switch.



My back slammed against the wall as muscle spasms swept across my body. I lost bladder control, which was all too obvious as a bright warmth ran down my legs. The 'nightmare' attack which had ceased with the onset of the overhead light resumed as if it had been held, like a video recording, on hold. The invasion which had initially ripped into my body cavity now seemed to burst from that location to follow my blood vessels to all parts of my body, relentless, all consuming until... It ended as abruptly as it had begun. Breathless, yes, but other than the stench of urine, I seemed to be whole. Ok, now I was scared *beyond* shitless.

I fumbled for and found the switch and was rewarded with light, sweet delicious light. That light would remain on, ok? That was no damn dream unless all of this was a dream. Forget about going to bed, or sleep or even staying here in this house one second longer. I pushed away from the wall, tested my legs and then, reality warped yet again. Breasts, for that's all they could be, fought both gravity and inertia, dipping down and then up while simultaneously swaying from side to side in response to my sudden movement. My back and shoulders responded to the additional weight automatically, catching and then, seemingly, anticipating the continued disturbances to my center of gravity. Hair, of such length that its weight was appreciable, added stress to my neck muscles until they, like my back and shoulder muscles, achieved a kind of steady state balance. My hips, now cocked in a wide, fertile stance, thrust my knees together. The flight of mass from my upper body to below my waist and my sud-

den knocked-kneed stance was enough to throw me off balance.

I fell to the bedroom floor, all knees and elbows. Of course it wasn't the sudden fall that had sent me over the edge and into abject terror. The scream that issued from my throat could not have been mine, too shrill. My fully padded bottom took the worst of the fall but that heavy right breast, also suffered. I sat up and attempted to clutch that damaged organ, which continued to throb even as it bobbed and swayed. There was nothing there. NOTHING! I looked down at my chest, it was my chest, belly, crotch, legs. "What the hell," I groaned. Electric fear shot up my spine. That voice was my voice but in falsetto and that nonexistent but injured breast continued to throb even as I ran an exploring hand across my chest. That pain was localized where no flesh existed, a few inches above the surface of my chest. A phantom pain, a 'ghost' pain. "Where are you?" I said, for I could feel a vivid presence. No answer. The desire to look over my shoulder was an itch I had to scratch. I did but there was but unoccupied space behind me.

I rolled onto my knees to stand but stopped abruptly. "Um." I said to no one, not even myself. Hair that felt like it went almost all the way down my back had shifted as had those phantom breasts. On my hands and knees, those breasts pointed to the earth, the tug was all too evident. And still that right breast throbbed and that mass of hair continued to shift until it spilled slowly off my back forming a pool on the floor covering my 'phantom' shoulder, arm and hand in silky lushness. I pulled myself up and stood, brushing back hair that still clung to my face or so the tactile impressions suggested. There was no visual parallel to the tactile and proprioceptive signals my brain was re-

ceiving. Having never felt literally two bodies, two realities, at the same time was disorienting to say the least. That they existed in 'near' spatial agreement made motor control possible but not sure. Four hands, four legs, each of which seemed equally real, was almost too much for my brain to handle, which was mine, which was 'real'? As I said, fortunately the additions to my somatic tactile-proprioceptive 'map' lined up, more or less; my 'new' right hand was roughly where my old right hand was. The excessively long hair and those 'breasts' had no counterpart and could not be resolved.

My brain wasn't equipped for eight limbs, or at least that seemed to be the case. In moments, my two right hands became one and the accommodation continued until a 'fuzzy' singularity emerged though the slight difference in height could not be fully resolved and those aspects of the two bodies which had no adequate counterpart, remained distinct. My 'new' breasts and long hair and my 'old' testicles and penis were uniquely highlighted for they could not be fused into one reality. I felt decidedly bottom heavy but not as extreme as before as if my brain had made an average of my male and this alien 'female' form, where averaging was possible. It took me a few seconds to appreciate that I would be able to move without collapsing into a heap.

I stumbled into the bathroom like a Frankenstein monster newly born of lightning, flipped on the lights and then leaned forward to inspect my face in the mirror all the while gripping the sink with all four hands. It was me, five o'clock shadow and all. My hair, a short, tangled mess. It was so incredibly odd for I could still feel those breasts and the weight of that long hair, as I leaned forward to inspect my face even if I couldn't

touch or see them. And *that* hair, the likes of which I had never known, a living, rambunctious entity with its own purpose, demanded attention like a spoiled child. And there was something worse or at least just as odd, the grimace I'd made to my image, *wasn't mine*. More toothy than I would have smiled, exposing both lower and upper teeth, a regular 'Rose Queen Parade' smile. And while I was thinking about that last discovery, one of my hands began to work and adjust my hair, but not my hair, *that* hair if you know what I mean.

"You're inside me, aren't you, huh? Damn it, answer me!" Nothing happened. I jerk my hand away, the one that was playing with my ghostly locks, and made it into a fist. I could control it but... so could 'she'. I realized that my first plan had been the best plan; I had to get out of here, out of this house. As I changed my underwear and pulled on clothing, as I hastily made ready for flight, I realized that my movements were being guided more by the phantom androgynous body than the one I could see. Finally ready to leave the house, car keys in hand, I hurried down stairs and across to the entranceway. The mirror behind the coat rack threw back a mocking image. Me, with knees together, hips gliding in arcs and elbows tucked in, near my waist. I stopped, straighten up, and walked, almost stiff legged, the rest of the way past that damn mirror. I made my hands into fists and held them down to my side. Fuck me, but I was in a battle for control of my very own body.

I know it's stupid, but I had been possessed, certainly by a woman and possibly by a dead woman. It wasn't much of a hypothesis but it beat the alternative, that I was freaking bonkers and ready for a straight jacket. Neither concept was the slightest bit comforting.

I looked down at my male body before getting into my car. In the brief moment that I had focused on what was happening and not on what I was doing, my arms had crossed over those phantom breasts and my hands clutched my rib cage, it was an all too familiar, feminine defensive posture like my mother would take when threatened or unsure. My right leg was straight but my left was already cocked bringing my left knee in contact with my right calf. Oh yeah, I had control over this body, if, that is, all that I focused on was my every movement.

~oOo~

Mr. Gardenworth wasn't a man to be trifled with, leastwise if one were a resident of Fernwood California. Most realtors are not, well, exactly pillars of the local community, that is to say they were usually the small fry players and not the grand movers and doers of said community but then most realtors don't own the one and only bank in town either. There was an obvious potential conflict of interest, to say the least, since Morton Gardenworth could both sell the property and provide the necessary loan to support that purchase. Not surprisingly, his was the only real-estate brokerage currently in the village. Having said that, I might also add that in a previous life he must have been either a used car salesman, dealer in medical snake oil or perhaps a carnival barker, for there was something entirely unwholesome about the man: insincere, calculating and, well, slimy. More relevant, he was as dangerous as a rattlesnake and yours truly had played the part of the helpless mouse, soon to be dinner. What he had was my money, ok? Every dime and penny I could scrape together had gone into the down payment

of my house and the three quarter of an acre upon which that house rested and he held the mortgage.

This wasn't just a house, it was my future. Like so many souls trapped in the mega-city called Los Angeles, I had longed for the quieter, more natural life of a small village, not that I knew anything about such a life. Maybe I'd read one too many articles in the LA Times about escaping the pressures of an overcrowded, often heartless and always dangerous city. A city where 'rush traffic' began at six A.M and seemed to continue unabated until the wee hours of the following morning, the freeways were anything but free, mostly long, very long prisons filled with irate and sometimes gun slinging citizens unjustly deprived of their freedom. And the village of Fernwood seemed perfect, considering most of my business could be conducted via internet now. Perfect indeed until last night which had been my first night in my new home-business.

As I sat outside of Mr. Gardenworth's office waiting for permission to see the great man, his Nubian guardian, a young woman who manned the gateway gave me another long, studied look. I must have looked terrible, I certainly felt wretched. A night almost without sleep could do that to a person but my problem was far deeper, more twisted then mere lack of sleep. I'd lived a nightmare that had shoved me to the very brink of insanity. My very understanding of reality, of fact verse nightmare, had been bent like a pretzel as if I'd gone on an LSD bender and then overdosed.

I had spent part of the night at the Denny's just off highway 101 until I had over stayed my welcome and then moved to a twenty-four hour truck stop for the rest of the night or rather that was the plan. About two-thirty in the a.m. a trucker had shown, well, totally

unwanted interest in yours truly. Doubtlessly, those feminine mannerisms had been noted. I was lucky; he might have come at me with fists rather than a smile. I guess there are gay truckers, and why not? Anyhow, I spent the rest of the night at a roadside rest stop in my car. The industrial yellow, high intensity 'security' lamps that lined the parking area made sleep nearly impossible but that light was also the source of whatever subjective safety I could achieve. Her presence hung like a Guillotine blade poised over my head. Sometime after four I'd fallen asleep and when I awoke, just after six, she was gone. Ok, it is a pretty good guess that 'it' was a 'she' and there was no doubt at all that 'she' was gone.

I reached up and touched my chin. Stubble met and resisted my finger. Yeah, I'd not shaved but making a good impression on Mr. Gardenworth was entirely irrelevant now. The Nubian gatekeeper jerked in response to some unseen signal, "Mr. Gardenworth will see you now Mr. Brian."

"Umm, it's Drake, Miss, Brian Drake," I countered and then shrugged my shoulders. Not that it matters, I thought to myself as I stood and walked past her desk and then opened the door. The office wasn't at all like the man for whom a bright, plaid sports coat, red bow tie and white buck shoes went together like an olive in a martini, it was dark and formal. Heavy drapes covered the floor to ceiling window that ran the length of the long room and thick, dark carpet seemed to eat most of the light that eked from the lamp that sat upon Mr. Gardenworth's huge mahogany desk. Everything was heavy and dark and not a trace of the bright California sunlight was evident. It could have been Nome Alaska on an endless winter night and yes the air con-

ditioning was turned to the icebox setting: cold and dark, this room fit my current mood very well.

Mr. Gardenworth jerked up out of his chair like a Jack-in-the box. "Mr. Drake," he bellowed in his usual 'good-fellow-well-met' voice that dripped with warmth like barbeque sauce on hot ribs. "Please be a good fellow and close the door, mustn't let the hot air in, right?"

"Yes sir," I said as a hand soon pummeled my back and an offensive but expensive cologne assaulted my nose. He grabbed me by my right hand as I turned, still thumping me on the back with his other hand while now pumping my hand as if to draw water from an extra deep well. I was pretty sure his artificial good humor would soon fade.

"So?" He said looking me in the face, a broad smile rode like a runaway train across his lips, only his eyes said otherwise for there was a familiar calculating coldness about them like an odds maker at a gladiator contest with the participants in a fight to the death.

I broke free of his embrace and headed toward the side chair beside his desk. I was trying to collect my thoughts, which is to say, my first impulse was to immediately begin screaming at the man and that seemed hopelessly inappropriate and doomed to backfire. When I finally spoke, he'd already reclaimed his throne behind that massive block of long dead wood. "Sir?" I said, struggling for the right words. After a short pause I blurted out what had to be the least controversial statement I could make under the circumstances. "I... I can't live in that house."

"Excuse me?" He responded, one eyebrow elevated slightly. Certainly where I lived was of no concern to him.

“What I mean...” I gulped and my head spun. This wasn’t going at all well. “Could we just, you know, negate that loan, the whole deal as if it never happened?” I looked at him. His face was now totally blank and not a muscle moved. If ‘no’ was ever written on a face, it was on his at this moment. The anger inside me which I had contained up to this point only by exceptional effort finally boiled over or, to be entirely accurate, I erupted like Mount Etna. I jerked to my feet. My fists were clenched and my blood started to thunder in my ears, I was out of control, ok? The Hell with it: “DAMN IT ASSHOLE! YOU HAD TO KNOW THAT FUCKING HOUSE WAS HAUNTED!”

“Excuse me?” He said, his calm was perfect. Perhaps he was accustomed to being yelled at or referred to as an ‘asshole’ or perhaps my outburst was expected. He folded one hand over the other and looked at me like a thoughtful adult might intercede with a distraught but spoiled child.

“I SAID...” I pause and caught myself and then, in a more normal tone of voice though it was still ragged and harsh to my ears, I said, “You knew, didn’t you that there was a ghost there right? Coming over here this morning I stopped by the coffee shop...”

“Oh Lord, you must have talked to Art Hobbs, correct?” He rolled his eyes, “The man is a certifiable nut you know, bonkers and a drunk to boot. So he said that the old Sweet house had a ghost, huh, and you freaked out.”

“Yeah. One Rebecca Sweet to be exact.”

Mr. Gardenworth giggled. “Rebecca Sweet? That would be funny if it wasn’t so sad,” he rolled his eyes and then shrugged, “Not that it matters. The contract we have is legal Mr. Drake. If you chose to default to

the bank, well that would be your decision. I'm afraid getting a judge to accept the existence of a ghost as a legitimate reason to void the contract between you and the bank is extremely unlikely, especially the ghost of Rebecca Sweet." He laughed.

"And my down payment?"

"I'm sorry Mr. Drake, this is a business, not a charity."

Perhaps it was as much the smugness that grew on his face as it was the realization I'd been had but my anger threatened to transform into inappropriate but otherwise satisfying behavior. Had Mr. Gardenworth not jerked his head back like a turtle I would have landed one on his chops.

"MR. DRAKE!" He shouted even as he pushed back his chair and stood up. His eyes were indignant but they showed no fear.

Before he could say another word I added, "You'll hear from my lawyer Mr. Gardenworth." I swear to God, a small smile worked his way across his face. Damn it, he had heard this or something like this before. I didn't wait for him to reply, I turned and left but not before I slammed the door behind me. The explosive sound that door made felt good, if inadequate. What was I thinking, lawyer? Like most people I knew nothing about the workings of law but I had a pretty good notion selling a ghost tale to a judge wouldn't be a winner.

As I stumbled out into the mid-morning sunlight, I didn't know what to do. Going back to that house was clearly out. I wasn't stupid, ok? When that ghost, spirit, whatever, left me this morning, I knew I had ducked a bullet with my name on it, damned if I hadn't. It had

had her ghostly fingers wrapped around my throat in a hold I couldn't break.

I turned and looked back at Mr. Gardenworth's office. If he had done this before, there would be a record, a trail. Multiple transactions on the same house in a relatively short period of time, that would be evidence, right? County records were in Ashville, not far at all and probably digital as well. I was, after all, a convicted 'hacker'. Yeah, I could get that data, county government had security made of cellophane. People would know, locals? I went back to his receptionist, "Excuse me?" She looked up. "Do you know where I can find Mr. Hobbs, um, Art Hobbs?"

She hesitated as if she wasn't going to answer but then she looked at her watch, "The Red Room bar doesn't open until two."

"Red Room?"

She nodded, "Across the street. He's usually there Mr. Brian, except when he isn't."

I nodded thanks and headed back outside. The old man I talked to earlier this morning did have the rummy-eyes of a drunk. More important, he appeared to know something about the ghost of Sweet house. I headed back to my car, it was only nine-fifty in the morning and there were a lot of things to do before I talked to Mr. Hobbs. And one of those things was downright un-nerving.



I write code. It is what I do for a living and, to be entirely honest, it was more or less who I was. As a youthful hacker I'd spent some time on the wrong side

of the law. It was Mr. Nixon, Tom Nixon, who had saved me from jail time or worse, a 'real' job. Tom didn't know squat about programming, he was a businessman, but he knew how to make money. Who better to write security software than a semi-reformed hacker? Anyhow, it was clear that there would be no final solution, the more society became dependant on digital devices, the more the powers that be needed new security code to be written and it follows like thunder after a lightning strike, the more hackers that would be drawn in by the challenge to defeat said security, yeah an endless loop. I had 'job security' to be sure. Anyhow, old Tom didn't care where I worked as long as 'product' was created and delivered to home base. Two years ago, after we made a big sale to an IBM subcontractor, he even gave me and Toddy Thunks, my pal and fellow ex-hacker, a nice piece of the company, so in part I was working for myself now.

Trust me, I was as happy as a kitten working a ball of twine. Oh yeah, I assumed that eventually I would find the right gal and, with her help, start turning out a string of kids. This house in Fernwood would have been perfect for that, or so I had thought.

Finding the right gal had never seemed to me exactly the easiest task in the world. She'd have to accept that I would spend most of my waking hours in front of a workstation, not many go for that. What I did wasn't a nine to five thing, ok? Solving a really complex problem might take months of serious concentration, sometimes sleep and time to chow down on junk food were the only gaps in an otherwise 24-7 operation. So yeah, even dating was a sometimes thing for me. My mother had no hope of ever seeing grandchildren though I had some, well, I had *one* candidate in mind for an eventual wife though Gloria would have freaked

out if I said that to her now. And now *this*, a ghost? This house, this *haunted* house had ended whatever immediate dreams I might have had of living and working here and, may I say, marriage? The money I had invested, short of legal magic, was surely gone.

So why was I now sitting in the driveway beside my haunted house? This wasn't one of those stupid horror movies, you know the ones in which say: a sweet young thing decides to take a walk in her see-through P.J.s, at midnight, oh yeah, lets checkout the local cemetery she says and then... It was about ten a.m., all the world was in bright California sunshine and I was no sweet young thing in a nightgown. In the dining room sat an almost new Sun workstation, I mean that sweetheart wasn't going to sit here abandoned by me, ghost or no ghost. We're talking bread and butter and true love. Add to my workstation, two laptops, a notebook and an assortment of other 'necessary' toys were also captives. And yet, in spite of the shining sun, I wasn't entirely sure if I was going to be able to enter 'her' domain. Did she even care whether it was day or night?

I don't think I was any more or less brave than the next man, nor any less stupid, it would seem. The whole idea of ghosts or any other supernatural thing would have sounded utterly foolish had you asked me say twenty-four hours earlier. Last night changed all of that, forever. Sharing your body with a dead person? Ok, I didn't know zip about the supernatural and I planned on changing that but I figured I was probably lucky that she finally let go of me and I sure didn't want to give her another shot. But I damn well wasn't about to give up my workstation, not a fifteen thousand dollar machine, after having been snookered by Mr. Gardenworth for forty-K and change.

It was like diving into cold water, get in quick or don't go at all. I wasn't going upstairs to that bedroom where she 'lurked', right? I know I was rationalizing the heck out of things but damn it, I just had to save my workstation.

Twenty minutes later I had the Sun in the trunk of the car and my favorite laptop on the seat beside me. I was intact, unaltered and, well, relieved. As to all the rest of my worldly possessions, someone else would move them eventually, ok, but not me. As I backed out of the driveway I looked up toward those windows in the master bedroom, they were empty and looked entirely innocent. A shiver worked its way up my spine until it rested just below my neck. I softly dammed Mr. Gardenworth and the LA Times, the latter for suggesting Fernwood as an ideal place to live.



I was sitting at the local Starbuck's and had been since retrieving my 'essentials'. I had already sent a text to Mr. Nixon telling him I would probably be back in LA, tomorrow. I didn't tell him why I had changed my plans. I sure didn't tell him about the ghost. I might, eventually, but probably not. Believers in ghosts and UFOs tended to lose some credibility in the 'real' world. Of course, if I did find a lawyer willing to take this case, well, I guess I would have to deal with that, if, or when a legal action had a real chance of succeeding.

I spent a couple hours on the Internet trying to get up to speed. Oh yeah, try "ghost" and see what you get. It was hard to believe just how much worldwide bandwidth was being used up by persons interested in

the supernatural. Like most broad searches, there was a lot more pure crap than gold even by Internet standards; my crap indicator was way over the top on this one. If I said I found anything useful, I would have been lying. Well there were at least some interesting things. There was an article in "Physics Letters" written by a Super-String theorist, for example, that argued that consciousness was a physical fact, probably an organized and coherent 'cloud' of sub-atomics and in that same article he suggested such clouds provided a potential basis for none other than ghosts if coherence could be maintained after death. OK, all I saw was an abstract of the article so I can't quote line and verse nor make the necessary mathematical arguments.

People that studied ghosts, and there were a slew of them, had developed statistics that suggested that "personal haunting" were actually more common than "fixed site haunting". Apparently the signals emitted from a warm, living body, like yours truly, could act like a spirit magnet. Well maybe those 'ghost hunters' weren't entirely full of shit after all. That first image of Miss Sweet moving toward me fit the pattern, I mean she didn't really appear to have 'seen' me in the literal sense of the word but she had moved relentlessly in more or less the right direction. There was even a debate on as to whether or not a ghost could, well 'manifest' itself fully in the material world. I had spent almost nine hours in what most certainly felt like a woman's body and trust me, those ghostly tits responded to both gravity and inertia. But yeah, she hadn't materialized except in my mind.

Being actually possessed was considered to be truly rare (read impossible) and, kick-me-in-the-face, but the Catholic church no longer formally recognized spirit possessions as such, so forget about the Catholic priest

with the Irish accent and rosy cheeks riding to my rescue, not that Fernwood even had a Catholic church let alone an Irish priest. It might have been hard to get an exorcism; thank God, she'd taken a hike on her own. Normally I would have found all of this absolutely funny but my funny bone was numb at the moment.

Oh yeah, more questionable internet data: the odds of me surviving an extended possession intact weren't good, not good at all, according to one Dr. Balvin Lewis. I might add, what kind of doctor this Lewis was wasn't clarified on that web site, the degree could have come off a matchbook cover. "There is the principle of homeostasis to be reckoned with", he had written. I think he swiped *that* idea from basic Bio 101 but in a nut shell, we (that is me and Miss Sweet) would have eventually average out our essential 'natures', a little me, a little her and then, go to hell, we would be... well you got the picture. My experience last night definitely felt like an 'averaging' mechanism had been at work. Maybe Dr. Lewis wasn't completely off his nut.

On a less positive note, if one could get less positive, it was generally accepted that 'possession' by a ghost, only occurred if the living individual was exceptionally 'weak minded' or of extremely modest 'will power', duh! That is to say, if I had been possessed, and I had been based on the descriptions I had read, I was either stupid or wimpy, fuck me and the horse I rode in on. I looked up at the clock, just enough time to grab a burger before heading over to Mr. Hobbs favorite watering hole. I muttered as I left the coffee shop: "Weak minded?" I was a damn good programmer and that was pretty heavy brain labor, I must lack will power, I concluded, or maybe I was just really unlucky.



## Chapter 2

I was expecting to find a broken down drunk setting, already half stewed, in a bar that had seen better

days. Contrary to the outside of the building, the Red Room was a rather fancy bar and steak house restaurant with opulent red leather seating, heavy red drapes and red, of course, silk wall paper. Thick red carpet ran through the bar section but ended as old oak hardwood floors replaced the carpet where the room opened up into a substantial dining area. I now wished that I hadn't had that burger.

The bar itself was dimly lit, the recessed lights giving the room a golden-red glow that complimented the extensive brass work and the small lamps in the booths, candles inside red glass chimneys, continued the theme. I approached the bartender, a young man in a short, red velvet jacket, "I'm looking for Mr. Hobbs?"

"Boss?" The young man said, looking into the darkest corner of the bar. "Someone here to see you."

I turned and there was Mr. Hobbs, still rummy-eyed but freshly shaven and wearing a conservative sports coat and tie. He wasn't the broken down drunk I had been expecting and the papers scattered across the table in the booth looked like receipts. The Boss? So much for premature assumptions. "Mr. Hobbs? We talked this morning?"

He motioned for me to approach and as I got closer I think he finally recognized me, "Ah- Mr. Drake. What can I do for you?"

"I need to know more about this Miss Sweet, ah, the ghost you mentioned this morning?"

"Jerry, set the man up with whatever he needs, on me."

"Um, that's not necessary Mr. Hobbs."

“Oh but you’re wrong, Mr. Drake, a good stiff drink is precisely what you need. Jerry, my usual and whatever Mr. Drake prefers, perhaps a good single malt?”



“I guess it is pretty simple, Mr. Gardenworth is running a scam. Sells that house and then scares off the buyer after the deal is closed, or rather the ghost scares off the buyer. Then the house goes into foreclosure and...”

“I think you are sniffing on the wrong trail, Mr. Drake. That house has sat there empty for over five years before you bought it. Mr. Gardenworth was probably only too happy to have that mortgage in place of an empty old house.”

“Seriously?”

“Gardenworth is no crook, just motivated by avarice. He bought the old Sweet homestead for little more than back taxes and what was left on the mortgage from the previous owner and sold off over five hundred acres of prime farm land for a handsome profit. He should have just had that old house torn down and sold the land it sat on with the rest but he couldn’t. No Mr. Drake, it was just greed.”

“And the ghost of Miss Sweet?”

“A long story. Anyhow, none of the locals would touch that property, needless to say, and outsiders, well they usually wanted either a house in or near the village or a ‘real’ farm. The Sweet house was neither. Out in the middle of nowhere with no land? And then you came along.” He shrugged as if to say there was one born every minute. “You want to take

Gardenworth to court? Easy enough to prove that he and everybody in Lee country 'knew' about the ghost of Rebecca Sweet but to be honest, nobody has ever seen her, the ghost that is. She is just local myth. No judge is going to rule that Gardenworth should have informed you about the local culture."

"I.. I saw her, last night."

"Saw?"

"Felt, ok, I really, really felt her." I gulped down the last of my Scotch, chewed on my lip and then said, "More than that, but you'd think I'm crazy..."

"You already lost me Mr. Drake."

"Call me Brian, Ok?"

"OK, Brian, I think I *will* call you crazy." He didn't laugh but he did stare at me for a good three seconds. "That wasn't Rebecca Sweet."

"Huh?"

"You said she?"

"Yeah. Sure." God knows I remembered the body, those heavy breasts, the whole nine yards.

"Rebecca Sweet, was a man."

I just stared at him and finally he went on, "I told you it was a long story. Jerry, another round, please and, make it a double for Mr. Drake, he'll need it. Now where were we, oh yes, I knew Miss Sweet when I was just a boy. She was already old then, really old especially if one is a child. She died, oh, about nineteen-fifty-nine or, no, early sixties, anyhow she had to be nearly a hundred by then. There was nothing remarkable about her death until the Medical Examiner was notified by her mortician that Miss Rebecca Sweet

was a male. Well, small town and all, one can't keep a secret like that. So that's how the story began."

"She was a he? Gay?"

"Weren't no gays then, just homosexuals. Living the life of an old maid, who knows why. Anyhow, that was the beginning of the Rebecca Sweet myth. About eight-ten months later a man from back East bought what was left of the Sweet homestead, about six hundred acres and the house and out-buildings, his name was Mark Bormann. Ordinary fellow, hardworking farmer, married with three kids, World War II vet. Now this is where it gets interesting Brian. Within a few weeks, Mr. Bormann's wife and children, left him, just flat out took off. The man himself disappeared from view, mostly, only coming to town when he had to and cutting off all other social ties. People started talking, things they'd seen, lots of strangers in and out of the old Sweet homestead, you know 'odd' people, hippies and such. And then Mark Bormann appeared one fine morning at the old coffee shop we used to have. I wasn't there, I was in the Army by then, drafted, you know, Vietnam," he paused, "sorry, that's irrelevant. I was told that Mr. Bormann was wearing women's clothing, makeup, the works and moving like he had a corn cob up his ass, if you follow me? Of course he got thrown in the clink quicker than you could say Jack Robinson, it was the sixties but it was also Fernwood."

"Women's clothes?"

"That ain't the half of it. Anyhow, he gave his name as Rebecca Sweet."

I raised my eyebrows, "No shit."

"Yeah, stood by that name like it was the only one he ever had. Eventually he spent some time down at that mental facility in Oxnard. After 'she' returned, she lived at the farm, but didn't work it. Tenant farmers did that. Spent more and more time away and finally moved to San Francisco full time in the late eighties. The people in the village were only too happy to see her leave. Apparently the new Miss Sweet had been using that house as little more than a weekend party place for out-of-towners for most of that time.

"Hell of a story," I said, a little breathless.

"That farm sat there idle for a couple of years. Miss Sweet kept up on her taxes but nothing else, finally she rented out the farm to a local boy, Sammy Yates."

"And?"

"And? Oh I see what you are getting at. Ah no. Sammy and his wife had a bunch of kids while living there and ah- nothing unusual happened that I'm aware of. Sammy's got his own place now and he and his wife and his kids that still live at home are doing just fine as best as I can tell.

"He didn't become another Miss Sweet."

"No and Sammy's family lived there until Miss Sweet returned in ah- '05. After Miss Sweet died, a couple years later, no heirs, the bank, Mr. Gardenworth in other words, took over the property and we are, five years later, setting here still talking about Miss Sweet."

"So nothing happened to this Yates guy."

"Nor any of his family to the best of my knowledge."

I wrinkled my nose, "It kind'a weakens this whole "Miss Sweet" myth, doesn't it?"

Mr. Hobbs shrugged, "Depends on what you're thinking, remember while Sammy was living at the farm, Mr. Bormann was still being haunted by that ghost. If there was only one ghost Brian, it was already busy with the former Mr. Bormann."

"Oh."

"Anyhow, it goes to figure. It came back to Fernwood with the second Miss Sweet and when he or she died..."

"Yeah, I get the picture. Its plausible, one ghost, one possession at a time. If I had any doubts about running away from that house before, they're put to rest now."

"Running away?"

I looked at my watch, "I can be back to LA by five, even with rush traffic." I looked at him, "Mr. Hobbs, I can't thank you enough."

"And the lawsuit?"

"Ah- pretty much dead on arrival." I shrugged, it was only money after all. "And I think you're wrong about one thing. This ghost is definitely female, trust me, I know." He looked at me strangely. "I was literally possessed by her last night, she was inside me. Thank God she split, maybe I wasn't her type, anyhow, the old woman you knew, the first Miss Sweet, was probably just another victim."

"Interesting notion Mr. Drake."

"I sure would like to know more about that house and your Miss Sweet, the 'real' Miss Sweet. I love a good puzzle you know, as long as it doesn't get too personal, but there must have been a 'real' Miss Rebecca Sweet at some point." I laughed and rolled my eyes, "Whatever. I really need to get on with my life," I

stood up and shook the hand he offered, "and again thanks for the drinks and your time Mr. Hobbs."

"You have me thinking now Brian. I'll start sniffing around, hmm."

"If you find out anything, let me know." I gave him my cell phone number and an e-mail account which he wrote down. Who knows if that thing could be destroyed perhaps I might save my investment. Neither possibility seemed likely however, I was no Ghost Buster, programming was my game.



I watched Fernwood California retreat from my rear view mirror as I headed toward highway 101 and LA. The sting of losing forty thousand and change seemed small potatoes now. My future was good, lots of money would follow, now that we were 'profit-sharing'. Mr. Nixon had been right, writing security software wasn't where the money was to be made. He all but gave away our basic software packages to our clients. It was the updates, the endless updates, that were necessary, in which a fortune could be made. No security package could be created that would work forever. The better the program, the more interest hackers took in breaking it. Different hackers were attracted to different institutions depending upon their motives: money, power, politics or just plain orneriness. Mr. Nixon sold 'insurance' much as did Prudential or the Mafia, *we* sold protection.

Last night, however, had changed my life forever. There was no doubt, not the slightest doubt, in my mind that some supernatural force had interacted with me. The very term 'supernatural' was probably the

hardest pill to swallow. I would be far more comfortable with a scientific explanation, like the one suggested by that Super String theorist. Supernatural 'thingies' didn't need to behave lawfully and along with that was a shit load of corn, you know ghosts, get angels, god(s) or God. I wasn't about to go that way unless led by a ring in my nose by a very strong force. Supernatural was a synonym for irrational and irrational programmers produced shit, trust me. If anyone in the universe seeks order, it is the code rat, the hacker, computers are filled with one and zeros, there are no fractions, no uncertainty and no fuzzy 'soul'.

I spent most of my trip back to LA on the phone. None of the people I knew or worked with could exist without remaining in continuous accessibility. Multi-tasking was the norm, not the exception. Before I got down to Santa Barbra, I was fully up to speed on the ongoing projects and anything else one might want to know. Matt Drew offered me the use of his apartment tonight. Matt didn't expect to spend much time there for the next week or so. I knew Matt well, he actually preferred 'living' in the 'Cave', which was the primary geek site at our facility. The junk food was free and cots were scattered around like so many playing cards after a game of fifty-two pickup. Of all the people I talked to that afternoon, I did not mention the real reason I was returning to LA. It was one thing to experience a ghost and quite another to convince others of that possibility. I had flown in a flying saucer but I wasn't about to start waving my UFO banner. Still, I had to share this with someone.

It would be about nine in the P.M. in Boston and almost a certainty that my gal was still at her lab at M.I.T.  
"Gloria, hey."



I was at Matt's apartment after stopping at his landlady's for a key. Prior to that I had picked up some emergency supplies, like a pair of blue jeans, a couple of button down white shirts, jockey shorts, four pair, an electric shaver and toothbrush, you know stuff. When I left Fernwood, I'd abandoned almost everything I owned, down to the most basics. It was only just stuff though and frankly, except for that new bed and mattress, now sitting in the monster's lair, not worth piss. A shave and shower, was God's sent, as was yet another burger, this one from Burger King. I was about as much at peace as a man could be considering the events of the last twenty-four hours.

Matt's place was clean, spotless, due in no small part to the fact that he had maid service and the obvious, he was seldom here. He was a true minimalist, other than a couch, coffee table and a flat screen TV, the living room was empty. The kitchen looked as if it had never been used except for the sodas that literally filled the refrigerator. Not a pot or pan in sight, nor anything to eat. Burger in hand, I took a coke and headed for the bedroom. I wouldn't be long for this world having had probably less than an hour of sleep last night and probably not two hours the night before I moved. I pulled back the drapes letting in the last of the sun light, the bright orb was just poised above the horizon. Lights from the towers downtown hadn't begun to take effect as yet and the sky was livid with reds and purples. I sat the coke on the floor beside the bed, eased down and began to have dinner as I watched the light show.

Looking back I can say that I was totally unaware of what was happening as that orb of brilliant light slipped from view. Had I been more knowledgeable, more tuned to myself rather than the view, I would have felt her, slowly gathering power even as sunlight still sprang off the clouds. It wasn't darkness at all but the direct light from the sun that had so corrupted her existence that I had remained unaware of her continued presence in my body all day. She hadn't fled at sunrise but merely hid, drawn back like a flower that only bloomed at night. As I balled up the wrapping the burger had come in and twisted around to reach the soda can on the floor, I felt the loose roll of unfettered breasts drawn by gravity, phantom hair followed in the same direction, crossing what was now our more rounded cheek. I didn't scream but my gut seemed to turn to water. "Fuck me," I said in that now familiar androgynous voice through what felt like lips that were too fat. I rolled back and looked at the ceiling. I was tired, too damn tired to deal with this shit again.

And then it struck me like a fist in my stomach; her dead grip on me was truly relentless. It was I and not that house in Fernwood that was haunted. I could have stayed there or at a motel 6 for all the good that would have done me. Images of the 'original' Miss Sweet, that ancient old man-woman and Mr. Bormann, soon to be, the second coming of Rebecca Sweet, flashed in my mind. Of course I had no actual images only those constructed by Mr. Hobbs description and my imagination but they were no less vivid for all that. I was fucked, truly fucked, unless I could discover and defeat this thing. It wasn't a battle I would have sought but it was one from which I couldn't run.

I rolled over on my side, squishing a breast between the mattress and me. "Fuck you," I muttered softly as

sleep found and threatened to overcome me. Tomorrow she would be gone or at least out of sight again. Fresh I might find a loose thread here, something I could pull and unravel this thing, this curse. I wonder how much time I have until, well, until I was the next Rebecca Sweet. I don't think Gloria was going to be very happy with me if that happened, that last thought brought a weird smile to 'our' lips and then I was gone.

~oOo~

"Good morning Mr. Hobbs."

He looked up at me from his morning coffee. It was yesterday morning all over again. He was wearing a rumpled white shirt and sporting a forest of second growth underbrush as he had been at our first meeting. His rummy eyes widened in surprise, "And good morning to you, Brian. Ah- I have to admit I'm surprised to see you so, ah- soon. Nothing bad, I hope?"

I sat down across from him uninvited. All things considered I probably looked better than I had the morning before. Nine hours of sleep and two showers can do that. My shirt was new as were my jeans. As soon as the waitress took my order I turned my full attention to him. "She's got me Mr. Hobbs, by my short hairs."

"Rebecca?" I nodded. "How?"

"She had never left me. I guess she hides during the daylight. I was in LA last night, LA, right? And then at sunset, boom."

"Boom?"

"Trust me, it's like two bodies occupying the same space. Her, me, all mixed up and it gets pretty crowded

inside one skin." I looked at him, "I came back to fight her, if I can." Truth I had no idea of what to do. I had already spent half the trip up from LA taking to Gloria. By the time I was done, she must have concluded I was bonkers but, more importantly; she was coming here to help me as soon as she could catch a flight and drive up from LA. "I need information from you Mr. Hobbs."

"I really haven't had time to learn anything more than what I already told you last night."

"No, it about stuff you *might* know."

"Like?"

"The old woman you knew as Miss Sweet, she never, ever hinted that she was possessed?"

"I didn't know her well, as you can imagine, we were of entirely different generations. She traveled a lot or had another home somewhere else, so I don't think anyone in the village knew her all that well either. She liked to spend the summers in Fernwood and not much more."

"I understand. But it did come as a shock to the town that she wasn't a she." He nodded. "So it follows that she probably had kept mum about his-her situation. And Mr. Bormann? Not a word either?"

"I wasn't here, as you remember, so it would be all hear-say. But as far as I know, it was when he came to town all dressed up that his condition became apparent. Your point?"

"Me. I'm still talking, to you at least. She hasn't stopped me yet."

"Stopped you?"

"Hells-bells Mr. Hobbs..."

“Call me Art, Uncle Art, all my friends do.”

“Uncle Art?” I shook my head, “Ok, *Uncle Art*, she might want to ride this pony until it drops but she sure doesn’t want half of M.I.T. checking her out with all its gadgets. She’s definitely a low profile kind’a ghost is my guess.”

“M.I.T.?”

“Yeah, the marines are coming all the way from Boston, if I know my girl friend. What I’m trying to say is, hell, if I suddenly stop talking about this ghost, then she’s found a way to shut me up.” I was ringing my hands now in obvious frustration, “Last night, I had dreams but they weren’t dreams as much as brain-washing. If anything happens to me, I want you to remember, to know that she found a way to zip up my mouth. Burn the fucking house down if that happens, can you promise me? Uncle Art?”

“You’re serious.”

“Couldn’t be more so.” He raised an eyebrow but said nothing. If anyone believed me, it was him. And if he didn’t?

“What did the first Miss Sweet look like?”

“She was a very old woman, what can I say?”

“Pictures of her when she was younger?”

“I can check around.”

“And the second Miss Sweet?”

“Again, I can check around, what’s your point?”

“Did they look alike? Have features in common? If she was replicating herself, they would, most certainly look alike.” Hobbs shrugged, he didn’t know. “The woman that takes over my body is a full figured

woman, hour glass figure, substantial hips and ass and big tits." I must have been speaking too loud because the other patrons in the coffee shop had turned and were listening. I looked at them, probably locals all, "We're talking about Rebecca Sweet, ok? Any help here?" Heads snapped away.

"You're beginning to make a scene, Brian."

I looked at him, "It's about time someone did, don't you think?" This last statement was spoken loud enough for all to hear. I was losing Mr. Hobbs' good support and I didn't know why.

"I'll do what I can, but," he looked around, "no need to cause a public disturbance."

I nodded in agreement but a worm was sliding around in my gut. There was something wrong, entirely wrong. It was like he just wanted me and the whole Rebecca Sweet thing to go away. Myths are fine as a source of stories but a poor substitute for rational normality. Or perhaps, the monster inside me could influence more than just me. Chameleons change themselves to blend into the background, why not change the background instead. That was too wrong to even consider. "You are right, of course, Art. I guess I'll head back home, I'm still unpacking."



Gloria Steinberger wasn't likely to ever appear in a Playboy fold out, indeed she was pretty safe, most nights, hanging out at pickup bars, not that she was inclined to do such a thing. Rattail thin and a chest like a table top, the only feature that stood out on her body was her nose. The latter was quite impressive indeed.

Like most homely girls I have known, she held rather high social standards in spite of the general lack of male interest she stimulated or, to put it another way, she was no easy 'lay'. She was probably the only woman I knew that had less sexual experience than yours truly. She was one of those very rare female 'hackers', I mean, she was a hard core geek. And like most really quality code rats, she was no slouch when it came to the underlying electronics, not that a Ph.D. in electrical engineering from University of Pittsburgh had held her back. She was two years older than me and had far better formal education; I had only two semesters of Community College behind me. For all of that, I was the better programmer and she knew and accepted that as fact.

Gloria and I had, a few years back, ah- hooked up. The improbable had happened at a 'geek' convention though we had known each other since before high school (via internet of course). She had a vagina and I had a penis and, more important, we had mutual respect for each other. I wouldn't say she was the only gal I had known in the biblical sense but were I to lose a hand, I'd still be able to count my conquests on the remaining fingers.

I probably made Gloria sound like some kind of sexless creature, nothing could be less true. She had the same total sexuality of any other healthy twenty-seven year old female, minus the opportunity to express herself, ditto for me. Her bags were still in the rental car out front of my house and the front door remained open, as were her legs, with me firmly entrenched inside her, hot, moist birth canal. Like a pair of dogs in heat, had someone come to the door, I very much doubt that we could have stopped what we were about. I was no fantastic lover and my resolve to hold

back what had to follow was weak if not entirely non-existent after six months of celibacy. Where I to use a stop watch, I think less than seventy seconds had elapsed from 'Hey!' to ejaculation.

Looking up at me after I came, her face now flush, she smiled, "Hey!"

"Hey yourself. Are you comfortable?" She was, after all, holding my weight with a hardwood floor for a bed.

She grinned, "What do you think?"

I grinned, "You're swell, you know that?"

"You probably say that to all the girls." She wiggled under me, "I hope we're not done yet."

"Not by a long shot." I said as I leaned forward and took a long dark nipple into my mouth. What was the old saying: anything more than a mouthful was a waste, well there was no waste here. Boobs that wouldn't fill a tea cup, but did I care? Not on your life. "Gloria, we really need to talk."

"So start," she said with a roll of her hips that only triggered my groin to respond.

That would wait, I guess. So where were the marines? She had arrived alone, which wasn't a bad thing considering our current situation but the clock was ticking. It was only a little after noon, twelve-twenty to be exact, but it was the fourth day of my possession. I whispered in her ear, "I have a virgin bed upstairs."

"Virgin? And a mattress, pray tell Dear Brian?"

"I suspect it's a bit softer than this floor."



We were slick with perspiration as I pulled out and then rolled over beside her. She half turned so that her cheek lay on my chest, her left arm lay possessively across and just above my groin, her hand stroked my skin like I was a kitten for a few seconds before it too lay silent. She mumbled something.

“What?” I said softly, my whole body was relaxed as it hadn’t been for months. I was in that half space between sleep and consciousness, my mind, blank. This was a good place to be. It was like the whole affair with Miss Sweet was just a bad nightmare; I certainly didn’t want to think about it. Of course, as soon as I made that resolution, I was thinking about *her* again.

Four days and, more importantly, four nights I had been possessed, tonight would be my fifth. Her first victim or perhaps Mr. Bormann hadn’t been her first victim, the first “Miss Sweet”, may have been the first or perhaps there had been many victims before that.. I didn’t really want to get on that train of thought again, but there I was, riding that rail to hell. Back to where I had started, Mr. Bormann’s wife and kids had left him mere weeks after that family had taken residence in this house. Had Miss Sweet driven them away? More likely, based on my personal experience, Mr. Bormann’s behavior would have become increasingly odd, odd enough that his wife had taken the children and fled? Perhaps. Certainly she would have seen him as behaving irrationally, most likely insane, rather than possessed. That might not have been too surprising, considering how utterly inappropriate his behavior would have become but I am repeating myself. “Gloria?” I looked down, her eyes were still shut, her

breathing was now slow and steady. I smiled. Gloria had apparently fallen asleep, sound asleep.

Sunset would be at precisely 8:47. That wasn't a fact that I would normally have noted, though now with Miss Sweet inside me, that instant of the day had taken on growing importance. I had the distinct impression that with each 'possession' she was growing stronger and stronger. Certainly her control over my body was no longer easily repulsed, not that it had ever been 'easy' for she was so relentless, so single minded. I had to wonder what Gloria's reactions would be when she saw me and Miss Sweet together. Under the best of circumstances, with my attention fully directed toward the control of my body, I moved like a robot. And under the worst? Like an over the top drag queen. It is true that men and women move differently but my-her movements were exaggerated to the point of being a caricature of the female. More like Mae West than Mae West. Syrupy languid movements, no, starkly seductive movements, the most common, most idiosyncratic 'role' that that old movie star had played, the loose woman of the nineteenth century with avarice in her heart and a well defined taste for, well, men. I looked at the clock, it was after three, a little less than six hours before show time.

I nudged Gloria, "We need to talk." When she didn't respond I got up off the bed and grabbed my ratty old bathrobe. I was going to make a fresh pot of coffee and then try to wake her up with a cup in hand. That should do it. I looked down at her and felt my heart give a little jitter. She knew that I loved her, which I did. And she me, but her career, her world wasn't mine. M.I.T., Ph.D.s, big 'formal science projects and Friday 'tea' at the President's house on campus. What had been unlikely before Miss Sweet, marriage, chil-

dren and a life together, seemed every day to become less and less possible. My manhood was leaking away with each nightly visit. And the dreams, well, they were the worst or best depending upon one's frame of reference, erotic and yet entirely alien. Mindless sensuality was about as far from programming as one could imagine; it was not me, it was decidedly 'her'.

### Chapter 3

"I threaded your e-mail through the M.I.T. server."

"You... WHAT! Gloria, that was private, very private indeed."

"Honey, I took *those* parts out. Anyhow," she waved her hand like brushing away a fly, "as you can imagine I got a couple hundred responses. Most were of a humorous nature, some serious, kind'a."

I growled, "Scientists."

"Seriously Brian, scientists are far more open minded than most people, though terms like supernatural and ghosts um, well you know what I mean." I nodded. "It's not like they care one way or the other but they want phenomena that can be studied, manipulated and replicated and these are not usually traits one assumes with the *super*-natural. Gordy Smith over in the physics department suggested some experiments by which we might actually 'image' your ghost."

"Seriously?" I felt a surge of hope.

"No, hardly serious. He wanted to look for psi-sonic waves and mu particles."

"So?"

"That would require subjecting your body to intense, hard radiation and my Dear Brian, you wouldn't survive."

“So nothing then.”

She flashed me a big, toothy smile, “Me.”

“And I certainly appreciate that. Oh God Gloria I’m so scared.”

She sat down beside me on the couch and put her arm around me and gave me a long, long hug. After a while she said, “It was a pretty big net I cast. I got some interesting replies from England where I guess ‘supernatural’ isn’t quite the dirty word it is in the U.S.”

“And?”

“Your ghost isn’t a proper ghost.”

“Oh, that’s *just* great. And why not?”

“Possessions are usually of an acute nature, brief, lasting seconds though Sir William noted cases that had lasted for days. Months? Years? Never. So there you have it or at least what one ‘expert’ in England believes. The ghostly,” she waved her hands in frustration as if seeking the right term and then finally said, “hell, matrix? Or whatever, comes apart like wet cardboard when held in direct contact with the living.”

“So, I’m not possessed.” It came out as a growl.  
“Damn it Gloria, I know what I have experienced!”

“Whoa cowboy, settle down. I was getting to my point or rather Sir William’s point, what you got is a doppelganger, the ancient Egyptians called it ‘Ka’.” I blinked my eyes. “A spirit double.”

“Come again?”

She laughed, “I looked it up. In your case, it’s kind’a like a spiritual psychosis, split personality? Ka is usually a perfect copy of the original spirit but it can, in

extreme conditions like yours, mutate into the individual's opposite persona."

I shook my head confused, "How does that explain anything?"

"Well, unlike a true ghost, the doppelganger is constantly being fed by the same forces that create and maintain your original 'spirit', read: soul, or consciousness. And therefore the 'Ka' can continue to exist indefinitely, don't you see?" She looked at me.

"And you believe that?"

She giggled and then became completely serious, "Hell no! I'm sorry Brian there is one other hypothesis and the only one that makes sense to me." She grabbed me by my arms tightly before continuing, "Your problem is psychological with possible neurological features."

"You're saying I'm nuts."

"Let's say that second personality may be as real as you think it is my Dear Brian, but definitely not a ghost."

"You're missing the whole point Gloria."

"Am I? You need to see someone trained in this area."

I wanted to lash out and hit her, I wanted her to *believe*. And finally after catching my breath, I responded, "I can understand why you believe that, I really can. But no shrink is going to help me."

"You will not even try, Brian?"

I just glared at her. It was almost five, less than four hours before sunset.



We had takeout Chinese and soft drinks for dinner that night; we ate in the living room off the coffee table, an unremarkable and utterly familiar repast for the two of us. She hadn't said another word regarding my 'need' to see a shrink though her continued concern hung heavily on her features. We both had managed to avoid talking about what the sunset might bring through the rest of the afternoon and early evening. Gloria and the people she worked with were heavily involved in extended parallel processors, thousands and potentially hundreds of thousands of concurrently active processors demanded a radically different operating system or systems as the case maybe. We were in our element now, the two of us joined by our mutual passions. Under different circumstances, we would have talked until the wee hours of the morning. But both of us were aware of the advancing shadows, the red-gold glow announcing the coming of sunset.

Gloria was the first to break the mental game we were playing with ourselves, the lets-pretend-everything-is-normal game. "What is she like?"

"I don't frankly know, Gloria. She has been mute and shares nothing with me. We are two bodies pressed tightly into one space. We seem to have mutual control of our combined bodies, but she seems, well, more dedicated to the task than I." I looked at Gloria, there was more concern than curiosity in those eyes. "If I let her go, allow her complete freedom," I shrugged and spayed out my hands, "she goes a little over the top."

"Over the top?"

"Honestly, what she does with my body is on the very edge of funny, you know? Like Mae West on steroids."

"Mae West, like in "My Little Chickadee?"

"Without W.C. Fields."

"You find that attractive?"

"Hardly. I would prefer Marylyn Monroe in "Gentlemen Prefer Blonds."

"You mean dumb and blond or is that an oxymoron?"

I rolled my eyes, now didn't seem like the right time to discuss my male chauvinist tendencies. "So Mae West is better?"

Gloria laughed, "Trust me, way better, she holds her own and then some." She paused and frowned, "Seriously?"

"Seriously what?"

"Mae West was a man eater, a female predator."

"Oh that, umm yes." I hadn't told her of the dreams I have been having, but there was no doubt as to my ghost's sexual preferences. "Ah- lets go out on the porch and watch the sunset on the swing, huh?"



I pointed to our right, "When the sun disappears below those hills, we'll have about four minutes before 'actual' sunset. I checked it out last night." She didn't say anything but she did reach over and take my hand in hers and gave it a little squeeze. "I don't know what is going to happen, tonight. This will be the first time

that *we*, that is Rebecca and I, haven't been alone. What I mean is... hell I don't know what I mean. If she tries to hurt you..."

"My God Brian, you can't be serious." I shrugged and looked away. "Well, that is a little scary," she concluded.

"Sorry. Maybe it would be best if you go sweetheart."

"Not on your life. Oh, Brian..." And then she stopped and frowned.

"What?"

"A Doctor, damn it, you got to go..."

"We're done with that now, ok? Look the sun is now behind those hills, just like I said, the clock is running." She now gripped my hand in both of hers as if to say, I'm here for you. If only she could make a difference, if only this would stop.

My body was no longer mine nor exactly Rebecca's either. The hourglass figure was perceptible but attenuated, the hips less wide and the waist less narrow but her breasts were as full as that first night and my male genitals appeared in magnified relief. Phantom hair spilled down my shoulders, some of which caught and intermingled with Gloria's much shorter tresses. My back had straightened and my chin elevated raising my nose a tad into the air, Rebecca had way better posture than I. Gloria noticed none of this for her eyes saw only in the familiar dimensions of time-space. A full thirty seconds had elapsed since my transition.

"Soon, right?" She said looking me in the face, oblivious of my full pouty lips or smaller, narrower nose.

She had no clue until I moved, freeing my hands so as to deal with my hair, my ghostly hair. Lightly cocked fingers deftly found and ordered phantom tresses and gather together errant strands, especially those on Gloria. Her eye widened. I looked into those wide eyes and saw her soul even if she couldn't see mine. She was more than half blind, locked in her one universe while I stood astride at least two. "I guess it's not, um all so much after all, Gloria." My voice, a pleasant alto and not that shrill falsetto I had known, civilized but hardly male.

"Rebecca?"

"Guilty, more or less, I guess." This was a bit of an anti-climax, a letdown. I had half expected 'her' to come forth as a complete personality. Of course she had never done so before, so I shouldn't have been surprised. Things were much more complex than that. Gloria was not a sexpot, I knew that, but I had found her sexy nonetheless, but now? An open void? Not quite. I took both her hands in mine, she resisted momentarily and then relented, "My God Gloria..."

"What?" she responded her eyes widened even further.

I laughed as I stared into her gray-green eyes, "It's like meeting you for the first time." She looked confused, "Seriously, you are a handsome woman." Again another distressed look.

She pulled her hands back, cocked her head, "You're coming on to me, right?"

I started laughing, which didn't go well at all with her. I shook my head, "No dear, I just saw you for whom you are." She still didn't understand and how could I explain it? I saw her without my male agenda,

without my male ego. She was brilliant and strong, caring and thoughtful, and triggered not the slightest sexual urge in me. A friend, a good and true friend beyond what she could have been to the old me. My old sexuality had obscured and corrupted my vision, her shortcomings, the large nose and small breasts had vanished from view simply because they were irrelevant. The pre-organized, sex image stereotype, no longer applied.

Her mouth was hanging open and no, the whole point went over her head. What she saw was just me behaving badly, very badly indeed. The word 'swishy' would be like calling Godzilla an over sized rabbit. Way over the top with fluttering hands on broken wrists, a double row of teeth fit a smile big enough for the two of us. I was her worst nightmare, simpering, girlish and absolutely, for Gloria, without sexual appeal. She did not see me, only the caricature of a flaming queen. The repulsion grew in her eyes like an impending regurgitation. She jerked back, turned away, "I need a few minutes to... adjust."

"Honey, I got just the thing for both of us. You stay here and enjoy the twilight and I'll be back in a jiff." I hurried away on mincing steps; hips swinging while my hands batted away invisible creatures from the night air.



As a general rule I don't drink much hard liquor nor does Gloria and neither of us would have taken the whisky 'neat' by choice but we were now. I was still sitting on the swing but Gloria had retreated to a side chair, though she had drawn it closer and now sat just

about opposite of me. The first drink had been good and the second better and so, gradually, the tensions between us had loosened to a considerable extent. It was easy for me to pretend that we were two girl friends engaged in idle conversation, but the conversation was anything but idle.

She had tried to talk about her research again but it was apparent to both of us that that wasn't going to work, it was like talking about the weather with an out-of-control fire raging in the next room. So I told her what it was really like to be me.

"And you actually hurt a breast? A phantom breast?"

"Yeah, banged it up when I fell that first night. It was even bothering me the next night, just a bit. Not now though, thank God."

She scrunched up her face, "That doesn't seem possible, now does it."

"Only if you assume it's, umm immaterial."

"So you're saying there is a physical analog to that Rebecca body?"

"Yeah, like, maybe just not quite here in this dimension. Heck didn't you say that there were at least eleven dimensions to the universe?" She nodded but didn't look impressed. "Sometimes I can... *almost* touch her, ok?"

"Almost?" It was obvious she wasn't buying that, well I wasn't either, exactly. She brighten up, "So what does it feel like having breasts, big sweet melons, right?" She rolled her eyes and added: "Men."

"More bother than I would have thought. They get me right here in the small of my back, you know."

She laughed, "Big breasts can do that, I've been told. Guy's don't think about stuff like that, do they? Hard on the lower back? A properly fitted bra would help, Brian."

I laughed, "Only if I can go shopping in another dimension."

"Umm..." She giggled. It was more the booze than my humor at work. "So what happens next?"

"Eventually I become a transvestite, objectively speaking, of course, and then either an effeminate gay man trying to pass as a normal woman or perhaps a full blown transsexual."

"And you can live with that?"

"Did Christ get to pick out his own cross? I mean, does it matter what I want? The original Miss Sweet lived right here in drag for years, how many I don't know but when she died, well she had male equipment. And then the second Miss Sweet, I don't know squat, except she lived as a female until she died."

"That doesn't mean that you will. Come on Brian? You, in skirts?"

"I'm not planning on it, no, but I'd be a fool to ignore the evidence."

"Come on honey, let's go upstairs and fuck."

"Gloria?"

"Hey it's the booze, right? Goes right to my crotch and besides, I'd rather keep you interested in girls."

"Seriously Gloria, I... I don't think it's going to work." She grabbed my arm and tugged while listing seriously. She caught me or rather I caught her as I stood up. She felt both familiar and utterly unfamiliar

in my arms. “What the hey, assuming we can make it up the stairs, of course.”



I knew it was going to be some kind of serious ‘cluster-fuck’ even before we got to the bed. Two bodies occupying one space, one male, one female with conflicting behavioral patterns, opposite reactions for the same goal. My penis, already rock hard, was ready and eager to thrust into Gloria as soon as she allowed me access to her vagina. And Gloria was ready. Her body posture, pelvis thrusting even as she stood with her back to the bed, our lips locked and the musky scent of her wetness between her legs bloomed as she ripped off her blouse causing buttons to ping across the hardwood floor. My phantom breasts and groin were no less ready, both demanded attention, attention they would not receive. My needs were not Rebecca’s needs, to fill rather than to be filled, to give rather than receive. It was my ‘material’ self that won, it had the initial advantage.

Now on the bed, Gloria’s legs spayed wide apart and I firmly positioned inside her birth canal, I thrust in a steady cadence. For neither of us was it an act of love-making, not even sex though the act itself was in progress. She was attempting to reclaim me, the male me, and had succeeded thus far, at least superficially. And I was more than willing to do battle with my ghost, I had done so each and every night since she had claimed me for her own. My subjective tactile world all but made a lie of my acts. Phantom breasts slapping from side to side and jerked up and down with each thrust, nipples, erotic, screaming points lashed the air,

a great cloud of hair, thick, lush hair covered both Gloria and I, catching and sticking on the now damp surfaces of our bodies. Inside me, female need expressed as muscles and glands soon had my thighs slick with phantom bodily fluids as my loins begged to be invaded. The conflict between two opposite sexual modes threatened to tear asunder that androgynous mix of Rebecca and I, that hermaphroditic creature.



It was precisely at that point of impossible disparity, that penis-vagina, that reality began to tear. A door to another dimension but slightly ajar swung open a tad wider, or so it seemed. Gloria was also caught, and how could she not be, with the two of us so intimately connected.

Gloria was the first to realized that something was terribly wrong, she screamed, "GET OFF MEeeeeee!"

I pulled back but only succeeded in drawing her up with me, I think I started screaming then as I joined her mindless terror, we were literally joined at the waist as one flesh. My penis was our penis, one member, one tube of flesh, both ends firmly rooted in our respective groins. There was nothing even slightly sexual about this joining, I rolled to my left and she followed, as she had too. Now face to face, she, with the flat of her hands, was pushing against my chest with what seemed superhuman strength; upon her face rode a grimace of horror driven determination, her eyes, wide and soulless. We were all but tearing each other apart for I too had taken Gloria by her shoulders and was straining with all my might to push her away. I think it was our mutual pain in our shared member, now stretched nearly to the point of rupture that finally overrode our frenzied attempts to 'un-join'. In the next instant we both collapsed into each other's arms, the screams gone but still vividly etched in our memories. "My God... Brian, what are we going to do?"

I had no answer as I planted my forehead between Gloria's neck and shoulder, I was panting like an overheated dog, as was Gloria now. I think she was also crying for I could feel her sobs riding along with her heaving chest. It was pretty clear that attempting sex while possessed in this body had been a bad idea, a

very bad idea. I finally answered her question, "Do? Endure until sunrise, I guess."

"What if I have to pee?"

I didn't answer that nor the extension to that question, what if sunrise comes and we remained joined. We would surely die, eventually, and wouldn't that make a macabre addition to the myth of Sweet house. "You want to try to sit up or something?"

She didn't answer but she did stop crying and moved her head and shoulders back as far as she could without putting undue stress on that tube of flesh that connected us. I drew back as well and returned her gaze, "Well?" I said, for I could see she was thinking.

She laughed, it was a short, brittle laugh but a laugh none the less. "I guess you were right, Brian, I don't think a psychologist would be of much help."

"That really wasn't an argument I wanted to win. Um, Gloria?"

"Yes?"

"This ghost..."

"Yes?"

"If I'm possessed, which I am, then she's got a hold of you as well, at least now." I watched Gloria's face darken as she absorbed that thought. "I'm... sorry I brought you into this mess..."

"Shush."

"What?"

"You didn't feel that?"

"Huh?"

She rotated her hips cautiously and I felt movement. "Hey!"

She started to pull back and then we both felt what was happening. We stopped by mutual, unspoken agreement. Her voice was breathless, "I'm *inside* you."

"Um...yes." I looked at her and she me and then we pulled apart. A slick, wet penis that seemed way oversized on her groin even though it was only partly erect, hung at half staff. I didn't need to examine my own groin to know what I would find.

~oOo~

I was banging on the door, "Gloria let me in."

"GO-A-Way!" She screamed back, I say she but there was little 'she' in that baritone nor in that more muscular figure Gloria now possessed. It was the latter that she had employed when she eventually threw me bodily out of my own bedroom. She hadn't taken her transformation at all well. Aside from that penis and a set of hairy balls, she was still Gloria. Well, Gloria on steroids perhaps. She still had her tiny breasts and feminine features, smallish hands and feet, though that nose of hers seemed to have better purchase now. I mean she still looked like Gloria, kind'a, if Gloria had been, well, a dike or a jock. What hadn't changed was her inner self, her personality, her frame of reference, oh lets be entirely honest, her gender and sexual object choice had remained entirely intact. She was a woman trapped in a man's body, I mean like a classic case. Son-of-a-bitch, not unlike the original Miss Sweet? Now that was food for thought. I had assumed that Miss Sweet had started out as a man, but heck, maybe the prick was added later and against her will.

I banged on the door again, "We need to talk."

"FUCK YOU AND GO TO HELL!" She screamed.

Yeah, she wasn't taking this at all well. I walked away wearing my old bathrobe, hips swaying but now that movement looked less abnormal. The 'dusting' of manliness that Gloria now possessed was in exact proportions to that which I had lost. Aside from my vagina, which was real enough and in perfect detail, the rest of my body had lost muscle mass and natural body hair. I was hardly the phantom woman; the Rebecca I knew still existed but only in my consciousness, but my slight shoulders and less angular features, were feminine enough to carry the illusion of womanhood that my movements so loudly proclaimed. The conflict and confusion had been markedly reduced: two bodies, one space, but that 'high-lighted' penis and those testicles were now gone. My phantom form was now entirely female and no longer had to integrate the male features. Pity that I couldn't touch those breasts or tactilely examine that tiny waist where it exploded into full rounded hips.

Had I had the choice at this very moment, I would rather have been Rebecca, full and complete. This was the first time that thought had fully formed in my consciousness, in what five nights? Five nights I'd gone from horror at her presence, to acceptance that she and I were joined, to this: envy, desire? I had been afraid that one day she would take over me, like a body-jack-er and now, I was eager for the deed to be done. *I wanted to be Rebecca.*

Before Gloria freaked out the second time, yeah we had actually talked for a while like rational people up in my bedroom, she told me something that made sense, kind'a. That body, Rebecca's body? From the

way I described it, Gloria concluded that it was unnatural. I wasn't sure what she was talking about, unnatural, man, it was like *total babe*. "And that's just my point," she said, "that... *thing* grew in a man's brain, ok? Some kind of overheated sexual fetish image, not real." She didn't go on to explain. I think it was about that moment I tried to spear myself on her dong and then she, well, got irrational and the next thing I knew I was in the hallway and she wasn't. Go figure.

I was back downstairs again, buck naked in front of the hallway mirror. Gloria had a point after all. I'd seen pictures of late nineteenth century American women or rather idealized pictures, mostly drawings. The age of the bustle and the corset, the wasp waist ideal. All beautiful women had this hourglass figure, or should, right? Had I ever met a woman with that kind of figure, or seen one in the movies, ever? One could go back to Mae West, but she was already pretty old by the time she did movies. But a young man in say the eighteen-nineties, might have bought the whole artificial shape as actually real, right? Especially if he was inexperienced, naive with regard to 'real' women and 'realistic' bodies. And this phantom body, as Gloria had pointed out, was entirely too perfect but not in modern terms. A dangerously small waist as if she had been tightly corseted from early youth. And no modern woman would desire hips and butt as full as the ones I described. Perhaps a walking wet dream from another age, but certainly not a modern image.

Of course the body I actually saw reflected back at me was nothing like her. Slim and, need I say, 'boyish hips'? A wimpy chest and shoulders that could belong to a real female but no waspish waist nor breasts. Of the latter, not even a hint though I felt them tugging and jiggling as I turned from side to side. Those sweet

breasts were forever, it seemed, just out of reach. My face could have belonged to a real girl, minus the thick, straight eyebrows and short, disordered mop of hair, but who was I kidding, that face was mine and too male to ever be pretty. Pretty? I wanted to be beautiful, no, knock out sexy like the babe she was. Oh my, I wasn't just walking down that path, I was in full gallop.

I slept on the couch that night, Gloria took the bed. The idea of sleeping together, well, according to Gloria, that wasn't going to happen. I started masturbating as soon as I got on the couch. My phantom body was a super-turn-on to my male brain. I pretended that I, the old I, was with her, the real her, seeing and feeling her every sweet contour. I was pretty much ravaging that red-gold triangle bringing forth copious amounts of 'real' bodily fluids when a loud gasp rang out in the night. The sound came from upstairs. Fuck me, but Gloria was probably doing the same thing I was.

The sound of her climax only drove me harder to find mine. The old me would have been done a long time ago. The female climax was a lot harder to achieve, or so it seemed to me and my fingers ached as did my groin long before I could achieve full resolution. Full resolution? It had been like driving a sport car stuck in first gear, a lot of sound and fury but not much speed. I guess that's why I was still awake when the light from the false dawn became evident.



We had breakfast together at about ten a.m.; sunrise had swept away most of the lingering uncertainties. "I have to ask Gloria?"

"About what?"

"You jerked off last night."

"What are you talking about?"

I laughed, "You can't lie to me. I heard you."

"Oh," she said and then blushed.

"So what was it like?"

"Weird."

"Ah, a woman of few words. Too bad we didn't do anything..."

"Not that you didn't try, Brian."

"So why not?"

"Because... because I'm not into women? It really grossed me out."

"What a waste of a perfectly good dick."

"I can't believe you said that. Doesn't it bother you just a little bit? Are you queer or something?"

"I wasn't queer last night Gloria, I was *her*, I was Rebecca Sweet and woman enough to want you. And don't kid yourself Gloria, you *are* man enough." *There, it was said.* What we had both been avoiding ever since sunrise. I had her plumbing and she mine, or so it seemed. She was wearing one of my shirts simply because her shoulders were too wide to wear one of her own. The effect on her person was surreal. She had carefully applied her makeup and had used more than she would normally have done, thus negating some of the masculinization she'd undergone but the effect had backfired or at least it seemed to me that was the case. Her attempts to recapturing her femininity made her look simply effeminate not feminine.

"And now? Are you still all hot to have this damn prick inside you? Huh? Brian?"

“Christ, don’t be that way Gloria, of course not. Rebecca is gone, as usual, leaving me or rather us, to clean up her mess.”

“Well that’s a relief,” she said sourly. “I was afraid you were going to be a one-hundred percent bitch one-hundred percent of the time.” She twisted in her chair, uncomfortably, then reached for her coffee cup and took a dainty sip, her little finger projecting out, but half curled.

Her behavior looked more feminine than I remembered due most likely that it rode in striking contrast to her mannish form. The effect was probably the same general phenomenon that Rebecca created when she rode inside me, flaming faggot rather than a real woman. Well, technically, Gloria was no longer a woman, leastwise as biologically defined. She continued to twist and turn in her seat. “Something wrong?”

“Yeah,” she growled. “It just got hard on its own, for Pete’s sake. Brian, what’s wrong with your penis?”

I laughed, “It’s got issues, Gloria, just issues.”

“Does it do *that* often?”

“Oh yeah.”

She looked at her crotch for a few seconds and then reached down for a closer examination and then finally back up at me, “This is real, isn’t it? My God Brian, what are we going to do?”

I didn’t answer her but my mind answered, welcome to my world, Gloria. “Doppelganger? I got to do some research on line, excuse me, Gloria.”

Gloria left well before sunset, not that I could blame her. She was comfortable enough with me but facing the Rebecca-me again was not something she was

about to do. Initially she said that she would stay overnight at a motel, thus avoiding Rebecca in my body while remaining close enough if something should happen. That *something* was probably her 'hope' that our gonads would return to 'normal' come nightfall. I have to admit that before sunset, she and I were of the same desire, for I too found a future with a vagina a little disconcerting. I'd never concerned myself with pregnancy, for example, or periods or... the whole nine yards. But with nightfall, not only had my new vagina remained in place, as Rebecca-me, the idea of its existence was rather more or less essential and certainly not a problem.

Gloria texted me, a very short but clear message, she was heading to LA and then LAX. No goodbyes, nothing. She knew, of course, it would be Rebecca-me and not Brian receiving the message. She, like me, was just beginning a new life, one we hadn't chosen, but then we hadn't exactly chosen the lives we had had before either.

I had no doubt that she would attempt to hang on to her gender identity. If she traveled that long road back with all the necessary surgeries she would still never arrive home. Childbirth would be out. Nor did she have a guiding ghost, like me, to pave the way to the other, less painful, alternative. I assume that she would remain in the closet, so to speak, but in her case hiding her maleness. How odd, terribly odd, things had turned out. Again I couldn't help but think of the parallels between the original Rebecca Sweet and my dear Gloria. Gal, I'm sorry.

## Chapter 4

I've spent eight nights now as Rebecca, that's what? Ah- three nights since Gloria got the shaft: ha, ha. I said

'as Rebecca' didn't I? Maybe it was losing my equipment to my girl friend or perhaps it was in the cards all along. Yeah, Rebecca was no empty shell, not just another pretty ghost. Mute, yeah, tight lipped, to be sure. If she is slipping ideas into my head, which I am now sure she is, she does it non-verbally, ok? Feelings and emotions, cravings and desires, oh yeah, but in a way that a moron like me actually thinks those feeling are my own.

Take the night Gloria left to go back to Boston. I thought that it was my idea to go out and grab a bite to eat, well, perhaps so. I had had only a slice of toast and coffee at breakfast, so grabbing something to eat wasn't odd nor did it strike me as suspicious in the least. But I ended up at Victoria's Secret, well eventually after another burger eaten on the run. I wouldn't be the first male to love looking at the Victoria's Secret's catalog or, as I did that night, stop in front of their display window. Guys like looking at women in sexy nightwear, even if the females in question were merely manikins. Rebecca played havoc with my mannerisms, but that wasn't news. But she never, ever, actually, you know, injected purpose in what I did, or least, at that point I still didn't think so. I was no zombie doll guided by her ghostly will, hah!

That sounds all quite reasonable, right? Wrong. I damn well had not intended to go out in public, at least not after dark, for obvious reasons. Fernwood is a village and even if I was still a stranger, or perhaps because I was a stranger, more than a few eyeballs would take note. And yes, as the Rebecca-me, we swished and pranced our way surely into Fernwood's social history. Like I said, it seemed to be an ok thing to do at the time.

How could I *not* realize that I could actually go in and buy something. I mean, I really was a girl, a real girl now. The latter fact had been all too evident all day long, especially when I went to the can. As Rebecca-me, being a girl wasn't a bad thing. I think you can see the schism that was opening up between the day me and the Rebecca-me, big enough to drive the proverbial truck through. Rebecca didn't make me go into that clothing store, nor select some nightwear to try on but she did allow me the 'freedom' to explore that gift I had earned, that womb inside my body. I felt a terrible thrill just before entering that store and it was delicious.

The young salesgirl looked positively baffled when I approached her for help. I hadn't the slightest notion of what size I needed as I held up a long, semi-transparent nightgown. The feeling of that material against my skin was electric; one could only imagine what it would be like to actually wear it. Had I had a penis, it would have been fully erect, as it was what I did have was responding well enough indeed.

They closed at ten, actually the register closed at nine-fifty-five. That fact and nothing else saved me from buying out the store. As it was, I came away with two nightgowns and quite a mish-mash of underwear, nylons and a pink dress that the 'day me' wouldn't have been caught dead near, let alone *in*. As to the young lady that helped me, I'm sure I had given her enough to gossip about for a month. When she handed me back my Master Card she said, "Have a nice evening, Mr. Drake." Oh yeah, I was one cooked goose and decidedly not a drake.

I floated home, more delighted than I had ever been as a male in completing a purchase. It even exceeded

what I felt when I bought my first real computer, an old hand-me-down IBM, and, frankly I just couldn't wait to get home try everything on one more time. Oh yeah, I was no zombie, just a wind-up Barbie Doll from hell. I had free will, it just wasn't Brian Drake behind that wheel. I was Rebecca that night and she was me. And she had come to claim her birthright, my wimpy assed body.



Trust me, the next morning I remembered every moment of that night up and including Rebecca-me in that sexy nightgown. What seemed like my future was unfolding before my eyes at a pace faster than I had expected. I also remembered that vivid dream, so much like earlier dreams I'd experience. It went something like this...

*The sound of hot water rushing into the tub met my ears. I had watched my hands turn the knobs, not my hands, but hers to be correct, in something akin to fascination. Now naked, I stepped into the mildly hot bath and sat down. I was she, in the flesh of that there was no doubt. The sight of 'our' buoyant breasts rising up amidst the clouds of soapy bubbles was like Pavlov's conditioned stimulus to my male libido. As blood rushed into that clit it wasn't entirely different from the experience I had known when my penis was aroused. And there was an added pleasure as our nipples became more articulated. A woman's arousal is different than a man's, more diffuse, but still readily defined by blood engorged flesh. She moved our hand finding flesh made nearly frictionless by the fine film of soap, the slippery surfaces highlighted both the tactile impression captured by that hand and those tactile impressions passively received by that stim-*

ulated flesh. Within minutes she had guided 'us' to a level of arouse that was significant without once touching a single, primary erotic zone. How little had I known about a woman's response? I was the original:

*slam-bam-thank-you-ma'am, always racing to a goal without realizing that the pleasure was in the journey toward that goal, the goal was illusion and the passage, reality. Active rather than passive, that was the male profile, hurry, hurry we are almost there and then what? A post coitus cigarette? I didn't smoke. Was it as good for you as it was for me? If you needed to ask, you were a male. 'We' were decidedly not male at that moment.*

*The water was nearly cold by the time I withdrew from the now soap less water. My flesh burned with that inner heat that comes from erotic closure. A red blush discolored our neck down to and between our breasts, a woman would know what that meant. Time stood still as we dried our body and then applied sweet smelling ointments on our skin until we sat in a cloud of feminine presence. Finally she let go. Was she exhausted or merely had she completed what she set out to complete.*

*I turned and began to scream at the face I saw in the mirror. "YOU FUCKING BITCH! WHORE-CUNT!" It had suddenly hit me what she, what REBECCA had done. Unable to literally 'control' this body without my permission, she had attempted to seduce me into accepting her control. Attempted? I began to giggle in a hysterical, out of control, out of my gourd kind'a way. That male id, that 'me' had responded to the gift she had offered, her body, her erotic experiences. I had been putty in her hands, a male with heterosexual instincts and a definite fondness for the feminine features such as tits and ass, all she had to do was let those same instincts lead me where she wanted 'us' to go.*

*I quit screaming as I leaned forward and looked at 'our' reflection. My anger had passed as quickly as it had come. I had learned so much. Among other things I had discovered just how ignorant I was. I knew nothing about women and perhaps, little about myself as well. She had left me vivid impressions that were certainly food for thought; this had been no blind, selfish act on her part but potentially a peace offering? We did need to learn to live together, if the word 'live' could actually be employed in this context. She was as 'stuck' with me as I was mated to her. Better to be lovers than antagonists. But at what cost?*

At what cost indeed, Rebecca was rolling a millstone and I was the grain. With each turn my essence was being ground into a fine powder, flour for the bread she intended to bake. When would she cross that gap, that divide, between my 'day self' and Rebecca-me, the creature that already ruled my nights. Why fight it? Truth? Giving up and becoming Rebecca twenty-four seven, wasn't something I could do. It would be like committing suicide by holding your breath. It wasn't that I was made of terribly stern stuff, indeed just the opposite, perhaps. Rebecca simply wasn't me and frankly I was very happy being me? Does that make sense, it did to me.



I spent the morning following my Victoria's Secret adventure and part of the afternoon at my workstation spinning out some code. It was pure escape, to be sure. Were I not writing code I would be mulling over what had happened and, well, probably wallowing in a sea of self-pity. So far neither activity had paid any profits since Rebecca had injected herself into my life. And

considering what had happened to both Gloria and I as a result of our 'experiment' one could say we should have left well enough alone. I had been truly 'unmanned' at least in the objective, physical sense. In a psychological sense, Rebecca had failed, that is the internal 'me' at this moment retained its male gender identity and male heterosexual frame of reference. Probably more important, 'I' existed, that irreducible, essential spark, that identity that was Brian Drake, twenty-five years old, the only son of Elizabeth and Ronald Drake of Cleveland Ohio, the computer wonder-kin. Like the black knight in Monty Python's "Search For The Holy Grail", I had been injured, but it was only a *scratch*. Yeah, trust me, I was whistling in the dark past a graveyard. Programming was my security 'bankey'.

Time passed, my code was shit. I found a bug of the most elementary sort, the likes of which I hadn't committed since I graduated from middle school. That fact left a bad taste in my mouth and for the first time in years, I got up and walked away from the computer, dissatisfied, even angry. I had plenty of excuses, all too many to be sure, I mused while sitting on the toilet listening to my urine spray out. Who wouldn't be distracted? I couldn't help but wonder what Gloria was doing right now and then I decided that I probably didn't want to know.

Rather than going back to the computer, I began to do some much-needed housekeeping. The nearly mindless activity gave me what I had sought at the workstation, distraction. Housekeeping? When had I ever done that? I threw down the wet dishtowel, scowling. "FUCK YOU REBECCA!" She was at last attempting to set up camp in my own space, or was I just being paranoid?

Night came and we went shopping and this time there was no effort to misdirect the Rebecca-me's attention, it was unnecessary now. That much turf she now clearly owned. A hair stylist would wreck what little damage she could, since I had little hair for the woman to work with. But plucking and shaping my eyebrows, that was another thing entirely. Makeup and training to use that makeup followed after consultation with an expert for the right colors. Time ran out before she could have a manicure and our nails painted. This was total war now and Rebecca-me intended to leave no survivors.



Art Hobbs called about mid morning the next day asking me to join him for coffee. He had solved the mystery or at least part of it. I explained to him why meeting him in town might not be a good idea. What Rebecca had done last night, the reshaping of my eyebrows and the hair were not things readily covered up. He understood and more than that, though he didn't say as much, he was aware of my shopping trip into the village two nights earlier. Of course this wasn't the mid-sixties, society had grown less sensitive to say ambiguities of one's sexuality but less sensitive was not the same as accepting. He, if not I, still had a stake in the community's sensibilities. That he had called at all was the clearest sign that I had earned an ally.

"Give me what you got in a nut shell."

"There never was a Rebecca Sweet."

"Got it." I wasn't surprised. Having been Rebecca for eight nights now, I was fully aware of the possibility that she had never been female, ignoring the obvi-

ously female phantom body 'she' projected. The clothes that Rebecca-me had bought two nights earlier, had fed a well-established and very intense sexual fetish. I'm no psychologist but it seemed unlikely that was a female thing. Rebecca had been at least a transvestite, which meant male. "One of Mr. Sweet's sons?"

"His only son, the good Reverend Sweet had eight daughters and only one male heir. You don't sound surprised Brian."

"No. My ghost is simply too fascinated with all things feminine. Just passing as female is a serious turn on and that just didn't make sense. Oh, more than that, I suspect he had no life beyond achieving the impossible which I guess means he might even had been a transsexual long before hormones were readily available and, God knows, there was no surgical option in the nineteenth century other than castration. So how did he pull it off?"

"His sisters, all grown up with families of their own, had probably felt sorry for Robert. Of course that is just speculation but after the old man died in nineteen and six, Robert returned from San Francisco at the age of forty and took up housekeeping at the old homestead as Miss Rebecca Sweet. At the very least, his sisters said nothing about the female impersonation he was attempting."

"Rebecca Sweet isn't a ghost, Art." There was no response on the other end of the line. "I suspect that what we are dealing with is a doppelganger."

"Ah- what?"

"An extra soul, a spare so to speak. Probably Robert's alter ego, his female want-to-be self. Look Art I'm new to all this but I doubt that the spirit inside me or

that poor Mr. Bormann carried around for years, had ever existed in the flesh, so it's not really a 'ghost' but rather..." I couldn't finish.

"What Brian?"

My throat constricted and my mouth had turned into dust, "THE FUCKING IMAGE HE JERKED OFF WITH! Umm... sorry Art, I didn't mean to shout. I'll... I'll talk to you later, ok? I'm, well distracted and off my feed." I hung up.

I was sure he must have thought I had gone around the bend, well I had in a fundamental way. I hadn't told him that I was now fully female at least in reproductive capacity. That was something that Robert Sweet had not accomplished, or at least I didn't think so. The accident between Gloria and I had been truly an accident and not one that Robert could have pulled off, he was in love with his female alter-ego, OK? Probably a virgin. Making love to Gloria was certainly totally out of bounds and could never have happened with Robert. That Rebecca matrix, could not nor would not integrate what we were doing, thus... the rest as they say is history.

That the Rebecca-me was fascinated with our new plumbing was hardly a surprise. That she had yet to take advantage of that fact followed from when she was created and by whom. She was a nineteenth century virgin born about eighteen-sixty-six, a product of her Victorian culture and very much a child of a deeply religious Father with rather ironclad morals. Rebecca was a very good girl with a deeply repressed sexuality, a sexuality that could only be explored in fantasy: in daydreams, romantic novels and, yes, masturbation. Ok, now substitute 'he' for 'she' and the picture becomes just a bit more confused. And now the impossi-

ble had become possible. She/he was ready to explore that new world and nervous as hell, go figure. Perhaps she/he was afraid that reality wouldn't live up to her expectations. That was a pretty realistic fear I suspect, reality seldom does.

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Rebecca-me was no 'babe', how could we be. Our internal chemistry was probably moving us in the right direction, ovaries create the hormones necessary for our evolution and the loss of male testicles, no doubt, would help as well. It would certainly be months if not years before any serious change in our shared body would be evident, though I had been a slender male, made more slender by the loss of muscle mass, so finding women's clothing that fit was not difficult. A bra with heavy padding and a pair of rolled up socks, added something to the overall presentation. The demi-corset we wore, though it did created the illusion of hips where none existed by tightly constraining our waist, had less to do with the visual impact achieved and more to do with the existing fetish. We were decidedly in pain and that made us all the more excited, the truth to be known. Similarly, the five inch heels gave inadequate support and remained a challenge to wear, were not only uncomfortable but dangerously unstable and yes, that too added to our pleasure. We were literally a creature walking a tight rope high overhead without a net below and the implied danger was every bit as sweet as the discomfort we eagerly endured.

Our short layered hair, dyed a pink to match our dress, our pink nails and pink high heels would have been over the top even without Rebecca's exaggerated

feminine mannerisms. The yards and yards of stiff pink petticoats that spayed out our full skirt, the likes of which hadn't been seen since the nineteen-fifties, made our entry into the Red Room that night, a grand occasion.



Our excessively full skirt and multiple petticoats literally filled the entry way and it continued to fill the room as we glided like a slightly wobbly queen toward the young man behind the bar. "Would you be so kind young man as to tell Uncle Art, *Rebecca Sweet* is here to call on him."

Our voice cut across the low murmurs that had filled the bar at our entrance and then silence followed. All eyes, or at least those that belong to those who were locals, were pointed in our direction. We posed for them, turning in a languid movement away from the bar and fixing with our gaze those that were still looking at us. Our nose held high, our mouth showing a double row of teeth between pink clad lips in our best beauty queen smile. That we recognized no one in the abruptly quiet bar mattered not, they knew us or rather about the Rebecca Sweet myth. We seemed to be drinking in their undivided attention like a hungry vampire at the neck of a victim. We ever so slowly turned back as Mr. Hobbs entered from the dining room, extended our gloved hand, palm down, "So nice to see you again, *Dear*." We added fluttering lashes as we continued to hold out our hand, expectantly. Mr. Hobbs was as pale as if he'd seen a ghost, which in some ways he had.

Rebecca-me was a drag queen that just happened to be female, I know that sounds, well, odd? In the Red room that night, we were in our glory. We had no desire to 'pass', to be seen as just a woman, even a beautiful woman, which we were decidedly not. It was important to us to be seen as Miss Sweet with all the sexual ambiguities that concept entailed Maybe too many years corked up inside Robert's brain, hiding Rebecca's existence in a world that would never have accepted her, had fermented her personality, our per-

sonality. We were being deliberately outrageous as if daring the world to challenge our essential femininity. On the other hand, maybe Rebecca-me was a kind of throwback to Mae West who had, after all, rejected the very morality that was so central to the Victorian age, the self made man-eater. As to the predator aspect, that was as fake as the breasts we flaunted. We were screaming by our presentation and manner, not vocally, I am more woman than you can handle (and man). In fact, we would have probably turned and run had old man Hobbs shown the slightest sexual interest.

While I saw Art Hobbs as an ally, surely Rebecca-me saw him as merely an opportunity to project our out of control but mixed sexuality, a safe foil for our feminine blade. Our every flirtatious signal and they came in a cascade, was meant to assault and even frighten the old man, certainly not to seduce him. The confrontation lasted for only a few seconds before Art beat a hasty retreat back to his office. Rebecca-me purred with satisfaction and then wobbled on heels too high into the main dining room for a light dinner. Trust me, all the village would know of *her* return. We felt as smug as a cat that had eaten the canary. And as to my continued existence here in Fernwood, the handwriting was already on the wall. Of course, Rebecca-me was hardly concerned by Brain Drake's fate, though we were bound together so closely.



The next morning I made repeated attempts to call Mr. Hobbs, to apologize. Not surprisingly, he refused to receive my calls. To be entirely honest, it wasn't Rebecca I held at fault but myself. Rebecca was little

more than a cesspool of sexual frustrations, neurotic self-delusions, misinformation and misdirected sexual attentions. She had yet to prove herself capable of concerted purpose, aside from immediate self-gratification. It was 'I' and not Rebecca that had given guidance to our behavior up to and including my confrontation with poor Mr. Hobbs. I had been drunk on the waves of erotic sensuality engendered, initially by those clothes and the feel of them against 'our' body, a reality that had consumed 'us' long before we got to the Red Room. I, and not Rebecca, had followed what 'felt good' like a moth might fly into a flame. That Mr. Hobbs had become the eventual focus of that behavior had no deeper meaning than it seemed the right thing to do at the time, no, it just felt too good to ignore, too fantastic to not do. I had needed an audience and had achieved that by my mere entrance into the restaurant. Poor Mr. Hobbs had been but a ploy, a tool, to hold that audience as if to suggest a plot and to buy time on my newly discovered erotic roller coaster.

Lord knows, this morning when I woke up, I felt half sick at my behavior. Shamed that I could be so totally captured by Rebecca's fetishes but captured I had been. Sexual fetishes are almost completely unknown by females. Check it out on the web. Ninety-five percent of fetishes are male and that last five percent is questionable. Which is to say, Rebecca was created by a male for a male's sexual purposes. Those dreams Rebecca had fed me, pure fiction. Rebecca knew no more about the feminine condition than the man that had created 'her' which was to say little at all. Rebecca was Mr. Robert Sweet's lifelong masturbatory doppelganger, a neurotic creation of a deeply neurotic man. Mr. Robert Sweet was no more transsexual than I was

and thus Rebecca, as a woman, was as phony as a three-dollar bill.

The truth that Rebecca was as male as my missing dong came all too apparent last night when we returned home to celebrate our victory. There was no there-there, her penis, *his* penis was the mystical entity by which all that pent up erotic energy could be released in one magnificent bolt of pure sexuality. What we had, of course, was a vagina. Rebecca, the pseudo-babe, the ultimate female persona constructed to feed Robert's male appetites, went catatonic or so it seemed. All that had gone on before had lead to one mechanism, one ultimate master, Robert's and therefore my penis. I had gone to sleep alone last night, the first time in over a week. HE, that is Rebecca, had curled into a tiny, hard knot and was no longer communicating with me or this body. He was not designed to be *actually* female. Hell of a time to find that out, right?

Having failed to contact Mr. Hobbs I went over to my workstation and sat down to Skype Gloria. She accepted my call but there was no video. "Hey, something wrong with your camera sweetheart?"

"No."

Great, I thought, she wasn't a happy camper. "I think Rebecca has gone tits up."

"Huh? That's great Brian."

"Yeah, a little too early to tell but it seems she has issues with our new equipment. Go figure, huh?" I waited for a second for her to reply but she didn't. "Things not going very well?"

Her image abruptly appeared, "What do you think?"

“Oh,” I said. She had zits, big nasty ones, all over her face.

“Damn it Brian, I’m going through a second adolescence. Needless to say it’s the hormonal changes that’s doing this. I’m loaded with ‘boy’ juice.”

What could I say, sorry? “You gone to a doctor or anything?”

“Come on Brian, do I look stupid? No.” She sighed, “You know, your penis still has issues. You have no idea how embarrassing it is to get a hard on and for no apparent reason at all.”

“Um, actually I do, or rather I did. Speaking of which, I went to a GYN yesterday like you suggested.”

“And?”

“Pretty damn weird experience.”

“No problems?”

“Nah, it was a private clinic and they took me as a walk in, no questions I couldn’t handle.”

“That’s not what I meant, Brian.”

“Oh, that. Still waiting for the test results but he said I looked healthy.”

“He?”

“Yeah.”

“What are you going to do, now, that is?”

“Damned if I know and you Gloria?”

“Ditto.”

“I got a call from the local paper early this morning. The world knows about the return of Miss Sweet or at least this tiny corner of the world knows.”

“What are you going to say?”

“Nothing, flat out nothing. I got to go sweetheart, another uninvited guest has just pulled into the driveway. Seems a lot of locals want to come out and see her, in the flesh, so to speak. Seriously, Rebecca Sweet is turning into something of an icon here in Fernwood. Later, ok?”



Mr. Nixon had been delighted when I appeared at his office one morning about a week later, unannounced. That look of delight lasted all of a second and then his mouth dropped. “Oh my God son, you look horrible.”

He was standing now, having jumped out of his seat upon my entry, but now apparently frozen in shock. And why not, I had shaved my head, how else to deal with what Rebecca-me had done to my hair and I hadn’t been able to get that horrid ‘pink’ color out. That I was probably a good ten pounds thinner and far less muscular wouldn’t have been evident since I was wearing a sports jacket with padded shoulders but my plucked eyebrows couldn’t be hidden. They certainly made me look, well, like a sissy. “Horrible?” Before he could respond to that, I added, “And it’s good to see you too, Tom.”

“My God Brian...”

“I’m not dying, if that’s your worry. Aside from what you might think, I’m actually as healthy as a horse.”

He was heading toward me, ready to clasp me by my shoulders. It was obvious by his facial expression

that he didn't believe that I was anything but a step from my grave. He slowed up as he approached, and stopped a good five feet short in some confusion: "I was worried when you missed the last deadline, it wasn't like you. You should have said something."

"Well that's why I'm here." I glanced at the side chair. That was all I needed to do, he quickly turned it around as if I might have trouble taking care of that chore for myself. He hovered over me like a mother hen, it made me nervous. "And I missed two deadlines, not one, boss man." I let out a long sigh.

He grabbed the other side chair and pulled it close before sitting down. Hands folded, looking expectant and not at all like an employer with a problem employee. To be correct, he was being the man I had always known, thank God for the Tom Nixons of the world. I was pretty sure I was doing the right thing now or at least I was talking to the right man. "Tom?"

"Yes, Brian."

"It got to be a mad house in Fernwood. Just local stuff, but I was up to my ears in it."

"Anything I can do to help?"

I felt instant relief then for it was clear that what was news in Fernwood hadn't made it to LA or at least it hadn't made it into Mr. Nixon's awareness. "Nothing that getting out of town and back home to LA couldn't fix." When he didn't respond I added, "And there is my condition."

"Condition? What condition?"

I couldn't very well tell him the truth, now could I, ghostly possession was a ticket to the funny farm, not a helping hand. My lie would have to be the truth turned up on its edge. "I got blindsided by some, ah- major

gland problems.” (Well gonads were glands, right?) Tom’s face was totally blank now. I shrugged, “Not to worry, I’m under doctors care and so far, it appears to be under control.” Tom looked even more distressed. “Anyhow, it’s a progressive condition but it shouldn’t ultimately affect my programming.

“You should have talked to me, son. Going thought something like that, alone. I would have understood.”

“Thank you Tom. I should have, perhaps.” And then I smiled, “But we’re talking now.” I received a generous smile. “Mr. Nixon, writing code is my life, ok? Not writing code, frankly, I would feel lost and more than a little useless.” He didn’t understand, of course. To him, programmers had a skill that was useful, they created products one could sell. Not unlike the ability to write. Most people could write, stringing one sentence after another to the point that they could communicate an idea, but that didn’t make them ‘writers’. The ability to write a story or a poem that others would actually ‘enjoy’ reading, was rare. To write truly great fiction or immortal poems, that was a rare gift indeed. Exceptional programmers were not merely persons with a skill, they were poets, novelists in their own medium. And I was an exceptional programmer.

He looked confused, “But of course Brian, you are the best programmer I have.” He spread out his arms as if to take in his office, “Without you, none of this would exist and you know that, of course. So what is the real problem, Brian?”

Now comes the big half-truth. “I need to transition, Tom.”

“Transition?”

“Look at my eyebrows.” He did but he said nothing. Was he being dense or polite? “I’m changing my gender.”

Yes he had been dense all right as his eyes bugged out, “You?” His voice was in total disbelief.

“Well?”

“Does that mean you’ll start wearing women’s clothing?”

“Like the sun sets in the West. Seriously Mr. Nixon it will not affect my work however it might cause some serious disruption, umm socially here at home base. Mr. Nixon?”

He hadn’t responded, it was obvious that I put too much on his plate. “Um, can I tell my wife?”

“Mr. Nixon, it’s not going to be a secret, of course. So how is Linda?”

He ignored my last question as he looked around rather lost, “Oh my. Umm, what am I to call you, I mean when...”

“Rebecca, that will do fine. Are we cool on this boss?”

“Yes,” he said but he still wasn’t really processing the data, “We don’t have a women’s restroom, did you know that? Never needed one...”

I stood up, “I’ll be in first thing tomorrow.” I didn’t bother looking back.

Mr. Nixon hadn’t taken my announcement as well as I thought he would but then what did I know about such things. I guess it was when I had my first period that I realized that eventually I would have to deal with this new reality but that didn’t mean I had to give

up my life at the same time. Nixon and I had been a good working team and I lived for my art. I would make this work, this transition into a female me while retaining all of the old me that I could.

Last night Rebecca had finally poked her head out, so to speak, after a week in hiding. She was no longer the wild-eyed drag queen, I guess having a working vagina can do that to someone or rather to Robert's doppelganger. The truth was my doppelganger's fetishes were as alive as ever, how could they be otherwise since they formed the core of his/her hurricane, the very eye of the storm, but that eye no longer had 'his' penis and there in lay the problem. Being a real female certainly changed the ground rules. Conservative Victorian mores which had always been there would surely tamper her behavior, if only her fashion sense could escape the nineteen-fifties. I planned to go shopping, for the both of us, as soon as I located a place to stay. Thank God I still had a job and a career.

## **Chapter 5**

It was a small, one bedroom apartment and quite satisfactory considering it was within walking distance from work. All the apartments in the complex were one-bedroom units, so I assumed there would be few, if any, families in residence and therefore no kids. There were kids, it turned out, their presence clearly evident later in the afternoon as their shrill screams and excited cries rose up from the central pool area like icy knives but I had already signed the contract, so much for logic. While not exactly a 'swinging singles' complex, there were numerous, mostly young, males and females who acted like they were in a pickup bar on a Friday night regardless of the real date or time.

Not that I remembered 'that' as I moved in. I was just being, me, Brian Drake and totally clueless.

You see, I wasn't terribly 'socially' conscious, most serious programmers weren't. It is dangerous to make broad generalizations about any group of people, but 'hackers' almost universally discover their passion early in life. Spend most of one's 'formative' years in front of a computer and with other geeks and, well, one's social competence tended to be at least slightly retarded. If a guy or gal had given me a significant mating sign as I moved in, I could not have detected it unless they had employed a baseball bat. I had probably missed all kinds of significant social messages in my life and that afternoon was surely no exception.

I was dumb but not stupid. An older woman, meaning late thirties, who's apartment was directly across from mine, appeared at her door and made the usual greetings to a new arrival. Now she *had* been swinging a baseball bat, metaphorically of course. Even I couldn't miss her non-verbal cry. Miss Jan Yates, with an emphasis on the title 'Miss', certainly had a predatory look on her face, I could all but hear her biological clock ticking, and her body language was expectant with an arched back and thrusting pelvis until I responded to her greeting after I removed my hat, uncovering not only my bald head but clearly revealing my pencil thin, effeminately shaped eyebrows. She didn't slam the door or run away but her body language shouted, shit, just my luck, a queer or *something* across the hallway. Anyhow, the thrusting pelvis had disappeared and Miss Yates was eager to go back inside her apartment as if she'd left something on the stove. Yeah, Brian Drake hadn't made much of an impression on her. It is amazing how sensitive some females were to my altered eyebrows, though that was a fact I had yet to

fully recognize. Rejection, however, was another thing entirely, that I knew down to my very toes.

As dusk came on I waited to transition into my Rebecca-me. There was a very good chance Rebecca-me would not go ape shit again, odd when you consider it. Having a vagina should have been, well, a turn on, right? To say that Robert's doppelganger was neurotic would have been an understatement. Could he-she run wild again? Does the pope wear a beanie? Fortunately I left that awful pink dress and fetish stiletto high heels back in Fernwood. What I had brought a mix of men's and women's clothes, both of relative bland character. I was pretty confident that she couldn't get too out of control. It was like having a nut case for a roommate, a nut case you couldn't lock out nor was she predictable. There I go again, blaming a hundred and fifty year old fetish doppelganger, I wasn't entirely innocent after all. To be entirely honest, I'd missed Rebecca when she had refused to come out. Rebecca-me was my evil twin but she knew how to have fun.

It was like that line from Poltergeist, you know... they'reee baaak! Rebecca arrived with the sunset, of that I was certain as her phantom breasts and fantastic hair rode invisibly upon my person. Rebecca-me flowed with a raw almost violent sensuality that the old me had never known. Explaining this would be like describing the color red to a person born blind, impossible. I, we, felt more alive, more vibrant, more sexually in the present... we got dressed after an elaborate toilet. Rebecca's makeup skills were, by now, awesome. My ordinary brown eyes were transformed into vapid pools of mystery, as if by mascara and eye shadow alone, a new soul, a female soul was born. How could mere paint and powder communicate such powerful

primitive sexual signals? Clearly the moist, colored lips were that, a second vagina for social communication? Made to appear fuller, and wickedly wet as if already consumed by passion. What lies came forth from the Pandora's box of tricks, how helpless was the unarmored male against that magic. Doing makeup was like writing code, it was functional and powerful.

Makeup for us certainly was transformational. In this context created by Rebecca, my bald dome looked, well, rather more like a bold fashion statement than the result of say, chemotherapy. My 'mannish' features, dissolved into an estrogenic bath and were rendered utterly female, ok, not a 'babe' but we would not need a bag over our collective head either. A fully stuffed bra, 'a' cup and white nylon panties completed my under-clothing. A simple, light white cotton dress with thin shoulder straps and a flared skirt that fell down to about mid-thigh completed my ensemble, that and a pair of flip-flops. The flamboyant Rebecca existed in spite of the constraints I'd place on her person, the lack of adequate clothing had been overcome by her will. This would be a coming out evening for Rebecca and it was far, far too late to do anything about it.

I checked myself out in front of the floor length mirror in the bedroom and was quite surprised at the illusion we had completed. I said illusion because I still didn't buy what was now fact, I was female. Had it not been for Rebecca's influence expressed in the effortless manner she controlled my hands and arms, the set of my feet and that all too female smile, I suspect my resistant male identity would have given away the lie. I hiked up my skirt exposing my panties. The evident cleft spoke volumes as to the actuality of my biological sex. Thank God my period had come and gone.

I always assumed, as a nerd programmer, that had I been born a babe, I would have had, well, an actual sex life. The idea that one could afford to say 'no' to a willing candidate for sex was, well, gosh, unthinkable. It wasn't like 'I', that is Brian Drake had ever said 'no'. Actually I hadn't heard 'yes' all that often either. Ok, let's be straight on this, I didn't plan on screwing any guys, tonight or any night. That is not to say I wouldn't, it just was, well, unlikely, ok, unlikely. I had issues with having sex with a male and poor Rebecca, was a nervous Nelly with regards to her new vagina. And one should never count out the possibility of a cute babe coming on to you. I knew I could handle that, though Rebecca was a definite unknown on that same score. And if nothing happened, I certainly expected to be the center of *some* kind of attention, that was just the way life was. Girls, even plain girls, get looked at and Rebecca had the moves of a hottie.

The real problem being a guy, was that you had to make the first move, ok? And that meant having some line. You just can't walk up to a gal and drool all over her tits. Well, you can, but the outcome of that approach usually wasn't very positive. Anyhow, when push came to shove, usually my mind drew a blank, especially if the gal was a looker. Ironic, but the better she looked the blanker my mind became. I guess that's why Gloria and I had hit it off so well, I never had to come up with a line. I remember our first one-on-one in the flesh conversation. It was concerning machine language constructions, for Pete's sake. She started that first conversation and I never, ever had to find some meaningless 'cool' thing to say.

Now a girl, she could just stand there, thrust out her chest, maybe wiggle her butt a little this way and a little that way and then bam, some fast thinking jerk,

mouth moving, eyes fixed on her tits, would appear. You know I watched that a hundred times. First one guy, then another and then, maybe two or three at once. Eventually the babe picked one and that was that. If she was hot enough, she giggle and roll her eyes. Anybody could do that, even yours truly. Yeah, I was looking forward to tonight as I looked out my window and down at the pool below. A crowd was growing and there wasn't a kid in sight. It was time to see the social world from the throne and not as a supplicant. Ok Rebecca, let's roll.

~oOo~

The experience was nothing like I had ever known, neither better nor worse for it was too alien to allow proper comparison, it would be like comparing apples to cosmic Barbie Dolls. Females, or at least this female, lived in a different world with different rules than the one Brian Drake lived in. Let's start with the most obvious; I was smaller than I had been since before I was an adult. Not a lot smaller but a lot weaker, a hundred and fifteen pounds wasn't tiny but I'd lost most of my upper body strength. Nor was my Rebecca-me about to throw a body block even when it was needed, which in this crowd would have been the smart thing to do. Throw in a hundred and fifty people milling around a swimming pool, not one of which was as feminine and needlessly polite as Rebecca-me, and I felt like I was surrounded by trolls in motion. The motion part was the most challenging and the average mass differential the most dangerous. Oh trust me, I did not feel like I was setting on a throne. I was a mere wood chip cast into a stormy, rolling sea.

Most females were no more or less dangerous than the males, at least to my immediate well-being. Naturally I made my way, as best as I could, to the periphery of this seething sea only to discover sharks. Well by any other name they were still sharks. Males, losers all and drunk or trying to achieve that state. Scavengers, not great whites, that sat there staring at female butts and displayed cleavage, since most of the attendant females were in bathing suits, of course, this being a pool party. The all too familiar chatter of non-alpha males, heavily laced with sexual desire and no prospects. They were I, me, Brian Drake. The emissions of sexual need colored the very air and yet or perhaps because of that 'need', they repulsed me. They were things unclean, distorted or incomplete. The instant I appeared, I felt a dozen eyeballs stripping away my clothing to expose meat for their collective need. It would have been terrifying and indeed it was for a second or so, until I realized that they were no more capable of transitioning from voyeur to actor than I had been. I was candy for their eyes that would be imprinted and stored into memory to be used, possibly later, while they jerked off. I had seen me and I was horrified. I dove back into the crowd of trolls.

A shove and I started flying toward the pool. It was then and only then that the trolls seemed to take heed of my presence. Those in the path of my flight stood aside, just for an instant. I went into the water butt first, arms windmilling, legs spayed. It was a heated pool, the water pleasant and the body that pressed up against me, bring me to the surface, my wet dream come true. Her crystal china blue eyes flashed concern but only for the briefest moment as laugh lines formed and those same eyes twinkled: "You ok?" But she didn't wait for me to reply, instead she yelled, "JERKS!"

I was mesmerized, enchanted. Of course she appeared to me to be an Amazon, easily half a head taller than me but that would hardly make her more than five foot nine. I'm sure her tits weren't real, that is to say only implants could have been so perfect, so full and yet riding high with only a thong like strip to deny the viewer the sight of her nipples. High cheek bones, generous lips, a home coming queen for sure, again almost too much perfection. As Brian Drake I would have been mentally frozen, of course as Brian, she wouldn't have been holding her arms around my waist.

Like I said, this was a different universe entirely. Her wondrous eyes spoke welcome in a way no woman had ever looked at me. That is to say, it was girl to girl eye contact. "You Ok?" I nodded. "You're new, right?" I nodded. "Katy Blackmore, apartment 300 C."

"Rebecca Sweet, apartment 222 ah- something." I laughed and she laughed with me. It was the beginning of a friendship, she knew it and I knew it instantly. Yeah, a friendship, a totally different universe. Brian Drake would have fucked her blind had she ever encouraged him. Rebecca Sweet went up to apartment 222 N to change, bringing along her new friend. Five minutes after meeting, I stripped my wet clothes off my body while Katy searched my closet for dry clothing. "You really need to go shopping." No sex, no lust, just her and I, me naked, planning a trip to the mall in an alien universe.

She even thought my bald head was daring, really quite daring. That I had no breasts left not the slightest impact on her, I guess that wasn't all that rare. That I was honesty female, there could be no doubt since my

sex was fully exposed while we talked. Yes, an alien universe.



The crowd was gone, or mostly gone. Katy, now in jeans but still wearing the top of her bathing suit, what an eye full that was. She had loaned me a sweater that had a deep 'v' cut in the front. It was too big and it showed, nothing, of course. My one and only bra was drying in my bathroom, that is to say, I was sans bra and sans even fake breasts. And just as in my earlier daydreams, she and I had attracted five young men. Two sat with us and the other three hung out nearby. All alpha males, though not a single one of them could be sure about the outcome. We were shopping and certainly not necessarily there to buy. The guys had to know it but the potential rewards were too big for them to ignore. I was no fool though, it was Katy and not yours truly, that accounted for the bevy of males in attendance.

I would be lying if I said I didn't appreciate the attention but seriously, I'm certain that if it had been just Katy and I and she had shown even the slightest interest in girl-girl sex, well, Nelly-bolt-the-door. Of course I probably would have missed the signal even if she had been interested. If I were to try to put the make on her, I half expected that I'd find myself tongue tied anyway. It had something to do with really hot women and lets be entirely reasonable, there was still a lot of Brian in the Rebecca-me persona.

Possibly hoping to turn the tide or simply because they wanted to get high, Katy and I were invited for drinks at Frank's apartment. It started with the seven

of us. After two Singapore Slings, one guy in particular started looking, well, ok. Not sexy, mind you, but not gage me with a spoon either. Safe? Bucky was the quiet one, almost shy, almost the kind of loser I was but not quite. I turned my considerable charms on him which sunk the ambitions of the remaining men given that Katy had already made her choice known.

The next thing I knew, he was setting beside me, arm draped over the back of the couch but not quite touching my shoulders. Katy was nose to nose with Frank but not yet kissing and the losers had quietly slunk away, one by one. I heard the sounds of kissing behind us, kissing like two animals in heat: noisy, impatient sounds. I got up, tugged at Bucky's arm, "Let's let them be."

We left. He slipped his arm around my shoulders as he walked me back to my apartment. I kept waiting for him to do something more. Our bodies, now in constant contact, that friction seemingly melting something inside me, between my legs. A delicious anticipation grew. Anxiety, no? More like opening a Christmas present, the best one, the last one, the only one that mattered. Delayed gratification was gratification magnified.

"Good night Rebecca." He drew back but not too far. "I had a wonderful evening.." And then he turned and walked away.

I stood there blank faced for a good while. Had I just been rejected or what? Would I have actually done 'it'? I had been ready to let him kiss me, that in itself was a huge step to take. Whoa, I thought, double whoa. My Brian male identity had taken an unexpected hit. But then there was still Katy, and trust me, she still looked totally good to yours truly. I realized then and

there my future was wide open, truly everything was possible. And rejected or not, that was still an open question, tonight as a very ordinary girl named Rebecca, exceeded any night that Brian had had, least-wise on a chance pickup date. Girls did have it better.

And then it struck me, a small thing that slid past me earlier in the evening, but was it small? I'd told Katy my name was Rebecca Sweet. Not just Rebecca nor Rebecca Drake, but Rebecca Sweet. Was that old queer finally coming out of the closet? Had Rebecca finally come out to play, as a *real* female? Oh my!



They say you can't go home again; there was more truth in that statement than I had expected. Home base, as we called the facility, had never known Rebecca and frankly the place where I had worked and often lived for the past six years seemed both utterly alien and totally familiar to me that day, a most remarkable experience. I had set my alarm for well before dawn. I knew that I would need all of Rebecca's skills to dress for work.

I had on the one and only bra I owned, fully stuffed with still damp cotton pads the latter due to my dunking in the pool. A sweet pair of boxer shorts, I guess they are called something else, satin with lots of lace. Rebecca loved the feel of satin and I was growing quite attached to Rebecca's preferences. Transparent nylons with exquisite frilly tops that somehow clung to my thighs without further attachments and two-inch heels that Rebecca handled very well. A satin blouse the color of butter, a charcoal black tube skirt and a shiny wide black belt completed my outfit. Oh yeah, lots of

cheap, plastic and very colorful jewelry, the most notable of which were huge yellow hoop earrings that had to be four inches in diameter and seemed to be in constant motion.

All was well until the sun rose that morning. Alone, without Rebecca, I was what I knew I was, a man impersonating a woman. Those two inch heels, impossible to use. I exchanged them for a pair of black flats. The bracelets were maddening and the earrings, a nightmare. So much for using Rebecca's talents, I still had to fly this body and there was no autopilot. Only the necklace remained as I hurried out the door of my apartment. Lord was I self conscious as my nylons glided against nylons, a tactile experience I had had as Rebecca-me but never as me alone. My skirt, which had been of modest length before sunrise now felt obscenely short. Rebecca had made this seem so simple, so natural. It was neither.

My first real test was going into Mr. Nixon's office. I remember my hands running down the length of my skirt, over and over again. Unconsciously I was looking for pockets. God knows I really missed them. Pockets, such wonderful inventions. I needed some place for my hands, ok? Pockets would have done swell except I had none, duh, I was wearing a skirt. I had no idea of what to do with my hands, you see and I was, need I say, as nervous as a bare foot boy on hot pavement. "Boss?" It came out as a squeak.

Tom Nixon must have been anticipating this very moment. I suspect he probably had had a long talk with his wife last night as to how he should respond. Needless to say his behavior was entirely phony as he looked up from his monitor and very casually said,

“And good morning to you, Rebecca.” He smiled pleasantly and looked as if there was nothing amiss.

“My workstation?”

“Jerry set it up next to Matt’s, he thought you would appreciate that.”

I stood there blinking, my mind was blank, “Right, the Cave.” Of course, the Cave, me and anywhere from five to fifteen programmers, most of them, should I say, boys in men’s bodies, hackers all. Repressed or at least immature sexualities, people like me or rather like I had been. I flashed back to last night, by the pool, when I stood before that group of ‘bottom-feeders’, male losers and had recognized, well, myself. “Right.” I said as I turned and headed out of Mr. Nixon’s office.

“Ah, Rebecca, they all know of course, about your ah- gender change. I thought that would help.”

I kept walking. I wasn’t looking forward to this, not at all. It was tough enough ‘pretending’ to be a girl but to do so in front of guys, some of whom I had known since right after high school... what had I been thinking? I was already blushing, I could feel my cheeks burn. God I wished I had pockets, damned if I didn’t.



The smell of unwashed bodies and assorted semi decayed fast foods were carried on the air conditioned breeze that flowed out of the open door. The announcement in bold block letters above the entrance way said: “This Door To Remain Closed At All Times”. It wasn’t, of course, nor had that door ever been closed in my memory. Inside the chamber I knew there was a sign that said Quiet, also in big block letters, but that sign

was just as readily ignored. However, the normal chatter sounded more like the noise of a group of monkeys in a jungle canopy, sharp barks and cries, warning cries. They were in distress and that wasn't normal. I knew why, or was I just being paranoid? I recognized one and then another voice and heard my name mentioned followed by nervous laughter and then "Freaking-A, Rebecca? Can you believe?" That was Matt and when he said Rebecca it came out as Reebecca. Hackers were generally uncomfortable around women, even if she wasn't 'hot'. And a trans-woman? Mr. Nixon had asked for too much. There wouldn't be much work accomplished today, that was for sure.

I stood there, just out of sight, for a few seconds. Did I really want to do this? I knew these guys, they weren't homo-phobic, it wasn't the 'trans' whatever, it was the femininity itself that got under their skin, half-baked sexists every one of them. There were damn few good female hackers and the ones that were generally acted more like teenage guys than girls. This damn skirt and nylons alone would have damned me. Again, what had I been thinking?

I squared my shoulders and marched in. I took one from Nixon's playbook, pretend there was nothing out of the ordinary happening, nothing at all. "Matt, you pimpled face bastard, have you beat the red team yet? Huh?"

The silence was total and then Matt responded, "Brian?"

"Well I'm sure not Cinderella. Hey guys, it's good to be back. Ummm... I got the take down on the Murray program, fucking Chink hackers, would you believe?" By this time I was at my station, plugged in and rolling. "It's all set up on the 3-A server if you're

interested." My heart was pounding inside my chest but my mouth was working and my brain was running. This would work, it had to work. I was the best fucking hacker in the room and they knew it. Eat your heart out Matt, I'm back and you are number two again.

It wasn't over in an instant but once I had the guys looking and thinking about code, well the world fell away for them and me. We worked straight through the day, the guys came and went marching to the beat of their own drummer, as usual. With the feed I had on the Chink caper, some of us would work all night and that was normal.

Except with sunset, which reached even into the Cave, Rebecca re-emerged. Her arrival caught me by surprise for I had lost contact with the passage of time. The smell of unwashed bodies which I had long adapted to had a decidedly unexpected effect on Rebecca-me. It was the smell of numerous unwashed *male* bodies and it almost immediately triggered a sexual current inside us the likes I hadn't experienced before. Rebecca's influence, of course, instantly altered my mannerisms and that fact was all too obvious to the men in the Cave. I had to get out of there and now.

I left, all a swish, hands dangling from broken wrists, elbows tucked in. I didn't need no damned pockets now. Fortunately the guys were too stunned to respond and I was too unsure of what might happen to stay, thus ended my first day back at home base.



I got a buyer for my Fernwood house; it was a gay guy from Hollywood. Ok, I don't know his sexual pref-

erences, but it was the Rebecca Sweet story that had drawn him to Fernwood and my place, go figure, one man's poison is another's well... treat. Not that he would see Rebecca in my lifetime, but he didn't know that. Anyhow, the house was in escrow and all that money I had invested, well some of it would be transformed into clothing. Ok, a lot of it would be spent on clothes. Rebecca and I had expensive tastes. Katy help cure Rebecca of her nineteen-fifties fashion problem but not of our taste in fetish wear. We soon had an awesome collection of underwear and shoes, totally awesome.

Katy and I spent a lot of time in the evenings, mostly shopping. While I still found her to be very sexy, I no longer had a functional penis in my head or at least all those girl hormones were doing something to my brain. Too bad they hadn't done squirt to my body. Oh, more me formed on my bottom and even less on top. I was coming into my teenage form but very slowly. Breasts? Other than my phantom breasts, I was as flat as a pool table with nickel sized tan nipples. I was no better in the hair department and to be honest, hair was very, very important to Rebecca which was hardly a surprise considering those excessive phantom locks.

I bought my first wig. Naturally Rebecca-me was attracted to a red-gold number but fortunately Katy was there to stop that train wreck before it happened. I didn't have the skin tones to pull that number off, perhaps blond but not that strawberry blond. Brown was of course perfect, that being my natural color, but who wears brown? Like gag me, you know. And then Katy showed me this dark brown wig, well, after I put it on it wasn't coming off. I would have paid full price but again Katy saved me. I left that night wearing that wig

and it only came off in the shower, trust me. I was developing every fetish that Rebecca had handed me. The fact that I woke up the next morning eager to wear my new hair said a lot about the slow metamorphosis that was taking place. Rebecca and I were slowly but surely integrating into a single, viable individual.

That morning I went to work in those two-inch heels, *san* Rebecca, my lovely tresses demanded that. I think that was the break point in my relationship between the guys and the new me. They had finally accepted the girl me as a hottie lady-boy *and* a master programmer. Of course, that in turn created new but totally acceptable tensions in the Cave. It was Jerry who first called me Princess or The Princess of the Cave. It was decidedly not a slam. Damn, if I only had cleavage they would follow me anywhere.



“Hey Gloria?” I said as soon as the Skype program delivered her image on my monitor. “Long time, almost six weeks huh, sorry.” I could see instantly that she was in a better place than the last time we Skyped and ‘different’ too. I could see a five o’clock shadow and there was no trace of makeup on that face. Indeed her femininity was apparently gone like the morning dew in the midday sun. Any pretence of being female eradicate by the gush of male hormones though her mannerisms were still decidedly feminine. Fingers flicked at hair too short to ‘flick’. Before I could say anything...

“Oh my God,” She moaned.

I self-consciously tugged at my long brown tresses, “It’s only a wig Gloria.”

She rolled her eyes, “If I knew you liked milk so much Brian, I would have bought you a cow. Tell me that’s just padding in that bra.”

“Oh,” I blushed. “Implants. They’re not that big, really.”



“Show me.”

“What?”

“Show me.”

I unbuttoned my blouse and then unsnapped my bra, it had clasps in the front between the two cups. They were still a little sore and I caught their weight in my hands. Little brown, ‘boy’ nipples had been stretched out until they formed light tan orbs. Each breast was just more than a hand full and had noticeable weight mostly from the silicone inside. “B cup,” I said. “Not all that much, really?” When she didn’t respond, I quickly recapture each of them in their respective cups and re-clasp the bra. She was still looking at me in a strange way. “What?” I said in answer to that look on her face.

“You’re going to tell me that Rebecca made you do that?”

“Um, no, not really. Ok, yes and maybe no. Rebecca’s not pulling my strings but, I’m really getting into her kinks, ok? Fetishes? Like this,” I stood up and unhooked my skirt, my blouse was still open. I showed Gloria my nylon reinforced girdle, “It’s called an under bust corset and these strips here,” I pointed with my fingers, “I’ll eventually be able to get my waist down to twenty inches.”

“Ouch. that must be uncomfortable as hell.”

“Um, no pain, no gain.”

“And probably unhealthy as well, Brian. You have any idea what you are doing to your internal organs?”

“It’s not really my choice Gloria nor to be honest is it Rebecca’s, it’s a compulsion, a need.”

“Need?”

“How can I explain what I don’t understand? Next week I’m going in for replacement implants.”

“Bigger?”

“Oh, yeah, eventually ‘D’ cup, trust me.”

“My God Brian, this is totally sick.”

“I’m having my lips done tomorrow and...”

“You need to see a psychologist Brian.”

“We’ve been through that, remember? We’re talking a hundred and fifty year old doppelganger, ok? These fetishes are the very core of that creature’s reason for being. You think there is a shrink in this world ready to deal with that?”

“Last time we talked Brian, you said you thought Rebecca had gone tits up.”

“I was premature, ok? Rebecca and me are becoming just me, fused, made complete.”

“When will this end, Brian?”

“When we become her ‘ideal’, that phantom fetish woman.” I shrugged, “Ok, that’s just a good guess but pretty much on the mark except for one thing.”

“And what would that be?”

“She needs my old ‘junk’ to be complete, really complete and I don’t think that is going to happen.”

“Brian? You are one sick puppy.”

“Yeah, I guess. You’re looking ah- happier Gloria. What gives.”?

“I have a lover.”

“Oh.”

“He’s really special Brian.”

“He?”

“You are hopeless Brian. Of course my lover is a man. A Professor here at M.I.T., married but, hey.”

“I guess I can’t throw stones, huh?”

“Not in that squirrel cage you call home. Sorry Brian, it’s pretty obvious you and I are no longer physically compatible.”

“Yeah, and it’s only going to get worse. Ah- Gloria? It looks like you have been working out.” She didn’t answer. Her arms in that short sleeve shirt were thicker and well muscled. She had changed as much as I had, except for sexual object choice it would seem. “I still love you Gloria.”

She stiffened slightly and blinked back what might have been a tear, “Not fair bringing up the ‘L’ word, not fair at all.”

And then the image disappeared.

## **Chapter 6**

Fetishes are not just weird games our mind plays but are ultimately based upon underlying neuro-mechanisms, principally the limbic system and the ubiquitous endorphins, the so called reward hormones. My Rebecca doppelganger, that creation of one long dead Mr. Robert Sweet, responded to a broad array of otherwise ‘ordinary’ stimuli, such as the feel of satin against the skin, much as a ‘normal’ person might react to an orgasm, that deep never-to-be-too-much-experienced pleasure. It is the same mechanism that operates with opiates and is responsible for the continued use by addicts of, say, heroin. Admittedly the feel of satin against my thigh is not as intense as your ordinary climax, but that too-good-to-ignore feeling can go on for

hours which makes up for its lower intensity. There was also the 'depression' thing, that is the absence those same stimuli, made me feel, incomplete sometimes to the point of despair. Rebecca initially brought these reactions to my awareness but by mere conditioning night after night, like Pavlov's dog, I had learned to salivate to the sound of her bell.

Were it only silks and satins, fine, elaborate laces and nylons that I was conditioned to, the events of the last several months would not have happened. Every aspect of that phantom Rebecca body signaled additional cues that could trigger potent erotic feelings (reward hormones). The feel of those phantom breasts initially produced teeth jarring pleasure, thus my breast implants were an attempt to create similar cues since during the day time Rebecca and her phantom body were not present, ditto the long wigs that I now wore. But as I said, it wasn't merely selfish self gratification that was my goal, the inverse was more true. I needed those stimuli to survive Rebecca's absence during the long, long day light hours.

The multiple surgeries that followed starting with my lips and then the second breast implant were merely expressions of the same driving force. Thus I was being lead, willingly I must say, toward a gradual recreation of a woman that had never lived. Driven not by the rod but by candy kisses.

Even pain can mutate into raw sensuality if the conditioning involves dopamine, which only accounts for my willingness to wear corsets and extreme foot wear. Eventually that pain, while not extinguished, co-exists with the natural neuro-opiates and thus one has pain and pleasure combined into one exotic entity. I was an addict, pure and simple, Rebecca's victim.

Oh yes, one more aspect of addiction, one grows increasingly tolerant of the endorphins thus generated, that is over time I required more and more stimulation to reach the same level of gratification. The latter process called adaptation, means less bang for the buck and a shorter period of high. It is a vicious cycle that can ultimately consume the victim. By the first of October, five months after Rebecca claimed me, I had been transformed yet still remained unfinished and unsatisfied.

My bank account, including the money I had salvaged from the sale of that house in Fernwood, was nearly flat. Between the surgeries and the clothing and yes, new costumes were more stimulating, I lived from payday to payday. Never getting ahead except of course to feed my addiction. I needed major surgery for my waist. Why? Because my alter ego, my phantom body had a terribly tiny waist. It was hard to find a surgeon willing to do the work and utterly impossible to find the money such an extensive treatment would require. To make matters worse, I had become a disruptive force in the cave. True, those guys would follow me anywhere but my double D's which I wore boldly now, were the center of all too much attention especially from 'my' boys.

That night in Fernwood when the Rebecca-me had forced an encounter with poor Mr. Hobbs, Uncle Art, was more of preview than not. Were 'she' to become the vixen queen, the ultimate sex kitten, the creature that would elevate even the most placid male's desires into a raging forest fire, that would have not been enough. Her 'maleness' was as tightly interwoven into his-her being as those phantom fetish tresses. That men could lust after 'her' while being fully aware of her mixed sexual nature was possibly the very point of her

sexual spear. And thus, while working in the cave after sunset, Rebecca-me actively sought to seduce our co-workers, a thing that should have been easily done, while at the same time reinforcing our essential 'male-ness'. The latter was ironic considering 'we' were no longer male. A rolled up sock inside our panties masqueraded as our 'junk'. We were not the 'she-male' we pretended to be, yet that aspect of Rebecca-me, was the very spark that keep the rest of our matrix functional.

"Mr. Nixon, you wanted to see me?" I was wearing a white wool knit dress with a deep vee front showing my extensive cleavage (double D's in a well padded demi-push-up bra can be quite a show) while tottering on five inch 'French' spike heels, the spikes themselves were nearly invisible creating the illusion that my heels were literally floating in air or that I was dancing on my toes. And what those heels did for my bottom, having elevated it into a sexually receptive position as if inviting a male to thrust into its inviting cleavage was, well, the olive in my personal martini. I was using makeup better suited for a evening encounter, heavy mascara made a drapery of my lashes and added volumes to my ability to signal sexuality. My wig, a pale brown, not blond, ran all the way down to the small of my back, that is, when it ran down my back, usually it went where ever it wanted to go, like now as I pulled it out of my face and tossed it over one shoulder. Mr. Nixon was not immune to my presence and, even though it was only ten in the morning, I moved with all the grace of the Rebecca-me, I was, after all trainable. That I was still a virgin or at least the female I had become was still a virgin, might seem ironic unless you understood the real me. That functional vagina was the odd man out, the fly in my soup. To have had a penis thrust inside there, a horror that might very well de-

stroy me. As Gloria had so aptly described me, I was one sick puppy but I wasn't looking for a cure, just another fix. I finished addressing my errant locks with my wickedly pointed two inch nails armored with vivid red polish which matched my pouting, full lips and red plastic jewelry, the latter clattering as only plastic could clatter.

Mr. Nixon just stared, his eyes following my cleavage as if hypnotized, which he was of course. He had perfectly normal reflexes and an adequate testosterone level. He cleared his throat. I sat down, otherwise we might be here all morning. "Sir?"

"About the Omaha account."

"Yes Sir?" I knew that was important. We had been a subcontractor for the Air Force even after they set up their own digital security command. That account was in danger of not being renewed and through no fault of our own. Politics.

"Marcus Williams is going to be in town but just over the weekend, he's staying at the Hilton in Pasadena."

"I met him once, about three years ago."

"Yes, I know you did. I'd like you to press our proposal, he's, well, involved in the committee making the final decision and you can present our case better than anyone, Rebecca."

I smiled. Mr. Williams was a lawyer and staffer that worked for Senator Brookington on the Armed Forces oversight committee and would have some influence on the final budget to say the least. He was also an out and out dork and relatively easy to please, a good meal and booze could do wonders. "Any complications?"

“He’s meeting with people from Honeywell on Friday, if you get my meaning. Look Rebecca, I’m not asking you to do anything unseemly or unethical but we must have his undivided attention.” He drummed his thumbs on the desk in agitation and then seemed to make up his mind, “He’s gay, ok? How do I know, I just do and you being...”

“A transgendered woman?” Of course Mr. Nixon didn’t know the truth, I was no more transgendered than he was. Still I would never even attempt to explain about my doppelganger nor my new physical sex.

He looked embarrassed, “Sorry. Just forget what I said Rebecca. We need the contract but not that bad.” He shrugged, as if to say it was just a wild idea.

“How much?”

“Huh?”

“Mr. Nixon my transition is very expensive, the sex-reassignment surgery alone could run fifty thousand, easily not to mention the time off I would need.” Not that I needed that particular surgery, of course.

“It would be wrong to put a dollar figure on this Rebecca.”

“Why? You’re a businessman. It’s always about the bottom line.”

“No. This is beyond that, I shouldn’t have asked and that’s that.”

I cocked my head, “Ok boss, I’ll do my best, no strings attached.” He looked relieved and that was alright by me. I wasn’t a whore though fifty-thousand dollars would have made me an uncommon one.

“Just talk to the man and I’ll cover the expenses whatever they may be. And Rebecca, I hope you can forgive me, that was wrong to even suggest...”

I got up and looked at him over my shoulder as I left his office. I owed him a lot he had been like a father to me. I pictured Mr. Williams, he would be older now. Three years ago he was already stooped shouldered and with a bird like beak and shifty eyes, he was no one I would have willingly touched. Gay huh? How did the boss know that? I stuck my head back inside, “Boss how do you know he’s gay?”



I had a meeting set up with Mr. Marcus Williams for four in the afternoon on Saturday, at the bar in his hotel. However that was only the tip of my agenda. Mr. Williams was, when in LA, a regular at the Queen Mary, a night club that featured female impersonators. Ironic but that single fact was the sole basis for my boss’s assertion that Mr. Williams was gay. A pretty thin thread upon which to hang such a broad theory. There was no way that Mr. Williams would have recognized me now as Rebecca-me and to be entirely honest he probably wouldn’t have recognized my old me anyway, it having been years since we met and only that one time. I should say that one meeting with Mr. Williams wasn’t a casual affair, for me at least, for at the time Mr. Williams was with the Justice Department and he’d had his sights set on yours truly for some activities I had been involved in a few years earlier. But that is another story. What I really needed was information before our meeting at the Hilton.

It was Friday night and I was at the Queen Mary. I wasn't there to be seen nor to pick anyone up, merely to observe if or when Mr. Williams showed up. Like I said, one didn't need to be queer to be here nor even severely bent. There were plenty of 'straight' men and women there mostly in groups, mostly tourists. I was in the same outfit I had worn when Mr. Nixon had suggested that I meet with Mr. Williams, my white knit wool dress. It was evening and, yeah, as usual I was way, way over the top. Rebecca-me was poorly equipped to perform a quiet recon mission.

I hadn't been there thirty seconds when I realized that here was where I belonged, really, really belonged. It was just a few minutes before the first show was to start and there was still no sign of Mr. Williams, but had he come in preceded by blaring horns, I might not have noticed. Normally I stood out like sore thumb as Rebecca-me but here, lovely-loud-pseudo ladies boiled in upon a river flood, a tide of queens, some utterly beautiful other utterly improbable as females which, to me, distracted not one whit from the wholesomeness of their complete person. It was like I had lived in a wilderness and had come upon an oasis. In the next instant, all thoughts of my mission were gone as I nearly flew into the arms of 'sisters' who's existence I'd never really known. The rest of the evening was a fanciful blur, an orgasm of relief.

I awoke the next morning in an unfamiliar apartment with only confused snapshots of what had happened last night. My ass felt like it had been abused and delightfully employed but by whom I had no idea. I could have waited to discover who or what was in the shower but all I saw was a shadow inside the rising steam. I dressed and left. My car, nowhere to be seen, but my location was familiar, Hollywood, some miles

from where I had begun. In minutes, with a serious hangover, I descended into the subway station and fled home. I had sex last night, of that I was sure. Sex as a man with a man. The latter fact was all the more curious for I was sure my vagina hadn't been employed, how utterly curious. Had I been someone's Madam Butterfly, a male successfully posing as a woman or merely a lady-boy to some avid lover. Did it matter? Probably not to me but to the Rebecca-me it might matter a lot.

All thought of Mr. Williams had vanished from my brain, not just last night but even now. A whole new universe had opened which made my earlier concerns almost vapid ambitions. Rebecca the lady-boy had been born and she had survived into the morning, oh my.



I was wearing a corset, a very fancy one to be sure, but a corset without a dress covering it. Fishnet stockings, black panties with a rolled up sock inside to give the impression of male genitalia and my best French heels, of course, completed my outfit. I was wearing a long black wig with the mountain of hair piled up into a Pompadour creation held together with a dozen long pins and a ton of hair spray. A simple, old fashion broach sat just above my ripe cleavage and dangling earrings of cut crystal hung exposed above my shoulders. All of this was hidden by a knee length trench coat that was tightly tied at the waist. I was also fashionably late, having waited outside until Mr. Williams looked fretful sitting there at the bar, an empty drink sitting in front of him.

I walked up and sat down at the bar on the next stool. He and I exchanged glances using the mirror behind the bar. I was so out of place, so wrong in this conservative setting. I looked and behaved as the drag queen I was. He could turn and flee or hold his seat. I had no more an idea of how he would react that I had last night when I had sought to do research. The difference was, I didn't care. Success or failure mattered not one whit now, it was the thrill, the unbelievable high of the challenge. "Sorry I'm late, Mr. Williams."

He jerked and looked at me directly for the first time, "Excuse me?"

"It's been a while, I'm Brian Drake," I offered him my hand, palm down, which he didn't take. "Security Systems? Mr. Nixon contacted you, earlier?" I continued to hold out my hand, vivid red nails that matched my full lips which had formed my toothy smile like a shark ready to feast. His eyes grew wider and wider and not fully in focus.

"Mr. Drake?" He finally touched my out stretched hand with the tips of his fingers and then only for an instant.

"Sorry Mr. Williams, I didn't mean to startle you." I shrugged as I reclaimed my hand. "I'm a pre-op trans-woman and frankly I do unsettle some people." I ended with a quiet but dramatic sigh.

"I had no idea..." And then shifted gears, "Would you prefer to take a booth?"



Mr. Williams was married with three almost adult kids and, to be entirely accurate, I am quite sure that he

had never had an affair with a man. That he was attracted to or at least interested in men able to pass as women was probably on the target, though he'd not actually ever approached such a person, well, I had no reason not to believe him when he made that statement. He was obviously excited and simultaneously distressed by this unexpected encounter. I for one could readily understand why a normal guy might find a lady-boy exciting, were *we* not the very essence of the feminine taken to a rare height? Real women had the disadvantage of simply being women without effort or at least without the truly massive effort of will and desire required of a male to achieve that exotic state. My 'sisters' last night, were the very embodiment of the eternal female that lives in the loins of males.

I immediately cleared the air with my intended, "Mr. Nixon wants me to argue the case for Security Systems, which I intend to do, eventually."

He raised an eyebrow, "Eventually?"

I gave him my best, sexist lash fluttering soul gaze, "Only if you allow me to make love to you." I unbuttoned the top buttons on my trench coat, exposing my substantial cleavage. It drew his eyes like a magnet.

He echoed what I had just said, confusion in his voice, "Only if I make love to you?"

I reached across and took his hand and drew it to my bosom until it lay fully on my flesh, "Yes."

"I think it is already too late for that discussion." He pulled back his hand, "Honeywell will have that contract, I'm afraid. There is nothing you can say or do to change that."

"Pity. Does that mean we can't fuck?" He looked startled. "This is no bribe Mr. Williams, merely a proposal, hum?"

"This is insane, Mr. Drake. I have already answered the question you have come to hear. No is no. No contract."

"That wasn't the issue I had in mind Mr. Williams and please call me Rebecca," I said as I untied my trench coat and let it gap open.

His eyes glazed over, "Call me Marcus."



Unlike Friday night, I was stone cold sober. I can remember every detail of that evening as if it were etched in steel. For starters I can say I was never even slightly interested in the man sexually. It was my own body and what his touch did to my body that was at the center of my experience. In effect we both 'fucked' the same body. Nor was there even the slightest chance that he was about to discover what it was that passed for a penis between my legs. Eventually he took me in the rear, doggy style, but only eventually. My breasts were made to be sucked and appreciated. I was lovely, sensuous, vibrant, alive and never more so than as he feasted on me.

After he came, which he did all too quickly, I gave him head. He was an older man and slow to recover but that made my task all the more satisfactory. I needed him to need me and I was certain that I could unleash his lust yet again. It gave me a sense of power to do so. It was doing this period, with my focus upon

him and not myself, that I felt my first orgasm or perhaps but a ghost of an orgasm, deep inside me.

Odd but what should have been a delight, that incipient orgasm, raised anxiety. There was that fundamental conflict between Rebecca-me and our all too female groin. In mere seconds I would be gone. Alarm bells had gone off and continued to ring. Odd, truly ironic if one considers the whole intent, purpose if you will, of sexual arousal leads innately toward one conclusion, resolution, climax and yet Rebecca-me was struck by sheer terror of that possibility. My sexuality extended across a myriad of loci, breasts, thighs and yes, even the feel of my hair, my phantom hair, swirling recklessly across my skin; our sexuality was everywhere except inside *that* womb. Crazy, yes, but not if you consider the implications for Rebecca, who was, in a profound manner more male than female. Freud would have understood him, the illusion that his penis existed was essential and those ready contractions inside us, made a lie of that belief. The error we had made had been to focus upon him and not our self and, left unattended, that essential feminine had awoken.

I sprung from the bed, sans panties, but my foot, tangled in the bed sheets, failed to follow. I went down in a heap, on my back.

“Rebecca? Are you all right?”

I looked up and he was staring down at me, well not at me to be perfectly honest, but at my mound of Venus and the wet juices that had matted the opening around my vagina. I twisted to cover myself, it was too later. “NOOOO!” I screamed as he spread apart my legs.



Monday morning I went to work wearing an oversized sweatshirt, blue jeans and a pair of sneakers, sans socks. Under that I had on a cheap cotton bra and panties, all of which I had bought the day before at Target. My hair, which was about six inches long now formed an untidy mop, more like weeds from an unattended lawn than not. No jewelry, no makeup, just raw me. Even my nails had been cut and the polish removed. The only evidence of the feminine was the product of undeniable female features such as my eyebrows, full lips and breasts, double D's of course. The body inside those jeans, the smallish waist and full bottom, rounded hips and heavier thighs were without a doubt female. My mannerisms, while not mannish, lacked the fine feminine details that had been such an essential part of my existence for the last seven months. Rebecca was gone.

Saturday night had ended my possession. Poor, poor Marcus. The look on his face when Rebecca finally fled the home he-she had created. Indeed fled, swarmed, to be accurate, she overwhelmed Marcus as she had done to me back in early June of this year. She would have to start over again, from scratch, but at least she had regained her 'penis'. What could I say or do? Nothing, of course. That Mr. Williams was in the act of raping me when Rebecca struck, took much of the potential guilt away. Indeed I should have felt no guilt considering that I was but a victim of Rebecca myself. Perhaps having spent so much time together, she and I had almost become one, so that when she struck I understood both her motives and needs. She was an

ancient thing, born of unattainable, unrealistic needs. To be pitied, not hated. Or is this all rationalizations?

My first inclination was to simply leave Mr. Williams there in the hotel room, he was far too busy, to overwhelmed, to pay much attention to my departure. That I was alone, truly alone, for the first time in many months though in a body totally unlike the one I had had before Rebecca. I was still me, Brian Drake, though biologically female, how deep that sex change ran was unknown but my core identity *seemed* intact. The urge to simply flee was palpable. Might that doppelganger change its mind? Other than that penis, was I not a far better platform for its existence than Mr. Williams?

I stood there at that door looking at Mr. Williams, he was bemused, of course, by that phantom body that shared his experiential space. He was surely feeling the weight of those sensuous breasts and the tug of the rampant mane, Rebecca's crowning glory. Even now his-her hands were playing with and adjusting those invisible locks, his-her fingers moved in a seductively feminine manner, his-her lips pursed in intense introspection. I removed my trench coat and let it drop to the floor. "Her name is Rebecca, Rebecca Sweet," I said as I found the snaps and began to remove that corset. The discomfort of that device no longer was balanced by that juicy erotic joy. I felt like saying, 'Free-Free At Last' as the last clasp was undone, instead I tossed that devilish device onto the bed beside Mr. Williams. He would, eventually, have more need of that than I. My nylons, heels and panties were already off leaving me utterly naked. I retrieved the trench coat from the floor and put it on covering my nakedness. He was looking at me now as I removed my wig and tossed it on the bed as well. I ran my fingers through my disordered mop of hair. Like the corset, the wig was an encum-

brance now both heavy and overly warm to wear and I was glad to be rid of it.

“We need to talk Mr. Williams about doppelgangers and frustrated desires.” Lord knows it would have been easier for me back in Fernwood had there been someone there to guide me that first night. “Robert Sweet was born in eighteen-sixty-six, only male heir of Reverend Sweet of Fernwood California...”



“Gloria? I was afraid you might not take my call.” Her Skype image showed what could only be a young man now, down to and including the buzz hair cut. Some of the feminine signals were still evident in her movements but muted, faded. “It’s been a long time, sweetheart.”

She looked at me, her face puzzled over some thought, some idea and then she blurted out, “She’s gone, isn’t she.”

“Christ, you’re good babe. Yeah, about a week ago. Apparently lacking a dick, she jilted me for the first one she encountered in her vagina.”

“Huh?”

“Long story. I have been trying to pick up the pieces of my life ever since.”

“Me too.”

“Yeah? How’s your love life?”

“Never get involved with a married man.”

“I’ll remember that. God, it’s good to see and hear you again Gloria.”

She didn't say anything for several seconds. "You know we could never make it, Brian. Too much has changed. We're kind'a like Humpty Dumpty, too broken to be put back together again."

"I'm a lot more the old me than I was with Rebecca inside me."

"I can see that."

"What I mean is, I do love you. Somehow, that has got to account for something."

"I wanted, eventually mind you Brian, to have a family."

"Yeah, I know that. We still could."

"I don't believe I heard that? You? Brian?"

"It could happen you know, I mean, hell, the idea is really flakey, ok, nuts, but..."

She just sat there looking at me for a few seconds. "I have a tenure track position at Ohio State starting next fall. What I mean is, you would have to eventually move to Columbus Ohio."

"Is that an offer?"

She bit her lip, "Not quite." She rolled her eyes, "If we can *actually* have a meaningful relationship, then, eventually we could, you know, live together maybe even get married but you'd have to follow me. My career, well, you know what I mean."

"Yeah, makes sense." It was, after all a big 'if'. "So where or how do we start?"

"If we start. I'm still involved with Peter." She shrugged, "I know the hand writing is already on the wall, but you know me, always the optimist? In the next few months I should know. I'm sorry to have to

put it that way regarding you and me, it depends on Peter and I." She shrugged again, "I don't want to give you false hope, ok, Brian? I set March as the drop dead date for Peter. If he hasn't asked for a divorce by then..."

"March, that's like four, almost five months?" I was going to say, that's a long way into the future but I shut that comment down. Beggars can't be choosers. That she was even willing to think about another go at our relationship was, well, more than I had hoped for in my wildest dreams. I grinned, just like old times. "I'll be there with bells on."

She raised an eyebrow, "Forget the bells, ok, Brian. And I don't go by the name Gloria any more for obvious reasons. Just my initials, G.L."

"What's the 'L' stand for?"

"Linda. Thank God all my publications are G.L. Steinberger or I'd be up shit creek without a paddle."

"Linda, that's a nice name."

"Eat me." she growled.

"No, what I mean is, I could change my name to Linda, well, eventually."

"Not Rebecca?"

I groaned, "What-*ever*."



The truth was I knew very little about being a woman. I knew the superficial things, the things that Rebecca had taught me. Things like makeup and mannerisms that attracted the male eye. I could give a

damn good blowjob to be sure and walk in high heels, you know, stuff, but I didn't really know squat about being a 'real' woman. Five months of having a period had taught me things Rebecca had never known of course. And then there was the bigger question, did I really want to know how to be a real woman?

I was a biological female, of that there was no doubt, but was that a woman? I could make babies and have intercourse with a male, not necessarily in that order of course, I wasn't plumbing challenged so to speak. I searched deeply inside me and I only found me, Brian Drake, a male. Twenty-five, shortly to be twenty-six, a life lived almost exclusively as a male and the past six plus months, a she-male? It was easy to tell Gloria, I mean G.L., that we could make a family, but seriously? Me? Pregnant? There was nothing inside me that suggested I could do that, deliberately, I mean. One can always 'get' pregnant but to do it with full knowledge of the months ahead and, yeah, child birth? Infant care? Oh my head swam in a restless sea of uncertainty.

And why Gloria, I mean, G.L.? Sure, I loved her as a man loves a woman. But I wasn't a man any longer and she sure wasn't my image of a woman, not that she had ever been precisely my 'image' of a woman. On the other hand, Katy no longer moved me in a sexual manner and hadn't for months. Had my sexual object choice changed? Truth? Rebecca-me was still a major turn on, my preferred sexual image that is, but I certainly did not miss her presence inside me.

I had received six months of training as a fetish queen and that training had not left with Rebecca. Those high heels still excited me in a way that shoes, any shoes, should not excite a man or a woman. Ditto

the rest of my clothes, ok, not those horrid corsets or wigs. My fetish wasn't strong enough to support pain, enough said. For over a week now, I had been wearing jeans and that one sweatshirt I owned, but that was not 'really' me. God knows, Rebecca had bent this twig, badly. I had, thus far, refused to give in to those urges, those twisted sexual impulses. That sweatshirt was my attempt at salvation. However, I had as yet to throw out all those clothes Rebecca-me had bought, even though I knew it was the 'right' thing to do. Every morning I would open my closet and just stare at that lovely array of lush, sexy things. Needless to say, I did not open the drawers in which lay my underclothes, the impulse would have been too great. No, I was still a sick puppy, just not quite as sick as I had been.

As was usually the case, I threw myself into my work fifteen-twenty hours per day. Mr. Nixon was delighted with my renewed focus and my boys, I think they missed the old me, all cleavage and spiky heels. I set up an appointment to have my breast implants removed but at the last instant, I called it off. I was, as they say, of two minds. I had almost five months to get my act together, assuming, that marriage with G.L. was really what I wanted to do.

Maybe that was where I had to start. Relationships. The only real relationship Rebecca-me had had was with herself. How would I function in a relationship with Gloria, now male, was the equivalent of asking how would I function in any relationship with a male. That was food for thought. And then there were the lesbian possibilities as well. Relationships, that's where I had to start to find the functional me.

Everyone at work knew me as a trans-woman, that certainly put a knot in their jockey shorts. Rebecca

Sweet had plenty of friends, but then they knew her as a nutty, over-the-top female, which I wasn't any longer. And then there was Miss Sweet herself, now in the person of Mr. Williams. Marcus already had an unhealthy interest in female impersonators and drag queens before the invasion by that doppelganger and had, well, adopted me, more or less, after giving up 'her' life as a Washington lawyer. I'd already given 'her' all the more outrageous clothes Rebecca-me had accumulated including those five inch "French' heels. But I wasn't about to be swept into that drag queen culture, it simply wasn't me anymore. Truth was, I needed a change of scenery, a fresh start, echoes of Fernwood?

I made arrangements with Mr. Nixon that I was going to work from home without telling him or anyone where exactly home would be. I hadn't decided where but it wasn't going to be 'here'. I needed to discover exactly who or what I was.

## **Chapter 7**

It took me five days to drive across the country. It was a leisurely drive partly because I wasn't entirely sure what my destination was. That I ended up in Euclid Creek Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland and, need I say, my old turf, should have not come as a complete surprise. Euclid Creek was as familiar as the back of my hand and I needed something familiar right now as I attempted to adjust to a life turned on its head. I had family, lots of family here, not that I planned on seeing them just yet but they were here and potentially available and that was a comfort to me. Driving around town brought back all kinds of memories from my youth but I was no longer that guy, that wild, geek hacker. Ok, I was still a geek and a hacker and a little wild, but female now and that made all the difference

in the world. Strangers responded to me entirely different now than then, duh?

Euclid Creek is 'upscale' with multimillion dollar homes on the lake front and it was there that I rented a condo with a lake view and started to re-invent myself. It didn't take me long to locate the local hackers and their hangouts for the obvious reasons, the hangouts hadn't changed and I knew most of the guys. That they didn't recognize me was hardly a surprise, that initially I had trouble getting 're-connected' also followed. It was like joining a club, I had to prove that behind those sweet brown eyes was a real geek. I was and I did, enough said?

It was like when I returned to work at the 'Cave' in LA but without all that 'trans-woman' baggage. The guy's were hitting on me constantly but I also had their respect, cool. I was the very special woman I had always looked for, I was their Gloria but with double 'D's. Of course word spread to the greater community in North Eastern Ohio of a really hot babe hacker. I was the Queen Bee of the extended hive, I was prime property. Needless to say, if I simply wanted sex, all I had to do was wiggle a finger. That is when I discovered a basic truth, I was more 'female' than I had imagined, which is to say, I wanted more than mere sex, I wanted a *relationship*. That was a hell of a shock, after all, getting laid had been the one and only criteria for me, right, for most of what was now twenty-six years of life.

Maybe my search for a relationship that was more than just sex was less about my growing femininity than it was avoidance of a serious problem. Truth? Guys just didn't turn me on, ok? I wasn't turned off, after all, Rebecca-me had sucked cock and liked it, but

not turned off wasn't the same animal as turned on. Broad shoulders and tight abs did nothing for me, though both male features were in limited supply, I mean my followers were 'geeks' right? I finally told Gary Whitewood, my most insistent want-to-be lover, that I would go out with him if he took me to a real restaurant and he wore a coat and tie. Why? I wanted to dress up, to the nines. I'd missed being that hot babe in French stiletto high heels, I missed displaying my gorgeous breasts and I was over do for my first trip to a beauty shop, the ragged mop was going to go. Could Gary handle the 'real' me? Trust me, I was going to make him a rep he would love. And me? I had to find my sexual handle, my bag as my old man would have said. I had a vagina that had never been used for pleasure. Gary was going to get lucky and I had my fingers crossed that I too would get lucky. Life without real sex sucks big time and sex as a 'real' woman, was, as yet, an interesting and unexplored mystery. I spent the week getting ready for that Friday night date like it was my prom. It was important to me that it be as perfect as I could make it. And yes, I was a tad nervous.



I told Gary when we got back to the car after dinner that I was inviting him back to my place for a night cap. He took it as an offer of an intimate interaction, which it was. Fortunately I didn't say what I really intended, which was, eventually, we would have sex. Had I done so, I suspect he would have wrecked the car on the way over to my pad. As it was, his driving was erratic. Needless to say he couldn't keep his eyes off of me, or rather my cleavage and he had been that way all evening. I couldn't blame him, I would have

been the same way he was say less than seven months ago, still it did make me feel a little like a lump of meat or rather two lumps of meat.

I had had my mop of haircut into something like a pageboy without the heavy side bangs. It covered my ears, just. Dyed black with absolutely no curl, my real hair was utterly straight, the hairstyle was sophisticated without being complex and this look should be easy to manage, which was itself a good thing. Black was also very good color for me making my skin look, well, shockingly pale.

I had bought a new cocktail dress that I wore off the shoulders. The front displayed my ample cleavage and the back, well, it extended almost to my butt crack. The dress was black and simple and the hem hung just an inch above my knees. For Rebecca-me this would have been conservative indeed but for me, the new me, I wanted to look sexy but not wildly so if you follow my drift. Sheer, transparent nylons, gave my legs that shinny 'hot' look without drawing undo attention, ditto my modest three inch heels, also black. I wore absolutely no jewelry, not even ear rings and why should I, my bosom and naked back were ample reward for the male eye.

Only on the makeup did I go over the top, well, relative to Rebecca-me it wasn't over the top at all, but fake eyelashes were fake eyelashes, like sultry sexual fantasies and when combined with my pink, almost white glossy full lips, I looked good enough to eat. And, as a former male, I knew Gary would feel the same way. Anyhow, all that was wasted or so it seemed for poor Gary seldom was able to met my gaze, fascinated as he was by my udders. As Gloria would have said and I quote her: "Men!"

As soon as we got back to my pad, he was all over me like an octopus. I didn't like that and I told him so. I almost threw him out but that would have missed the whole point of this 'date'. He would have to learn patience and, more important, learn to march to the beat of a drummer less rabid. Poor Gary all he had was an on-off switch. If he couldn't climb all over me he just sat there pretending to be a good boy. Gads, he didn't know the first thing about seduction. It looked like it was going to be a long, long night until we started talking code.

About forty minutes later, he and I were in each other's face but not on suck-face mode. He was actually returning my gaze and I his. It could have been me and Gloria, the parallel was uncanny except I was the one in the dress. I leaned forward and kissed him on the lips, it was a light kiss, spontaneous and unplanned and he hadn't anticipated it any more than I had intended it. I enjoyed that momentary contact and then retreated before he started to turn this into non-stop suck face. He blushed and it made me feel good.

I stroked his cheek and he turned his face and kissed my fingers, but he did so lightly. A pleasant bloom awoke inside my womb. He was learning for he didn't attempt to leap at me. I moved beside him and drew his arm around my shoulder and gave him a second, light kiss but a lingering one. I let him respond, which he did eventually, and his kiss mimicked the two I gave him. He was trainable. "Um..." I said as I then opened my mouth just enough to lick his lips with my tongue. His hand did what it had wanted to do all night as it enclosed and squeezed my left breast. I turned into him fully now, my tongue stroked inside his mouth unmolested at first, our lips now alive and growing more demanding. Oh heck, slow was good,

but too many years as a male was rapidly making a mockery of my plan.

Within seconds I was all but naked, my breasts, now fully exposed, grew hard, eager nipples and were as yet un-sucked. I dance away shucking my shoes and panties and then grabbed his hand in mine to lead him into the bedroom. Between my legs bloomed an internal heat that I had never actually felt as Rebecca-me. I giggled with relief, this was going to be easier than I had ever imagined. God only knows what it was going to feel like.

~oOo~

“I can’t believe you did that!” I screamed. Immediately I felt sorry for Gary, he was crest fallen and I had to grab him before he jumped out of the bed. The male ego was a fragile thing, I knew that from personal experience and yeah he was suffering from performance anxiety. If I allowed him to leave right now, the rest of the night was, well, ended. “Stay.” I ordered him as I got out of the bed and went into the bathroom to wipe off the cum on my leg. That he had cum before even entering me wasn’t exactly why I had screamed at him, though, I’m sure he thought otherwise. He was still moping there in the darkness when I returned, silent, withdrawn.

“You weren’t wearing a rubber.” My tone was matter of fact. “Gary I don’t want to get pregnant, ok? Sorry I yelled at you.” He didn’t say anything, he just lay there on his back looking at the ceiling probably feeling sorry for himself or embarrassed, *whatever*. I removed a Trojan from its wrapping, it was lubricated

and ready, as was I. Unfortunately Gary wasn't but I could fix that.

I felt a shudder flow down his body as I took his limp dick into my mouth. His hands came to life and sought out my flesh, such as was available to him. For a man who had stared at my boobs all night, he'd paid them scant attention once we go into the bedroom, he gone from breast fixation to vagina in that instant or, to be specific, nothing matter other than putting his thing inside me. Been there, done that. Gary was definitely a work in progress, though it took little encouragement for him to get hard again and almost instantly he wanted inside again. "Whoa," I said as I carefully rolled down that rubber over his penis and then, finally, "You're good to go.

There is no good reason to describe in detail what followed. That he was between my legs and inside me, felt, well, entirely off-planet. You would think it would be otherwise after nearly seven months with a vagina. Good news, bad news. The good news was that I had no performance anxiety, were I not aroused I could still have played my role to perfection. The wider I spayed my legs, the deeper he penetrated and it wasn't rocket science to cock my hips so as to allow him even deeper penetration and deeper was decidedly good. And then I started to respond to his thrusts by counter thrusts in the opposite direction and that's when I really started to feel my whole body begin to engage.

The bad news was the timing. For whatever reason, the growth in my arousal lagged far behind that I had enjoyed as a male. I used the analogy before, it was like driving a sports car stuck in first gear. By this time I was making a lot of noise, more than I had ever done as a male, and all of my body was fully involved, yet I

wasn't there yet, wherever there was. I knew an orgasm was coming but its due date was unmarked. And then I felt Gary's climax. It was readily detectable seconds before he actually came, his whole body had become tense and started jerking and then, blast off. He came and I didn't.

A few minutes later, nestled in his arms, I felt the slow ebb of my thwarted desire. It wasn't painful as it would have been as a male, no blue balls because there were no balls at all, but I was definitely unsatisfied. Fortunately Gary was young, I already felt his prick throbbing against my butt cheek. "This time, I'm riding on top. And Gary, I want you to really suck my nipples, ok? Hard."



It was mid November now and colder than a witches tit. I hadn't missed the cold while living in LA and the dark clouds overhead threatened snow, the latter I could live with. I was wearing blue jeans, an extra thick sweater, leather boots with two inch heels and a short coat with imitation fur on the collar, the latter was turned up so as to cover my ears. I had gone light on the makeup, just a hint of color on my lips. The red on my cheeks was natural, the product of the cold and the anxiety that coursed through my body. I was heading over to my Mom's Nick-Knack store, actually she sold stationary but let's be honest, it was mostly stuff people put on the shelf to gather dust. And no she didn't know I was in town nor had she the faintest idea of my physical transformation.

Mom and I hadn't been close since I discovered computers and programming. Which is to say that

since I was about eight years old, I had lived in a world that not only did she not understand but, frankly, didn't like. Later, as I matured, my nerd friends were as alien to her as those computers we loved. I can't say my Dad had been any more supportive of my passion. I can't tell you the number of baseball gloves, footballs, basketballs, soccer balls: etcetera. I had found under the Christmas tree over the years. And yeah, he liked my friends even less than my Mom did. That I never played sports made me a failure in my old man's eyes and only had nerds for friends, had pained my Mom. Needless to say, I hadn't gone to the prom because I never had a date in high school. But they both loved me, I knew that. After three weeks in Cleveland it was time to, well, come home.

I felt my heart take an extra leap as I saw my mother near the back of the store. She looked up, of course, and then returned her gaze to the customer at the register. Not the slightest sign of recognition crossed her face. I stopped to examine some silly junk as if I was there to make a purchase. I caught snatches of Mom's conversation with the older woman, the customer, while biding my time. The urge to just turn and run, to put off for another day, week, month this encounter grew and almost led me from the store. And then, abruptly, we were alone on a cold, blustery morning. "It doesn't get cold like this in California, thank God," I said. I looked at her, still no recognition, not even at the sound of my voice had drew forth any recognition. Of course my voice had changed. I cleared my throat, "Mom?"



Thanksgiving day was a big deal in our family. The dinner itself wasn't the grand affair, it was just my parents and my two sisters and I and, yes, turkey with all the necessary trimmings. Both my parents were from large families and both were the oldest of their respective siblings. Naturally, as the afternoon faded into evening, we would be swamped with Uncles and Aunts, cousins by the car loads and, now that many of these cousins were older, their husbands and wives and a zillion children representing the next generation of Drakes and Hawkins and... well you get the picture. The fact was there would be so many people there my presence wasn't all that notable unless I made a point of the fact that I was Brian and had, obviously, changed my gender, which I wasn't about to do. And there were so many new members of the family that one could readily assume I was someone's new 'wife' or girl friend.

Not that there had been any attempt to keep my 'condition' a secret. At least early on when the number of guests was small, Mom made a point of introducing 'her' new daughter, though to be absolutely honest, in most cases, that announcement went right over their heads, except for my Aunt Karen. We talked later, when she was adequately drunk.

To my Mom and Dad I had always been a mysterious child, drawn to images they couldn't understand. I had met neither of their expectations and had fled to California right after high school. Ironically, now that I was 'female' seemed to have given my Mom some hope that I might be normal in an abnormal way. My old man, I half suspected that he believed I had always

been a fag so, in a way, my 'coming out' was almost a relief. The real surprise was my sisters, Ester and Ruth. Having never been close to either of them, they were enchanted by my change. To be honest, I learned more about womankind from them over the last week and a half than all of the last seven plus months.

It wasn't the time for ghost tales, so I told my sisters the first time we talked that I had had sex-reassignment surgery last June. I'm not sure they fully understood what that meant, not that I did either, but I explained to them that I was as functional as a real woman. Wouldn't they have been amazed to discover how 'real' I was. And more than that, I was committed to my new sex (like I had any choice?). They didn't come around immediately but after a few days of discussions, they finally accepted that I really was their 'sister', now. From that concession a dramatic shift in their view point followed like a rainbow after the storm. They focused on the one and only thing I needed, a man. The right kind of man, of course. He must be a good provider, kind, thoughtful and, if possible, handsome. How unlike men, right? Physical attractiveness was at the very bottom of the 'must have' list for my sisters. I listened and learned.

The party was no longer riding on beer and wine, the later guests had brought hard stuff. Among those was Roger Harmon. He had dated my younger sister, on and off, for years, which, I assume accounted for his presence here at my folks place that night. Roger Harmon had been the pimple of my existence since middle school. He was the son my father had never had, the jock. Roger did this and Roger did that and worst, why can't you be more like Roger? Well Roger was a jerk with the brain of a newt but my old man didn't see it that way. And, oh my, my mother loved

him as well. Before he started dating my sister, Roger had been Prom King his senior year in high school, a regular big-man-on-campus, that is, a social success. Of course my sister Ester had discovered the hard way that Roger wasn't exactly a man one could set one's sights on. He played the field. Anyhow I was standing nearby when Ester gave him his marching orders. And when he didn't leave, she fled to her room upstairs. Pity, I had been having a really interesting discussion with her and now she was gone. I could have followed her but I didn't. Trust me I really don't know exactly why I stood there rooted to the spot, Roger had fastened his high beams on yours truly. He certainly did not recognize me and, frankly, I didn't mind being look at *that* way.

I think it was my double D's that caught his eye. As he sauntered over toward me, I was ready to let him have it with both cannons. On second thought, I could just tell him who I was, Brian Drake, sex-change lady-boy and notorious fag, that would cool his ardor. And then the third idea crossed my mind, and this one I jumped on with both feet. I became Rebecca-me or at least my best memory of her. I felt my shoulders draw back as my breasts elevated into firing position. My right hand captured a few strands of black hair and twirled them between fingers with feminine purpose. "Hey?" I said in my sexiest voice. "You're the famous football player Mr. Harmon, right?" He was beef ready for the slaughter.



It had to be about twenty degrees outside at the back of my parents house. With the wind off the icy

lake, it felt more like zero, and there we were. My panties hung from one foot, my wool skirt was gathered up to my waist and Roger's prick was firmly buried inside my sloppy wet vagina. I was clinging on to his neck with both arms, my legs wrapped around and locked behind him. We were doing 'it' standing up, something I had never tried in either role. It was at this point that I had planned on telling him exactly who I was, Brian Drake, a trans-woman, lady-boy and man eating fag. Funny, that initial plan had faded the moment he entered me.

Possibly it was being thus exposed, not to the cold of course, but to discovery, that had heightened my excitement. At any moment my old man might sneak out the back to have a cigarette, which he 'didn't smoke anymore' or worse perhaps my sister might come down from her room looking for yours truly and find me thus with her old flame. Mostly though, that asshole himself excited me. He was strong, well built like I never had been and that cock, well, it was a two-by-four and it was ramming into that deepest, most sensitive point in my womb. And yes, I started to cum almost from the first thrust, and then 'Nelly-bolt-the-door', I really did climax. My scream cut the night air, a banshee wail, shrill and totally mindless and then one climax followed another and another in quick succession until...

"Roger? Roger Harmon? What are you doing to my son?"

My naked butt hit the ice cold ground as Roger shoved me away and then he turned and ran into the night. "Sorry Dad, something just came up between us." But all I saw was his back retreating into the house. "My bad," I mumbled. I had a feeling Roger

wouldn't be welcome here anymore. Pity, I had been all wrong about him, all wrong. Nerd's didn't make the best lovers, Gary was a case in point, alpha males like Roger had never entered my field of view before, least-wise as sex objects. My womb was still doing the stutter step, each contraction slightly weaker than the one before. If he could do that to me, maybe there was room on the planet for jerks like that after all. Holy-shit, my sexual-object choice button had just gotten reset, or had it?

I pulled on my panties and stood while I adjusted my skirt. I was sure I had a shit eating grin on my face and I certainly smelled of sexual congress. And Ester rejected that asshole? I guess I had a lot more to learn about being a woman, a lot more.

~oOo~

"Ruth, how mad is she?"

"Rebecca, Ester will get over it, trust me." She shook her head and frowned, "You did break rule number one however, never, ever cut in on a sister."

"She was, um... done with him?"

Ruth laughed, "Even if she is, and I'm far from certain that is a fact, you broke at least rule number two, never date a sister's ex-boy friend."

"How many rules do girls have, anyway?"

She didn't answer but her frown softened. "So what was he like, anyway?"

"Holy-cow Ruth," I shrugged, "I thought girls didn't talk about that sort of thing." And then I laughed, "Awesome."

“Did you use protection?” And then she laughed, “Sorry I forgot, I guess you wouldn’t need to worry about getting pregnant.”

Little did my sister know, I thought. Idiot! Twit! I was mad at myself, yeah I could get pregnant. Holy-hell, by Roger? Wouldn’t that be a can of worms. I grinned back at her but it was a mask that covered my newly discovered fear. When is my next period due? Early December. What was the old joke, what do they call girls that don’t use protection? Mothers.



“Merry Christmas, G.L.”

“Hey. Long time Brian, what’s up?” Her Skype image showed an office cluttered with paper and books stacked half way up the wall behind her. She was obviously busy and had been so for some time. Stubble ran across her cheeks and chin.

“My period was late this month, scared the piss out of me.”

She rolled her eyes, “Man, that brings back memories.” She looked at me, “You learn anything?”

“I’m on the pill now if that is what you mean.”

“So, who is the lucky guy?”

“Oh Christ, Gloria, my worst nightmare. I screwed him out of spite, you know?”

“Out of spite?”

“He was an asshole I went to school with, the kind of football-star-clown-jock jerk I really hated.”

“You’re not making a lot of sense, Brian. If you hated him so much...”

“I guess that’s why I called. I’m really confused. I think I’m more different now than I realized, ok? All this time I was confident that it was just me inside, you know? Still me with a new body or something, anyhow, Roger, that’s his name, is one big, lumbering asshole with a pea brain and, when I was in his arms... I felt entirely vulnerable, ok? Vulnerable and, holy crap, I liked it, damn if I didn’t. Gloria, that just wasn’t the old me.”

“And?”

“Um... the sex was really, really great. It was like I had to be overwhelmed, totally at his mercy to really let go and enjoy being, well, female.”

“That doesn’t sound very healthy.” She shrugged and then added, “but what do I know? I was never into being dominated, possessed. I knew girls that were though, maybe that’s just the new you?”

“That thought had crossed my mind, Gloria. I had sex with another guy, earlier, and it didn’t do much for me. But I had been in control then and with Roger, well, it was definitely a totally different ballgame.”

“Speaking of ballgames,” Gloria laughed, “Peter and I broke up.”

“You seem to be taking it pretty well.”

“That’s what I mean by a new ballgame, I broke up with him, Brian. To be absolutely honest, I’ve turned into some kind of slut.”

“Slut?”

She laughed, “If I were a female, that label would apply, yes. As a gay guy, I’m a stud, ok, and that isn’t a

bad thing to be. Honestly, that whole affair with Peter, that was like a carryover from my female life and nothing more. I was a one-man gal then, but honestly, I don't need a guy to give me purpose, ok? I have my career and, so far, lots and lots of sexual opportunities. One night stands, I mean, I finally figured out what it is to be male." She laughed, "A whole new ballgame, understand?"

"Wow." I laughed and then added, "Men!" And then we both began to laugh. After a few seconds I stopped myself and added, "On a serious note, it's pretty clear that you and I, as lovers, are done, right?"

She sobered up in an instant, "Yeah, sorry."

"No reason to be sorry. I guess I was just pretending that, well, you and I were, who we had been."

"Yeah, reality check, huh?"

"Looks like you're busy, I'll get back later, ok?"

"Yeah, Bye Rebecca."

"G.L., Happy New Year."

"Ditto."

The End