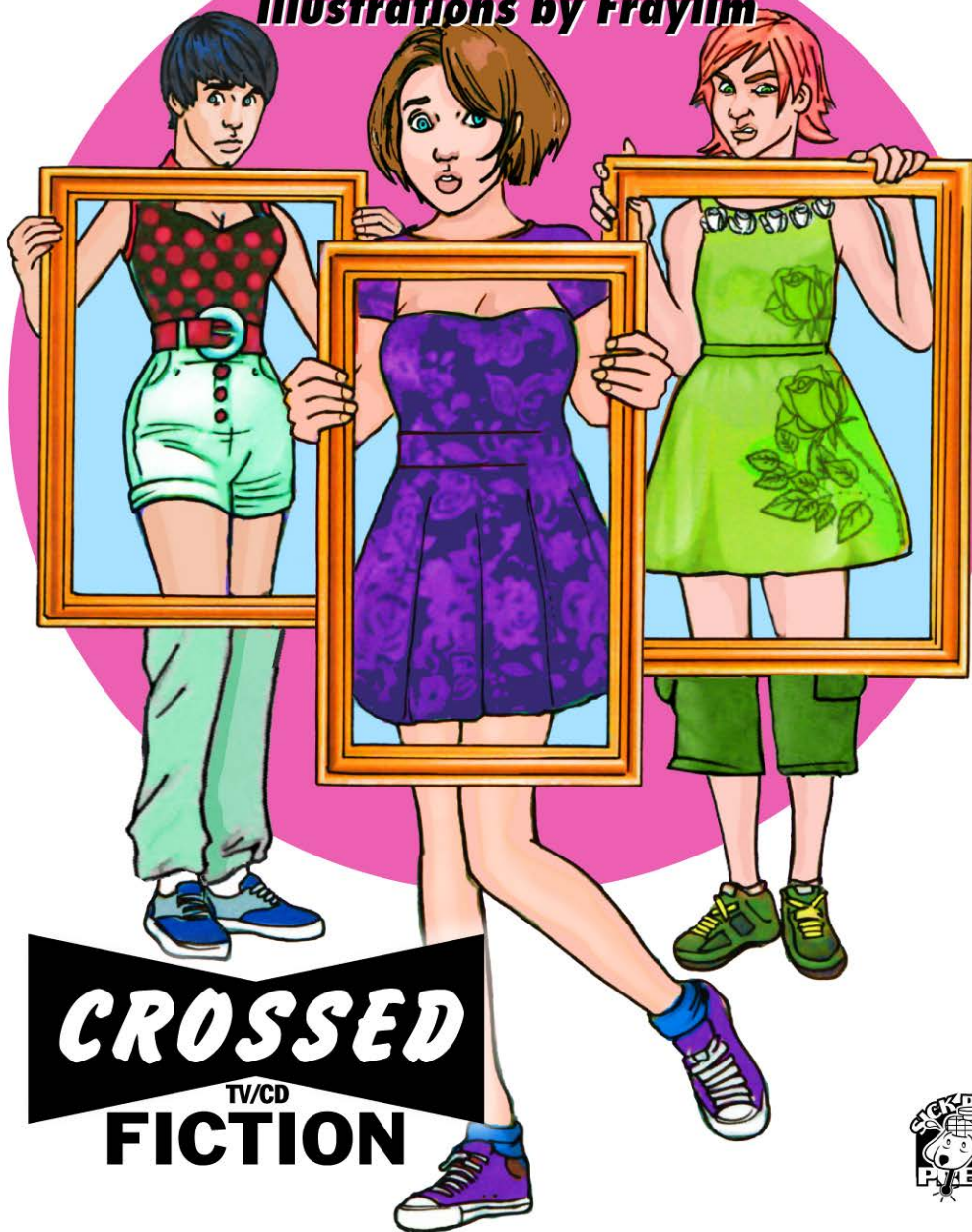


ADULTS ONLY

67 pages **29** illustrations

FASHION VICTIMS

**"Shop 'Til You Drop" by Lauren Bliss
Illustrations by Fraylim**



CROSSED
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FICTION



L A U R E N B L I S S

FASHION VICTIMS

**“Shop ’Til You Drop” by Lauren Bliss
Illustrated by Fraylim
A Crossed Fiction Story**



2015 eBook Edition

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SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP

On the last Saturday before school started for the year, James Sanders was dropped off by his mom at Fair Oaks Mall. Their conversation the previous morning about getting ready for school had led him here – to the place he most hated. The place he feared. The place that felt like it was sucking a little bit of his soul every second he spent in it. The mall.

He wasn't exactly a social butterfly. James was kind of a dweeb. His long, stringy black hair hung in his face, and he always wore his favorite shapeless hoodie everywhere he went. He looked like the poster child for the slacker generation. Whatever adults saw as being wrong with today's youth, James was symbolic of almost all of it. He didn't care for much else besides gaming on his console and watching TV, and his ambition and drive had long since been lost, probably under a heap of old unwashed t-shirts at the foot of his bed.

Earlier that week, his mother noticed all his clothes were tattered and faded, and she suggested that he needed some new things before school went back in session. James had no interest in any such thing. The stores would be crowded with people, and James was not a people person. It also sounded a lot like work. They argued for several hours, sniping back and forth in a passive-aggressive way, until finally they came to a compromise that he could go shopping for his own things. She was okay with him having his own style. She just wanted him to be clean.

"You'll need 5 or 6 new outfits, plus some gym clothes," she said, handing him her credit card, "And you might as well get a haircut while you're in there. If you think you're responsible enough, you can go ahead and get a new phone as well. I'll call the phone store, and let them know you're coming. Text me when you're done, and I'll come get you."

So now, as he watched his mom motor away, it was just him versus the mall. Being a typical grumpy teenage boy, he took this opportunity as a punishment, and full of dread, made his way to the entrance. As he entered the food court, he saw the old, noisy arcade on his right, and his trip to the mall came to an abrupt end. He decided that this would be the best way to kill off the afternoon. Playing *Time Crisis* was a lot of fun, but it was a quarter-eater. After about 20 minutes, he burned through his personal fortune and realized he needed to find something else to entertain him. According to his master plan, he needed at least an hour and a half before he could call his mom and tell her "he couldn't find anything."

The one thing about the mall he did like was all the pretty girls. There were girls working in shops, girls looking through clothes, and girls just plain hanging around. Too bad none of them would ever take an interest in him. As long as



he kept his distance, though, he was fine. He could gawk and leer all he wanted, without any risk of human interaction.

It wasn't that James hated the way the mall looked or how it was built. He didn't have a problem with the food court. He liked the arcade, as old as it was, and he actually liked riding up and down the escalators. Especially backwards. No, it was that Fair Oaks Mall just gave off the worst vibes. It was all about money for fashion. Insane amounts of money. Money that could be used for things so much cooler than fabric stitched in some sweatshop in China. The conspicuous consumption was enough

to make anyone dizzy, but it made James sick to his stomach. Not that he was against spending money on cool stuff, but this mall had nothing cool in it. It was crammed full of stores hocking the craziest styles and fashions to the teenage girls who hopped from store to store all day long.

The whole place was a tribute to the stupidity and folly of chasing fashion. So much money, time and energy wasted on trendy clothes. Didn't women understand how style was just a lie? That it was just some corporate bigwig deciding what was in and out? While they were busy spending time figuring out which colors to wear and how long their hemlines should be, the world burned outside. It really did make him crazy. The futility of life was never more acute to James than when he was at the mall.

He walked around from shop to shop, looking at nothing, avoiding the people hawking sunglasses and trinkets. After a few minutes, he decided to go outside and sneak a cigarette. He had been smoking for two years now, his mom none

the wiser. It was out next to some trash cans hidden by the mall entrance that he ran into the last person he'd ever expect to find at the mall: Bret Jacobs.

Bret was the cool guy at school. The alpha cool guy. He was the same age as James, but that's where the similarities stopped. James was a part of the scenery. He was no more interesting than a desk or a table. But Bret had everyone's attention with his chiseled features and devil-may-care attitude. He could have had any girl in school he wanted, and he frequently did.

"Hey," was all he said. "Do I know you?"

James prayed he could just speak calmly. He didn't want to sound like an idiot in front of Bret. "We go... To school... Our school... Which we go to... Together."

"Gotcha," Bret said, bobbing his head. "Comin' up soon."

"Yeah," James replied, unable to expand on the thought. "Here for back to school clothes?"

"What?" Bret looked confused. "Nah, I get my stuff downtown. Where they have the real deal stuff."

"Of course you do," James said, under his breath. He should have assumed Bret had much better sources than mall stores. "So, what're you doing around here?"

Bret smirked. "Back to school season. Lots of girls. The place is packed with them. There's some choice beauties around here today. That's what I came for." He revealed a camera phone in his pocket. "I like to take pics for mementos. Just a secret between you and me."

The thought that he was



sharing a secret with Bret – *The Bret Jacobs* – was almost dizzying. “Right. Sure. You got it.”

“Hey, you know the best spot?” Bret said, finishing his cigarette. “Right outside the dressing rooms at Jillington’s. They have some high-class bitches there.”

“Really?” That made sense.

“You have to check it out,” Bret said, heading back to the entrance and leaving. “Hasta La Vista.”

James had to calm himself. He actually sat down on the ground to keep from falling over. He had just had a conversation with the coolest guy in school. Bret Jacobs. *Bret Jacobs!*

He finished off another two cigarettes to calm himself down. If this was sign, maybe this was going to be a good year, after all. Maybe things were looking up. Maybe he’d be able to hang out with Bret or something. Maybe they’d become best buds. All of the sudden, James couldn’t wait for school to start.

With a spring in his step, James returned to the mall. Bret was right. There were cute girls everywhere you looked. At the store, eating food, hanging out with friends. This was prime girl-watching territory.

Coming across Jillington's department store, curiosity got the better of him and he made his way inside. The three-story shop contained everything you could think you’d need for the plastic artificial happiness all these fashion zombies craved. At least, that was James’ opinion. The first floor was for electronics and appliances, and bored salespeople with nothing to do. That floor was for the male customers, if they even had any. Jillington’s was definitely geared towards female customers, and the busy floors were above. The second floor held all make of clothing for sophisticated women of any age, and was always buzzing with activity. The third featured a full service salon and makeup department.

Wandering aimlessly around the store, he ran up the ‘down’ escalator to the second floor, causing several shoppers to dodge him coming the wrong way. Once he had gotten to the top, James happened upon the dressing rooms.

Well, he had let Bret’s suggestion lead him here, really. The girl didn’t disappoint up here. They were some well-maintained girls, that was for sure. Thin, rich and crazy beautiful. That was when the wicked little part of his brain made a crazy suggestion. He’d never seen a girl naked in person before – was it anything like the internet?

That would be a good story to tell Bret. He’d be able to say he followed Bret’s suggestion – and went one step beyond. That would certainly make an impression. Feeling a bit sneaky, he crept into the dressing area to try and sneak a peek. Checking under stall after stall, he saw no one’s feet. He had

struck out. About to get back on his feet and leave disappointed, he heard from behind him: “What are you doing?”

He glanced up to see a pretty brunette staring holes through him. She was thirty something, wearing a simple short black skirt, black heels, and a white button-down blouse. Her hair was pulled back into a simple ponytail, and her name tag said: Pamela.

Trying to think of any excuse he could, he reached randomly into the nearest clothing rack, and grabbed the first thing he could find. “I was just wanting to try this on. I’m shopping for my back to school wardrobe.”

“Really?” the attendant replied, very skeptically. As she stood with her hands on her hips, he noticed that above her name on her name tag, it said ‘Store Manager.’

“Uh... Yeah,” he said, nervously. “My mom dropped me off with her credit card. I’m supposed to get some new school outfits, and gym clothes. I’m also supposed to get a haircut, and pick out a new phone.”

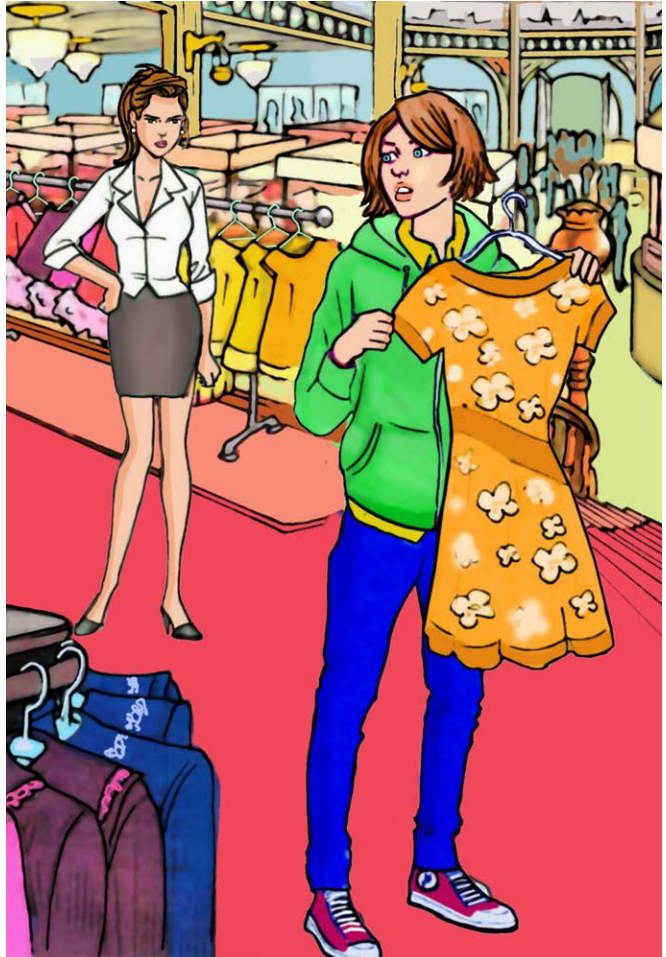
“So you want to try on that, then?”

“Yes, Ma’am!” James replied, earnestly.

“That *dress*,” Pamela emphasized.

Looking down he realized he was holding an orange and white print dress in his hands, he returned his gaze to her, blushing profusely.

But James had chosen the wrong person to mess with. Because even though James had a tiny little wicked part of his brain that had just gotten him into trouble, Pamela had a much bigger and much more



developed part of her brain that was ten times as wicked. She already knew what she wanted to do. Her tone quickly changed to a perky salesperson, trying to help a customer.

“Well the color isn’t really right for your current hair color. And with your fair skin, that hair color is all wrong for you. We can take care of that up in the salon. Come with me and we’ll get you started up there.” She put her hand on the small of James’ back and started to guide him. “While you’re getting the works I can go ahead and arrange a few things for you to try on when you get back.”

Ready to make an escape, the boy said, “No, that’s all right. I don’t think it’s for me.”

Seeing him trying to run, Pamela grabbed his arm and said, “But I insist. I know that I, and the styling experts at Jillington’s could bring out your best features. Unless, that is, you don’t *really* want that new wardrobe. That would mean you were lying to me. I wonder what security would think of a boy back here in the changing area, who didn’t want to buy anything. What else could he be doing in this dressing room?” Pamela tugged at James, getting him to move in the direction of the stairs. “I hire all the employees, you know. I make sure I’ve got the biggest, meanest security people I can find. They’d love to meet someone like you. Would you like to meet them?”

“N... No Ma’am,” James stuttered.

“Oh, maybe some other time, then. So let’s get you started on your day of beauty! You should go ahead and give me your wallet, so I can get your store account started for you.”

Realizing his defeat, James reached in his pocket, and handed over his wallet. Taking his card and ID out, Pamela examined it. The last names on the cards matched. That part of his story checked out, at least.

If he wants a new look, I’ll give him one, she thought to herself. “You’ll just love what Jillington’s full service salon can do for you, sweetie.”

She checked the ID card for a name. “Jamie. That’s a very pretty name,” she said, placing the cards back in the wallet. “Follow me, Jamie. I’ll take you up to get your hair fixed. It looks like you’re overdue. I know how that goes.”

Leading the frightened boy up in the elevator, they headed toward the salon. Entering, they were greeted by a middle-aged green-haired woman in a leopard-print top.

“Hi Louise. This is Jamie. I found him downstairs trying to find a new dress for his back to school look. I figured you could help him get the style he seems to be going for. I’m thinking he should go blonde with a soft perm, and maybe French tips. Also, all that body hair definitely has to go.”

A little taken aback, Louise looked at the young boy quizzically. “Are you sure that’s what you want?” she asked him.

Frightened, he looked towards Pamela, who was sporting a serious glare. He realized he had no way out. The grip of fear on his mind made James want to do just about anything as long as he could avoid the mess that he had gotten himself into. “Y... Yes? I think that would be great. Whatever you think is best.”

Louise smiled wryly. “Well, if you insist!” She brightened up, as she put aside her concerns and examined James as she would any client. “I guess we should get moving! We have a lot to do before you’re ready to make a splash at school!”



In a daze, James was led to the back of the salon and asked to disrobe. He put on the pink terrycloth robe that was offered to him, and waited lying on the table. It was only then did he begin to understand that he was in a women’s beauty salon, naked under a robe and waiting for God knows what here on a table. He felt like he was a Thanksgiving turkey waiting for the hatchet, his body to be ravaged after the deed had been done.

A small woman of Asian descent stepped into the room with a serious scowl on her face. James said hello, but she shook her head and said, “No English.” Quietly, nervously, he waited as she applied wax to his legs, and covered it with strips. The warmth of the wax was almost relaxing, making him feel a little at ease, but then he was brought to a rude awakening by the sudden tug on a strip that took all of the leg hair with it. He quickly understood that the dozen of other strips were going to be removed the same way. He attempted to scoot off the table, but he was efficiently restrained by his torturer. “No!” She barked in her accent. She grabbed him by the ankle to keep him still. “You no move or it *really* hurt!”

After finishing the legs, the small woman made her way up the rest of James’ body. All the way up – even up to his face and finishing with the eyebrows. As he laid there, in shock, he felt as if his skin was on fire, like the worst sunburn he’d ever had. Only then did the Asian woman begin to rub lotion all over his sore body, to help with the redness.

After a few minutes to cool down, Louise brought him a bag, and something on a hanger. In the bag he found a pair of yellow satin panties and a matching yellow bra with a little bow between the cups.

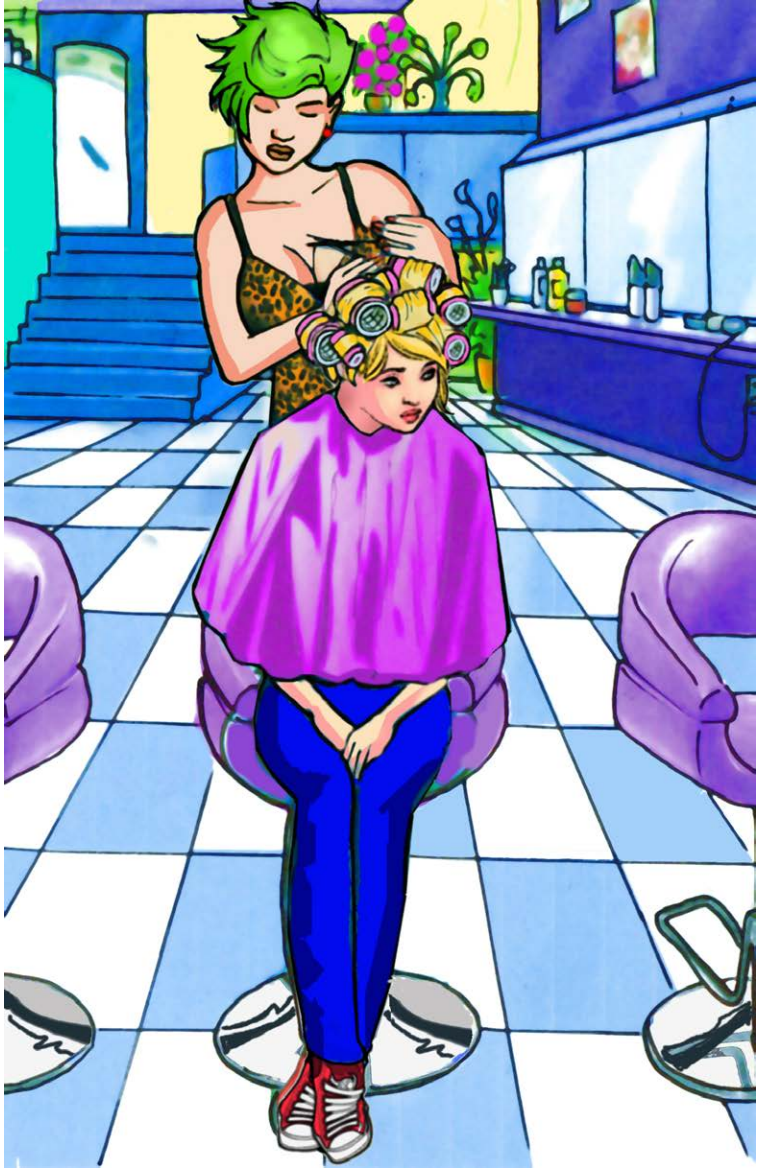
“Who are these for?” He asked Louise.

“Who do you think, sweetie?”

James gulped and picked them up. He was in much deeper than he first thought. Slipping on the panties was easy enough, although they felt all kinds of wrong on his body. Then it was time for the bra. After struggling with it for a minute he managed to arrange it in place. Feeling that the bag had more inside it, looked inside to find a pair of medium-sized breast forms with a little note attached to them. "For a 'girl' like you

who could use a little help," the note read. Trying to get through this humiliation as quickly as possible, he did as he was told and inserted the breast forms into the cups of the bra.

It was the oddest thing to look down at his body and see himself. His body looked so strange without hair, and the bra and panties shaped him in ways he'd only seen on girls. His emotions were tumbling inside of him like an unbalanced clothes washer.



“Don’t dawdle now,” Louise said, as she returned to the room. She hung a dress on a hangar and left without further comment. James recognized the garment as the dress he has randomly yanked off the rack earlier. Sighing, he put the dress on looked at himself in the mirror. What he saw was a skinny young girl with a plain face beneath her arched eyebrows, and stringy unkempt hair. Her dress was a tight fitting orange-and-white print knee-length sheath. It had a braided brown leather belt around the waist. He thought that the dress looked very sophisticated for a girl his age, but still very age appropriate. Something a fashionista would wear.

Knowing that there was no point in trying to delay the seemingly inevitable, he was going to have to leave this tiny little room. Summoning all his courage he stepped out into the main area.

Louise was already waiting for him by her salon chair. After sitting him down she began the process of bleaching his hair. While coating his head in a smelly acidic liquid, she rambled on to James about how her daughter had hair the same color, and about how she knew he would look just ‘precious’ when he was done. He thanked her, as best he could, and hoped that he would be able to undo this when it was all over.

Louise applied a gel bleach to James’ hair, waited, then rinsed it out. Then she did it again, and then a third time. After 20 minutes under the dryer, he was washed out, and she began cutting his hair. She first cut straight bangs across his forehead, and he noticed her cutting a lot around the ends, but for all the cutting, not much length was coming off. When she was done, she rolled his hair up in rollers, and it was under the dryer again. While he was waiting for his hair to dry, the small Asian woman returned and started working his nails. It took almost an hour. When she was done he had a nice set of French tips, and shiny, clean, well-rounded toenails. After the soft perm she tweaked her creation, combing and spraying his hair. Once she seemed satisfied, she suddenly spun James around to see himself. “Meet the new girl on campus!” Louise said. His reflection in the mirror was that of a young girl with blonde hair and bangs. Her hair curled in well-crafted flourishes that cascaded around her head like crashing ocean waves and floating clouds of mist.

“I think you could do with a bit a fancy style for your debut, don’t you?” said the nice woman, smiling politely. She teased the crown of his hair a little, creating a little bump, and gathered it all back and secured it in a half back with a matching orange barrette. “All done,” she said. “Pamela will meet you out front, so you can go to the makeup counter.”

“Thanks,” he almost whimpered.

“Oh, don’t forget your shoes!” Louise said, handing over a pair of white 4 inch pumps. James slipped his feet into them and made his way out the door, weaving from side to side as he tried to understand how to walk.

“Don’t you look pretty?” Pamela said, grinning ear to ear. “Come this way. We need to get your face looking as adorable as the rest of you.” The two made their way over to the cosmetics counter, with Pamela guiding him through the crowd. Sitting there were three girls, all wearing similar outfits to Pamela’s, but more heavily made up, almost to a caricaturish



degree. “Girls, this is Jamie,” Pamela said to them, “She needs a smoking *hot* look to go with the new hair. Make her look completely kissable.” Jamie was quick to notice her change of pronouns. He was grateful he didn’t have to explain himself and that this was getting less embarrassing, if only by a little.

The girls were excited and eager, and immediately started working on his face. After about an hour of brushing, painting, and coating, James was handed a mirror. His face now looked bright and flush, with big blue eyes, and long lashes. His lips were a soft pink, and they looked a little bigger thanks to the lip plumper they used. As he was staring at the image they created, they snuck in and sprayed him with a rose-scented perfume.

Pamela had returned and chimed in. “Thanks girls. Great work, as always. She looks amazing.”

“He was a great subject,” one of the girls said. “Oh, I mean ‘she,’” the girl added, with a sinister giggle.

Taking James by the hand, Pamela walked him to their next stop. “We’re off to the jewelry counter now,” she said. She was really starting to enjoy this. She loved her job. He was starting to look so pretty, she almost forgot he was simply a pervert getting what was coming to him.

At the jewelry counter they had him try on several bracelets and necklaces, seeing which worked well with his complexion, and what seemed like his style. James was just hoping that the worst wouldn’t happen – but then it did. “Time for earrings!”, Pamela squealed. She picked out several styles, ranging from long dangly ones, to simple studs. Pamela finally decided on a pair of large wide silver hoops. Next thing he knew both his ears were pierced, and he was sporting the new earrings.

“Looks like you’re all set,” Pamela said. “Now, it’s time to shop ‘til you drop.” “Let’s just get this over with,” James said, wobbling behind her in the unfamiliar heels.

“Don’t get your panties in a bunch, miss prissy. This is the fun part!”

She took him back to the same dressing room where she had caught him. Brining in stacks and stack of clothes, she made him try on outfit after outfit, taking pictures of him posing in each one. Pamela made him pose and smile in each picture as she added various accessories.

James felt like he had tried on the entire store, although it had only been a few dozen outfits. After a few outfits for gym, it was into the dresses. Flare dresses, open-back rompers, mesh-top dresses, flouncy lace dresses, zip-front denim dresses, strapless dresses and crochet dresses. All of them short, skin-bearing and expensive.

When they were finished he was returned to the orange dress, while Pamela sent the photos to her color printer, and the clothes to the back for packaging.

“Well, I guess we’re all done here. I’ll run your card and get you ready to go. I would have to say that this was probably my most successful makeover. But you have to remember that what makes an outfit is the accessories.” She placed a knee length white satin coat, with a single row of buttons down the front on his shoulders. She then handed him a brown buckled handbag, and showed him how to hold it over the crook of his elbow. She then placed a pair of large white-rimmed pair of sunglasses above his new bangs. “Here’s a new wallet for you. I’ve already moved your ID and your mom’s card over to it. I think the pink leather suits your new look better. There’s also all of the makeup that we used earlier in the purse. It’s going to take a bit of time to get your things ready to go. Didn’t you say you’re supposed to go get a new phone?”



“Yeah. I’m supposed to get a smart phone. My contract is up. But I think I’m going to wait ‘til later. It just doesn’t seem that important to me right now.”

“Nonsense!” Pamela said with a wave of her hand. “I’ll go with you. I’m taking my break soon. It’ll be fun!”

James hung his head, and resigned himself to the fact that this woman had him firmly under her thumb. The two made their way down the thoroughfare of the mall, Pamela looking confident and sexy in her stride, and James looking like he had just discovered the ability to walk. She gave her charge tips on how to hold up his head as he swiveled his hips, and he did his very best. That wasn’t easy, as they were getting a lot of attention from all the passers-by. None too soon for James, they head into the phone store, and Pamela made sure she was the one who spoke to the man behind the counter.

“This is James Sanders. He’s supposed to pick up a new phone.”

While James lowered his eyes in shame, the man snickered, and showed her the options.

“He’ll take the pink one with the sparkly crystals,” Pamela decided. “I think it’s the cutest.”

After his service was transferred, and Pamela took a quick snap of James in his dress for his profile picture, they made their way back to the store to grab his purchases. Before giving him his new phone, she made sure to text his mother to come pick him up. After retrieving his new things, they headed toward the main entrance, so James could await his fate.

It was a horribly torturous fifteen minutes as James stood on the curbside. He wasn’t sure which he was more afraid of: being recognized by someone – or *not* being recognized. He had to admit, Pamela had thoroughly transformed him, and was nearly unrecognizable as James. Or simply as male. That absolutely terrified him.

When his mother pulled up, she got out of the car, and started looking for him. James tried to ignore her, hoping she would leave, but soon enough she recognized her own son. “James? Is that you?”

Pamela quickly jumped in. “You must be Mrs. Sanders,” she said with a practiced smile, “Jamie here has just been a thrill. I’m the manager of Jillian’s Department Store. I saw her in the dressing room holding a dress, poor thing, all confused and uncertain. So I just felt compelled to offer her some help. She told me she was getting some back to school clothes, but the poor thing didn’t seem to have any fashion sense, so I just had to help her out. We’ve gotten her several new outfits for class, and gym, and also for any important social functions she’ll have to attend through the year.” She handed over a loose-leaf binder. “We’ve compiled a photo album of her modeling her new clothes.”

As she stood there, stunned, James’ mother flipped through the first couple of pages of the album, looking at her son in flamboyantly feminine outfits. The first that caught her eye was his new gym clothes. They were a pair of pink short shorts, and a white tank top, with pink and white trainers. The second was a leggings and sweater dress combo with a cowl neck, and knee high boots. The next was a flashy one, with him in a white off-the-shoulder dress, with a flouncy skirt that fell to mid thigh, and a black ribbon tied around the waist into a large bow at the front. His feet were perched atop a pair of white strappy 3 inch heels, and his head was topped with a white large-brimmed boaters’ hat with a big black bow on the left side.

After putting the album back in the bag, Pamela had loaded all of the packages, filling up the entire trunk and backseat of the car. James sat in the passenger seat, about as embarrassed as a boy could be in his situation.

Without really much idea of what in the world had happened to her son and the misadventures he must have gotten himself into, Mrs. Sanders thanked Pamela, even though she knew she wasn't getting the whole story. As Pamela waved on energetically, they pulled out and headed home. The new mother/daughter duo then drove home in the most uncomfortable silence anyone could think of. It was only broken once. "At least you'll be one of the most *stylish* people in school," James' mother said.



"Oh my God!" Melody said, spilling over on the sofa. James' sister was fit to be tied as she laughed louder and harder than James had ever heard her laugh before. She had just gotten sight of James as she had arrived for dinner. "That's really you!"

"Now, now, don't tease your brother," James' mother said, as she stuck her head out from the kitchen. She could barely be heard with the whooping cackles Melody was belting out, and it didn't calm the young lady down one bit.

James had expected nothing less from his older sister, who had always looked for every opportunity to humiliate and demean him. Even though she had moved out a couple of years ago, she still spent a lot of time at the house, and always seemed to be hanging around. She and her boyfriend Carl were practically residents in the Sanders' household, and rarely missed dinner. Melody wasn't exactly the domestic goddess her mother was.

"Set the table?" James' mother asked her son.

"Yes," James grumped. He went into the kitchen, the door behind him barely muffling the sound of Melody's



hysterics. "You still let her come over with me dressed like this?" He asked his mother as he grabbed the flatware.

"She was going to know sooner or later," was her simple answer.

As James set the four places at the table, Melody had calmed herself enough to hover over her brother's shoulder as he made the table. "You lost a bet. You're in hiding from the mob!" She asked. "No! You got a part in a play as a girl and you're practicing!"

"No," James mumbled. "Leave me alone."

"Oh, no chance," Melody said.

"Is Carl coming over, too?" James asked.

"He'll be here after he's watched the game with his pals. If there's free food, he'll be here. I just hope he didn't get too drunk."

"Great. Just great."

"So? What's the story?"

With a heavy sigh, James explained it to her. He left out the whole 'peeping tom' part, but he did tell the story in as much detail as he could, hoping for some degree of sympathy. He got none.

"You are such a chump," she said, after hearing the tale. "And you know.... There's something you're still not telling me. Some busy store manager isn't going to randomly terrorize their customers by forcing them to get a makeover fit for a beauty queen." She tapped her chin in thought. "Plus, that doesn't explain why you're still dressed up like this."

"That's my fault, I suppose," their mother said, coming in to check on James' progress. "I got a little over-zealous."

"She threw all my clothes out," James said. "Even my favorite jeans!"

"They were full of holes and stunk to high heaven!" His mom defended. "But perhaps I did throw out more than I should have."

James turned to his sister. "This is all I have to wear. She threw every last stitch of my clothes into the trash. My shoes, my socks, my underwear... Shirts... Pants... Sweats."

"She did that to me when I was seventeen, remember?" Melody said with a smirk. "You should have seen it coming."

"You dressed like a homeless person," James jabbed at his sister. "I was never that bad..."

"Yes you were," both Melody and their mother said simultaneously.

"So, it's been three days. Why don't you just go out and buy some new stuff?" Melody asked both James and her mom.

James looked to his mother for an answer to that one.

"Do you have any idea how much this all cost?" She said. "I had to phone up the credit card company to raise our limit! I still haven't heard back from them. Besides, I know Little Miss Bottle Blonde here isn't telling me everything that happened. So if he wants to get proper clothes for school, James is more than capable of going back to the store and returning these clothes. Then, and only then, he can get what he wants to get."

Melody turned her attention to her brother. "I'm not going back to that store," he said. "You can't make me."

"Hey, anyone home?" Carl yelled out bombastically. "Is everyone in the kitchen?" He had just walked in the front door.

"Aw, crap," James said to himself.

"Oh my God!" Carl yelled upon seeing James. "That's really you!" He started to yuk it up and his girlfriend joined him. "You're in a dress!"

James wanted to crawl under a rock.



Pamela started her morning like she usually did. She threw water on a couple of fires with her staff, resolved a half-dozen customer issues and sat in on a conference call with other regional store managers. It was just a little bit after eleven when her boring routine turned around. She heard, from behind, the clicks of heels on the tile sales floor. She glanced aside to see a young blonde girl walking towards her. "Well, hello there, Jamie," she said with a smile stretching from ear to ear on her face. She never thought, after she had taken that little perv James and gave him the makeover of a lifetime, that she'd ever see him again.

"I need a refund... or an exchange... or something," James said. "School starts Monday, and I definitely can't go back with the clothes you sold me."

"I don't see why not," came Pamela's reply. "You look gorgeous. All the girls will die with jealousy over you. Let me get a good look at you."

James was wearing a sky blue cap-sleeved sheath, with sequins. It had two large buttons on opposing sides of the waist, and beneath them a few pleats before the skirt flared out slightly, down to the knee. He stood atop a pair of matching blue sling-back open toed wedges, with little bows on the toe. His blonde hair was styled in a painstakingly carefully way, with his bangs falling softly on his forehead. He dug into his blue and white vertical striped handbag, and pulled out a receipt.

"I've got all the clothes in the car," he said, waving the slip of paper furiously in her face.

"I don't see why'd you want to. You look great. Did you put that outfit together yourself?"

"I had to wear this. I told my mom what happened, and she's refusing to pay for anymore clothes. She even threw out my old things, before I even got home. You can't do this to me. If I have to wear these things to school, I'll be the laughingstock of the place."

"But you're wearing..."

"I had to wear something to get here, and this is all I have now!"

Pamela pointed to his hair and face. "And the..."

"I didn't want to look like a guy in a dress!" He dipped his voice down lower, to keep from being overheard. "I had to make myself look pretty!"

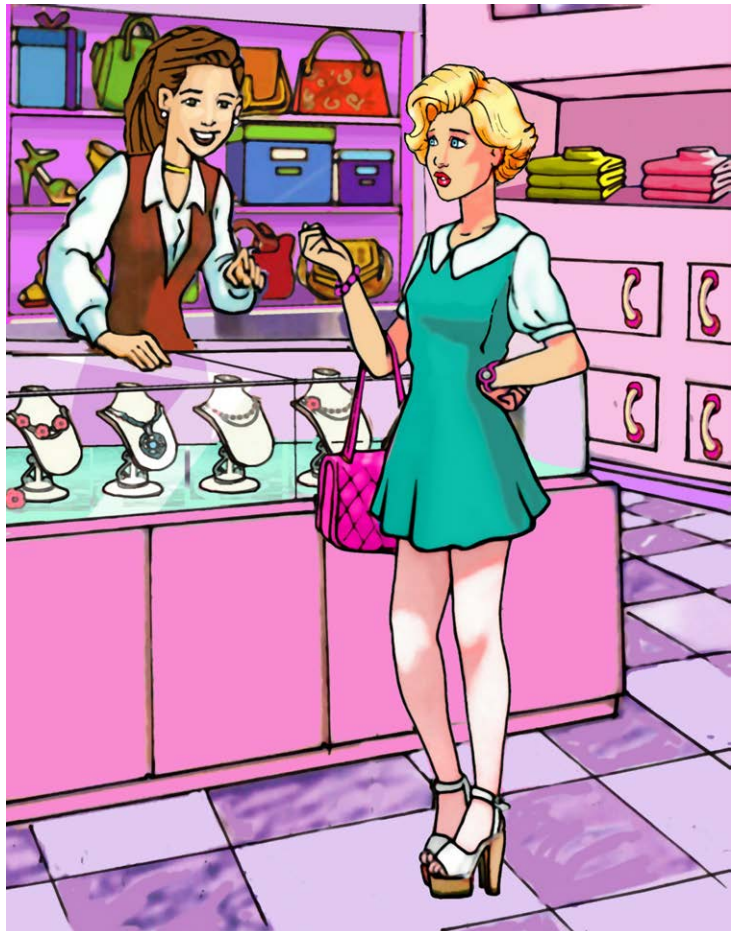
Pamela's wicked grin faded, as she placed her hand on her chin, and thought for a second. She examined the receipt. "I'll be happy to exchange these for you, Mrs. Helen Sanders. I just need to see your ID."

"That's my mom's name. I used her card! You know that!"

"I'm not normally supposed to do exchanges for someone who's name isn't on the receipt..."

"Don't do this to me!" James whined.

"...But I think we can work something out," Pamela continued. "I need some help around the store today. If you really dressed yourself, then I can use you. I need a sales



associate on the floor.”

James’ stunned expression said it all. “You want *me* to *work* here?”

“Of course. You very obviously have an eye for style. You’re sure someone didn’t help you?”

“And put up with them making fun of me?”

“Interesting. Well, it’s simple work, really. Show the customers around the department, and make suggestions for things that would go well with their purchases. If you can do that, then I think I can help you out.”

“I knew I shouldn’t have come back here,” he said.

“But you did. Now would you like to help us out in the Juniors section?”

“No,” James said.

“I knew you would! Follow me!”

After a quick description of what he was expected to do – help out customers selecting clothes, add as much as possible to every sale and direct everything else to the registers – Pamela left James alone to fend for himself. She just pinned a little blank name tag for Jillington’s to his dress and he was now an official salesgirl.

James didn’t have to wait for his very first customer to come along. “Do you have this in robins egg?” A woman asked, holding a tank dress.

“We... We don’t have eggs,” James replied.

“It’s a color.”

“Really?”

“Do you have it? It’s the same color... as the dress you’re wearing.”

James looked down at himself. “Huh. Well, what we got out is what we got.”

“Could you check?”

“Not really.”

Five minutes later he was helping out another customer, a white-haired woman with her daughter.

“What would go with these pants?” The woman asked James.

“I dunno. A shirt? Was that a trick question?”

As the minutes ticked by, James faded deeper and deeper into his section. Wherever customers were, he would go where they weren’t. He figured as long as he could just hang out for a few hours, not get into trouble and avoid people, he could get out of here with his money or at least an exchange, and it would be over and done.

“Hi, I’m Trianna!” Said a girl who had snuck up behind him. James turned his head around to see who it was, but just as he did, another voice came from his other side.

“I’m Brianna!” Said another girl. Now James had to swivel his head back around to take a look at her. Then back again to Trianna, and then back once more to Brianna.

They were both blonde, both had the same pasted-on smile, both were wearing practically the same outfit, and both were wearing name tags for Jillington’s. If one were to ask central casting for retail employees, they would have produced girls who looked like these two. They wore tight v-neck cardigan sweaters with long sleeves over white scoop-neck tops. Brianna had it in pink, and Trianna in a slightly different pink. Both wore black knee-length pencil skirts, and Brianna had black knee-high boots and Trianna had dark brown knee-high boots. The easiest way to tell them apart was to note that Trianna wore a white hairband while Brianna favored a pink scrunchy.

“Are you new?” Trianna asked. “We haven’t met.”

“Yeah, we haven’t met.” Brianna echoed. “I love your hair. I bet Louise did it. I know her work anywhere! She’s *so* good.”

Trianna agreed. “I only let Louise work on my hair. No one else. So who are you again?”

In between the two chatterboxes, James felt like he was under a machine-gun attack. “I’m...” He was going to have use that name Pamela had given him. “...Jamie.”

Brianna made a funny face, her pink painted lips becoming crooked. “Jamie? Isn’t that, like, a boy’s name?”

“That’s so totally a boy’s name,” Trianna said.

“No, my aunt had a girl parakeet that was named Jamie,” Brianna said. “So I guess it can be a girl’s name, too.”

“Yeah, okay, I guess.” Trianna then turned attention back to James. “So, um, did you know you’re in our zone?”

“You’re totally in our zone,” Brianna confirmed.

“See, we all have zones, and we all get paid for what gets sold in them, and it’s, like, totally important and stuff that we don’t go into other people’s zones, okay?”

“Oh... Okay...” James replied.

“Great!” Trianna chirped. “So, just scoot over there a few steps, okay?”

James moved a step in the direction she was indicating.

“Just a few more.”

James complied, continuing to move as she directed.

“One more. And another. And... There!” Trianna smiled brightly. “And that’s your zone, ‘kay?”

“So stay in your zone, and we won’t have to report you!” Brianna said with her best smile. “Isn’t that great?”

“Um, yeah,” James said. “Great.”

“Well, we have to get back to work now, because we’re sellers. *Top* sellers.”

“Number one,” Brianna emphasized.

“So, bye!” Trianna said, as she and Brianna then turned their backs to James. “Did you see her? She’s so fat!”

Brianna concurred. “What’s Pamela thinking? She’s so ugly and fat!”

“I can hear you,” James said, from just a foot away.

“Stop listening to our private conversation!” Trianna hissed.

“So rude!” Brianna added.

“Hi,” a girl said, approaching Trianna and Brianna. “I was thinking about this sweater and...”

Trianna didn’t wait for her to even complete her sentence. “That sweater looks so totally prefect you!”

Brianna was just as enthusiastic. “You are definitely meant for that sweater. You have to get it!”

The girl took a second look at the gaudy mix of orange and turquoise stitching on the oversized sweater and shrugged. “If you say so...”

“I won’t let you leave without buying that!” Trianna said. “It’d be a crime!”

The girl’s attitude perked up. “Okay. Yes. You’re right. I’ll get it.” She turned and walked to the register.

“Great! Fill up on fashion at Jillington’s!” Trianna spoke the trite corporate slogan like it was a the name of a passionate lover.

As soon as she was out of hearing range, Brianna and Trianna gave each other a high-five. “You nailed that sale, girlfriend!” Brianna said.

“I know, right? She was like ‘what about this sweater’ and I was all ‘you should get that’ and then she totally got it! It’s so easy for pros like us!”

“She looks *awful* in that sweater!” James piped up, annoyed. “She’s going to feel humiliated in that piece of trash!”

Brianna clicked her tongue. “You just wish you were as good at selling as we are.”

“We’re top sellers!” Trianna pointed out, again. They both headed off to their station, leaving James by his lonesome self. He was absolutely fuming at the

attitude of the two girls. He was reminded of exactly why he hated the mall all over again, at double the intensity. This day couldn't end fast enough for him.

An older woman was wandering in his direction. "Do you have foundation garments?" She asked.

"Me? No."

"No, the *store*, dearie."

"Beats me. Go ask that lady at the register. She might know."



Over on the other side of the store, Pamela was minding to her duties when she was confronted by the white-haired woman and her daughter. "You have some very poor customer service here!" She said. "I used to like shopping here, but your salesgirls are so rude!"

"I... I'm sorry you had such a poor experience I..."

"Shove it, lady!" the daughter said, piping up. "My mom doesn't deserve to be made fun of!"

As they left without accepting any offer of reconciliation, Pamela knew exactly where this complaint had come from. Over the course of the next hour, she heard three more.



"Jamie," she muttered to herself. Pamela had to stop and consider that maybe, this time, she had been a bit too clever with her little pet project. She thought he had him so thoroughly frightened that he'd obediently do whatever she wanted and get a free employee for the day. Still, the boy did have potential. He had co-ordinated a delightful outfit and expertly done his own makeup and hair. No, she was going to cut bait. She'd just refund his money and get him out before he messed up her store's reputation.

"Excuse me, are you the manager here?" A man holding a clipboard asked.

"Uh, yes," Pamela replied, already suspicious. Clipboards were never good.

"I'm with the mall. I'm evaluating stores to make sure everyone is in compliance with mall policy."

Pamela perked up and put her best smile on to make sure her new favorite person in the history of ever was at ease. Or at least she was going to act like he was her most favorite person in the history of ever, because the mall evaluation was as important to her job as anything else in her life. The mall sent these reports directly to corporate, and Pamela knew that ensuring that her store was in 100% compliance with mall policy was a requirement of keeping her job.

"How very interesting!" Pamela sang in a sweet voice that could have been yanked from the throat of a Disney princess. "You must have such a fascinating job!"

The clipboard man ignored her blatant attempt to cozy up to him. "I wanted to ask about gender compliance. Our checks seem to indicate that you employ 73 percent women and 27 percent men. We do have a requirement that every store have no less than a 70-30 balance. Are you not aware of this?"

Pamela had to restrain her need to groan. She knew very well that she was skirting the gender compliance rules, but how many men could she hire in a store that was obviously made to appeal to women? She already had more male salespeople than she would ever need working the electronics floor. She really had intended to hire more men, she had just let it slip away from her a little.

"Wait!" Pamela said, suddenly realizing the serendipitous moment at hand. "I just hired a boy. He hasn't shown up in our list yet!" That was going to save her. "He'll put us over the minimum!"

"I see," the man said, clearly skeptical. "I'll need to see him to verify."

Pamela led the clipboard man over to the Juniors section, where James was slumped against a wall, nibbling at a stray thread on his dress, trying to bite it off. "There he is," she said, keeping a distance from James.

"Pardon?"

"That's Jamie. He's... Well... He's a he."

"You don't say."

“Well, I know he looks like a girl, but he’s really a boy and...”

“Transgendered!” Pamela was expecting some pushback, but instead this gentleman appeared quite intrigued. “Yes, that’s wonderful! Why, hiring a transgendered employee is more than enough to put you in compliance! In fact, that’s just the kind of foresight and leadership we’re looking for in our stores!”

“Oh...” Pamela hadn’t even considered that. “That’s good?”

“Indeed! I’ll be sure to send report this along to your supervisors with my highest praise! Well done, well done!”

“Thanks!” She said, with a swell of elation inside of her. She was going to get a pat on the back for this one, she realized. A raise? A promotion? But that also meant she couldn’t let him go. “Jamie is one of our best employees,” she said. “We think great things are in his future with Jillington’s.”

Around four, as the day was starting to wind down, Pamela found James at his station. “I’m thrilled with your performance today. I must say you’ve exceeded all expectations. I wish I could keep you around forever.”

“Me?” He had sworn he was doing a terrible job. James found a bashful smile. “That’s okay. I think one day is enough. I’d like get my refund, so I can get on out of here.”

“About that...”

“Oh no,” James said, fully understanding he was about to get shafted. “No, no, no! I thought I’d get a refund if I worked for you today. I thought I’d be able to buy all new clothes. Or at least exchange them!”

“I told you honey, I can’t give you a refund after this long. And exchanges are out of the question, I think you forgot that we don’t even sell men’s clothes.” She trotted on her heels to the rear elevator, and James trailed behind her. “But don’t worry. With the commissions you get on your sales, you’ll have enough money to buy yourself a new wardrobe after a couple of months. Not to mention the employee discount. 25% off designer dresses. Who could beat that? Well I’ve got to go. I’ll see you tomorrow sweetie. Have a great night.”

“Wait!” James called out before Pamela pushed the manual override button to shut the doors.



“Well then, I’d show up tomorrow with a smile on your face and a good attitude!” James’ mother said.

James was understandably frustrated. “But I don’t want to work there! And as a girl?”

They were at home and preparing dinner, James tossing the salad as his mother handled the chicken. "I don't see any other job offers rolling in," she said.

"I'm seventeen! Why do I need a job?"

"Stop getting all worked up. Here. Stand still, you've got some lipstick on your teeth."

James obediently stood still and exposed his teeth. His mother took her fingernail and scraped the smudge off.

"Did you get it all?" He asked.

She checked again. "Yes, it's gone."

"I hope I didn't have that all the way home. I'd be so embarrassed." He grabbed the compact his mother had lent him as he checked his reflection and pimped his hair.

"I told you to get a job this summer, but you dragged your feet for three months. If you had worked and saved up your money, you wouldn't be in this mess."

"That's not fair! How was I supposed to know this would happen?"

"That reminds me, just what did happen to cause..."

"Hey Mom!" yelled Melody as she arrived. "What's for dinner?"

"Where's Carl?" Their mother asked.

"Mmmm... Roast chicken! Carl's out in the car. He'll be in in a second." Melody took a seat at the counter near her brother. "Mom says you got a job."

"Mom says a lot of things," James said with a grumble.

"He's going to need to pay for his own clothes," Mrs. Sanders said, "and this is how he's going to do it. He's going to work at Jillington's."

"Oh! Fancy fancy!" She grabbed a tiny tomato from the salad bowl. "Can you get me the employee discount?"

"I'm not working there!" James protested. He was more than a little irritated that the discount was the first thing his sister cared about, not his continued imprisonment in dresses.

"Hey hey!" Carl said, in his greasy way. "Chicken! Awesome. James! Still dressed as a girl! Not awesome. How long 'til we eat?"

"Five minutes," Mrs. Sanders replied.

"I brought the beer!" Carl said, holding a six-pack of bottled beer. Three of the slots were already empty. Only he and the kids' mother was actually old enough to drink.

"Well, you can put what you haven't *already* had in the fridge," said Mrs. Sanders, as a combination courtesy and insult.

"So I guess you're committed to this gay crossdressing thing, huh?" Carl asked James.

"No!"

"But you're still dressed as..."

"It's complicated!" James barked.

"It looks gay. Really gay. You sure you're not getting into dudes now?"

"What? No!" James hated to have to ask this lump for any favors, but he had no other options. "Hey, uh, Carl? Could you lend me some stuff to wear? School is coming up and..."

"Say no more. Maybe it'll cure you of this faggot phase you're going through. I'll get you all set. I got a lot of crap I don't wear. You like heavy metal?"

"Oh boy," Melody said dipping her head down. "You're going to regret that one, little brother."



It was a beautiful morning as James Sanders made his way up to the school, but he couldn't be bothered to notice. He was too worried about his recently blonded hair becoming the talk on everyone's lips. He desperately hoped not to find himself in a situation that demanded the removal of his black ski cap, which the young man had seriously considered gluing to his head. James had also pulled the rim of the cap down as far as possible, to cover his forehead, dreading the moment when a comment was made about his not-exactly-masculine eyebrows.

He was wearing clothes that were less than comfortable, as they had been donated by Carl, a man fifty pounds heavier and three inches taller, and the lad made sure his belt was tight enough to keep the rather huge pants around his

waist, as well as high enough so that no one got a look at the lacy pink panties he sported underneath.

Yes, besides wearing a smelly, linty sweater, he was wearing panties, because although Carl had generously given him several pairs of stiff, odiferous boxers, there was no way on this Earth he was going to wear them. Or touch them, for that matter. The outer clothes were bad enough – he had already run the pants and shirts through the washer three times and they still smelled like skunky beer and BO. It wasn't like he had a lot of choices, though, so here he was in school dressed like a college dropout with a drinking problem, which summed up Carl nicely.



“Nice look, assface,” said the first person he saw. It was Frank Bates, a kid who had made it his life’s work to pick on James. Frank had been on his case for years, ever since they were in Grade School, and had been amazingly persistent in his bullying. Frank wasn’t that intimidating, as he wasn’t that big and he rarely got physical beyond pushing and shoving. No, Frank’s talent was in hounding James verbally, day after day, year after year.

“Leave me alone, Frankie,” James replied, using his pet name for Frank. It was his one dig he knew would tweak the bully.

“Frank. Get it right, dickweed.”

“Sorry Frankie.”

Frank cracked his knuckles. “Oh you’re making record time this year, ain’t ya? You missed me kicking your butt all over the school, I guess, huh? Think you’re

a tough guy?"

James wasn't too sure why he was pushing Frank's buttons. Maybe he had been through enough lately that he just wasn't going to take Frank's usual thuggery. He had also just survived a weekend working at Jillington's, putting up with more pesky customers and wondering why Pamela just hadn't given up and fired him yet.

Sure enough, Frank was in James' face, and shoving him back by the chest, keeping him from getting past him. "Looks like you're going to be late on the first day of school, Sanders. That'll look bad on your record."

"Just let me though, okay?" James said, after being rebuffed a couple of times.

"Just let me through!" Frank teased in a whiny voice. "Waaah! I'm James and I'm too scrawny to fight you!"

"C'mon!" James insisted, trying to quickly dart past Frank. He was unsuccessful on one side, and then tried and failed on the other side.

"Is there a problem here?" A middle-aged man in a shirt and tie said, walking over. James recognized him as the vice principal.

"No problem," Frank said, with a cocky grin. "He's just trying to pick a fight with me."

"Let's not have a fight on the first day of school, shall we?" The man said, crossing his arms. He turned to James. "And we would appreciate you washing your clothes so they didn't stink."

"Yes sir," James mumbled.

"That's just what I was telling him, sir!" Frank said. "This is a school, not a homeless shelter!"

The vice principal was not amused. "That's enough, Mr. Bates. You're already on thin ice after that video we all saw of you."

"Hey! You're not supposed to mention that!" Frank complained to the imposing man.

"Video?" James asked.

"That's none of your concern, Mr. Sanders," was all the explanation the school official was going to relinquish. "Be on your way."

Finally, Frank relented and let James past. James didn't look back as he made his way through. That mention of a video was certainly interesting, but he had no time. He had to find his locker, stash his stuff and get to class in about two minutes, which he already knew was impossible. The first bell hadn't even rung and the new school year was already off to a miserable start for James.



It was a Sunday night at Jillington's, and as usual for a weekend, the store had been packed full of noisy, irritating customers that James had little tolerance for. But not it was closing time, and as James was heading out, he noticed the entire staff huddled around the back returns desk. "What's this supposed to be?" James asked one of the salesgirls.

"The end of the month meeting," she replied. "The one we have every month?"

"I'm new," James said by way of explanation. "Is this mandatory?"

"Obviously," the girl said before turning away.

"I'm going to get it," Brianna proclaimed to her Trianna.

"No, I'm going to get it." Trianna insisted.

The two were standing nearby, squabbling between themselves. James had observed that they always travelled together, and rarely seemed to be more than a few feet apart at any given time. They almost shared the same brain, if whatever was in their tiny heads medically qualified as a brain. They were petty and condescending not just to everyone they met, but to each other as well, and had no capacity to talk about anything beyond gossip, fashion, hair and makeup. James had already figured that the least amount of time spent in their presence, the better.

Brianna was adamant. "No, I'm going to get it!"

Trianna was just as steadfast. "No, I'm going to get it!"

"Get what?" James asked.

"The promotion!" they both answered at once.

"The one I'm going to get!" Brianna added.

"No, I'm going to get it!" Trianna asserted.

James sighed. Not only was he going to have to stick around for whatever this was, he was going to have to listen to the two girls snipe back and forth for the duration.

Fortunately, only a couple of minutes later, Pamela appeared and began a little presentation. "I know all of you Jillington's team members are on pins and needles as to who's getting promoted," she said. "Let me say, it was a very tough decision, and we have lots of great candidates, but only one slot available. So without any further ado, I'd like to announce that Jillington's, where you fill up on fashion, has a new junior assistant manager-in-training, so everyone give a big hand to... Jamie Sanders!"

"Me?" James warbled in surprise.

Every one of the fifty assembled employees turned to glare at James. Especially Trianna and Brianna.

"It's not fair!" Trianna declared.

"No! It's a mistake!" Brianna chimed in.

"Congratulations, Jamie," Pamela said, clapping by her lonesome. "I know you'll make me proud."

Slowly and sporadically, the rest of the crowd gave some token, unenthusiastic applause. It ended quickly.

While everyone was giving James a death stare, if anyone had cared to look at Pamela, they might have noticed the cat-that-ate-the-canary smile on her face. She knew that she was stuck with James as a salesgirl, and she couldn't let him slack his way through his shifts anymore. No, she needed a competent salesperson and she been doing this job long enough to know a few tricks to motivate her employees.

This was her favorite trick of all. Shortly, she'd have the salesgirl she wanted. James would be one of them.



"So you didn't say a word all through dinner," Melody asked James. They were still at the table with their mother did the dishes in the kitchen and Carl watched TV in the living room. She was finishing off her drink and avoiding her boyfriend. James was just staring off into space.

"I got promoted at work," James said.



“Boo?” Melody responded, not sure of what to make of her brother’s attitude. “Isn’t that good? They like your work? More money?”

“Yeah, it’s bad. Do you know how hard I’ve been trying to get fired?” James said, sulking. “That store and that mall are symbolic of everything I hate in life.”

“Mel! Get me a beer!” Carl called from the living room.

“In a minute!” She shouted back. “You know James, everyone your age would kill to have a job like that. And to get promoted? That’s better than anyone could hope for!”

“Yeah, but... Jillington’s and Fair Oaks is like evil incarnate! It’s like I’m suddenly a part of my own nightmare!”

“It’s not that bad.”

“All I do every day is watch vapid, shallow people desperately try to cling to clothes to solve their innermost problems. It’s like their lives are just a black hole of despair and they keep stuffing it full of clothes to fill the emptiness, never to find it.”

“Uh... O-kay...” Melody said, adjusting her neck. “You may not be a girl, but you sure are a drama queen.”

“But what does it mean? If I was trying so hard to get fired, and they actually love my work... Does that mean I’m just a complete and total fraud?”

“Jamie! Come help me with the dishes!” Came their mother’s call from the kitchen.

“Jamie?” Melody asked.

“It’s what they call me at work. Mom’s been calling me Jamie for a couple of days, now. I wish she’d knock it off.”

“Aw, don’t be grumpy, Jamie. Boys don’t like girls who frown.”

“Cram it. I’ve having an existential crisis here.”

“Mel! Rub my neck!” Carl yelled from the living room.

“Ugh,” Melody said. “At least it’s not his feet.”

Both siblings got up to do their duty: Melody to her massage her demanding boyfriend’s shoulders and James to put on an apron and help his mother.



The first thing James saw on his first day at work as the Junior Assistant Manger-in-training was a large framed photo of his face on the wall, proclaiming him as the newest Junior Assistant Manager-in-training. It was just at the back entrance, right next to an ad for their ‘40% off winter warm-up

sale.' It made his mood so much worse.

His life was an odd juxtaposition. He spent his entire day at school trying to project the most masculine appearance he could, only to come to work and project the most feminine appearance he could. Today he was dressed in a form-fitting black sleeveless top with a white peter pan collar, and a high-waisted white flare skirt that was short enough that he didn't dare bend over or sit down for the rest of the day. A black choker and black high-heeled booties completed his adorably cute outfit.

As he walked up from the ground floor, rode up the back elevator, checked in for his shift and took his position in his zone, every eye of every employee was on him. They were tracking him like a lion tracks a wildebeest on the Serengeti.

"How's my newest manager?" Pamela enthusiastically said, as she had been waiting for James to show up.

"They're really creeping me out," James answered. "They're all staring at me."

"They'll get used to it. Strong female role models like us sometimes can be intimidating. But I knew you were management material the very first day you worked here, just like me."

"You're out of your mind," James complained.

Pamela was having a moment and wasn't stopping. "When I got my first job, no one believed I could do it either – I believe in you, Jamie."

"You're forcing me to work for you. In dresses!"

"Being in charge really can change your perspective on things. People will look to you for leadership and direction, and between you and me... It's kind of addictive."

"Are you even listening to me?"

"Have a great shift! I'll see you later, Jamie."

James rubbed his temples and tried to get his head screwed on straight again. He was folding shirts and arranging them neatly when he stopped cold. "What am I doing?" He asked himself as he backed away from the table.

"Excuse me miss," a teenage girl asked as she walked up to James, "I wanted to know if you thought this skirt went with this top."

James looked at the two items the thin, shapely girl was holding: a maroon baby-t and a pair of olive short-shorts. "Honestly, it's not the best," he said. "But they are tight, and with a body like yours, no one's really going to care about the color."

"Really?" The girl said, looking at the items again. She then focused in on James' name tag. "Oh, you're a manager! You're right. I'll take them."

"Oh. Okay." James was sure he had just insulted her and wasn't expecting this

kind of reaction. "They can ring you up at the desk."

"Thanks so much!" was the girl's reply as she left.

That exchange left James scratching his head in confusion.

"That should have been my sale!" Brianna said, from the edge of her imaginary zone.

"Or mine!" Trianna added.

"Yeah, about that. Do people just buy stuff you tell them to when you're a manager?"

"Yes!" They both said spitefully, and then strutted off back to where they had come from.

"Huh," James said. Curious to try this new power out, he waited until the next customer came by and needed help.

A woman ten years too old to be shopping in the Juniors section was trying to squeeze into a tight sweater. When she had it on, her muffin top was completely exposed by the cropped midriff and the seams were stressing under industrial strength pressure. "Does it breathe? I don't want it to look too tight."

"It looks great on you!" James told her. But he could see doubt in her eyes. "People are going to be so jealous of how fabulous you look in this!" he added.

His customer agreed. "You know, you're right. Now what would go good with this? I'm thinking miniskirt."

"What about this one?" James said, holding up a tight, ultra-short skirt that was going to be shockingly indecent on her. "All the girls in my school are wearing them."

"I'll take one in every color," the woman said. James dumped seven of them in her arms and sent her off to the register.

Throughout the rest of the day, James found that he was an excellent salesperson. Dealing with customers came naturally. Every patron he dealt with left with a smile on their face, and an arm full of shopping bags.

"Who was helping you today?" Pamela asked. She was talking to James' latest customer, a man who was racking up a sizable sales total at the check-out register.

"That manager girl in the Juniors section. She is fantastic. Great sense of fashion and style."

"That's Jamie. She's my best sales girl."

"You should give her a raise. I'll be back with my girlfriend," he said. James had learned something new with this gentleman. Not only did he exploit his newfound authority as a manager by recommending everything he could think of, he found that male customers were responding to a little extra attention

from him. All he had to do was bat his eyelashes and flirt a little and he bought everything James had suggested.

"I'm so glad to hear that," Pamela replied. He satisfied grin threatening to shear the sides her face.

As the man left, his arms full of shopping bags, he passed by James on her way out. "Thanks again! I'll be back!" He said.

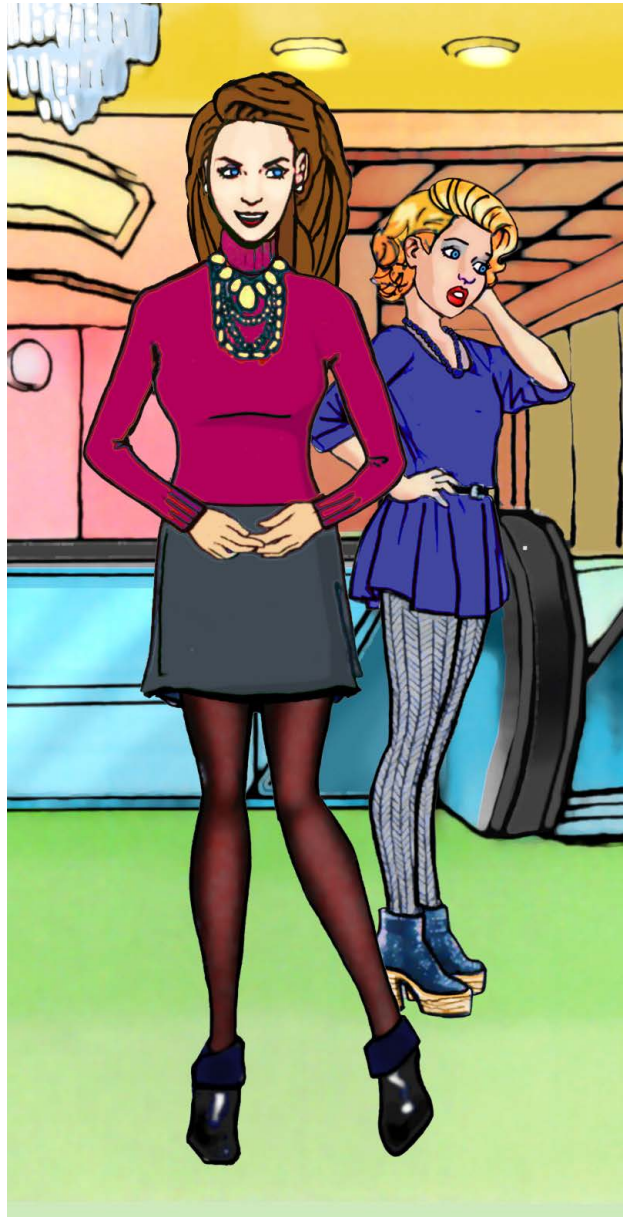
"We'll see you then, and thank you!" James replied, sweetly. "Remember, Jillington's is where you fill up on fashion!"

Despite his conscious mind telling him that he had just betrayed himself in a profound way, he was thrilled to see the approving expression on Pamela's face.

That night, a fair amount of Jamie's sales were to guys buying stuff for their girlfriends. She'd flirt with them a bit, touching their chests,

laughing when they cracked a lame joke, and they became putty in her hands. "I don't know what's happening to me." James thought, from somewhere deep inside. "It's like I'm getting some kind of weird pleasure out of having that much power over men. Not only that, I can't stop imagining them in the outfits I'm helping them pick." Regardless, Jamie kept using her feminine wiles, racking up the commissions. That first paycheck was going to be nice and fat.

"Scored another one, girl." Pamela said, beaming with pride as she approached James. James had just closed another sale, and Pamela was sliding



her purse into the crook of her elbow, as she got ready for her break. "I'm going to hate losing you once you get your check. You're quickly becoming the department's top seller. Nice hair, by the way."

Jamie flicked her hair instinctively, not realizing how much pride she was showing. "Thanks... Uh, I guess. That almost sounded genuine."

"Oh, I'm totally serious. You're a hot little thing. On top of that, I'd said you've adapted pretty well. Changes your perspective when you see things from my point of view, doesn't it?"

"I guess so. I really am sorry for peeping around. I guess I never realized how 'on display' women are to some men... Me included."

"Well I must say, you're doing a great job, and you're definitely taking your punishment in stride. Once Friday gets here, you can go back to being your old, significantly less fashionable self. Are you hungry?"

"A little, why?"

"C'mon. Dinner's on me."

"Do we have time to hit a restaurant? My break's only twenty minutes."

"One perk of eating with the store manager: Your break is as long as I say it is."

Pamela looped her arm through James', pulling her toward a nearby bar and grill. "Now that you're a manager, I have tons of great tips and tricks for you. And we'll get you started on our training program right away..." The two chatted and giggled as they made their way out into the mall.

"It's not fair!" Brianna whined.

"That should be me having dinner with Pamela!" Trianna said.

They both pouted as they watched them walk away into the distance.



James had sold an impressive 162% above his projected sales for the last 2 hours and 45 minutes of front-of-house time, with a 146% attach rate on products that sold 30-45% above margins, and a 61% conversion rate. Therefore, he had decided he had earned a quick break.

"Executive washroom!" Pamela said, handing him the keys. "A bonus for being the Junior Assistant manager-in-training!"

It had been at least thirty minutes since he had been able to check his face in a mirror, and it was beginning to really worry James. He turned to Brianna and Trianna. "Hey guys, can one of you cover my zone? I need to go freshen up."

"Sure thing, Jamie!" Trianna said, happy to oblige.

"I am so excited for our big winter sale-a-thon event! How about you?" Brianna asked James as he walked by.

"I guess I'm excited! I know I'll be up bright and early Saturday morning to get started!" Pamela has been talking it up for the past day, and the sale did sound pretty interesting. Lots to do, lots of people.

"It's going to be intense!" Brianna told him.

"Like, totally!" James replied as he toddled into the executive ladies' washroom. He was satisfied that his face hadn't fallen apart since he had last seen it, but he still spent a good five minutes primping. When he got back, his section was already overrun with customers. "It's always like that whenever I take a break," he said to himself.

"Thanks, Trianna!" He said, relieving his co-worker. "I owe you!"

"No big, g-friend!" Trianna replied. Trianna and Brianna had been difficult and sullen for about half a day before they realized that James was now nominally in charge of them, and their switch from disgruntled co-workers to brown-nosing underlings was remarkably quick. Now they couldn't be happier to accommodate James in doing whatever he needed them to do.

"Is there anything I can do to help over here?" James said, approaching his first cluster of customers. "Just a reminder that our fall selection is now thirty percent off and priced to move! Just ask if you need any assistance."

Suddenly a voice came from behind him, "Sanders? James Sanders. Is that you?"

"Oh my god!" came the femininely-attired boy's reply.

James turned to face his constant tormenter, Frank Bates. The very same Frank that had made it a point to make James' life as miserable as possible, and it looked like this afternoon would be no different.

The bully smirked with vicious intent. "Well, well, well. What do we have here?" He crossed his arms and began to circle James, who was paralyzed with fear. "Nice outfit, James. I love the little bows on your shoes. Nice touch. Really sells that whole 'I'm a total faggot' thing you're going for. Will you be wearing this to school on Monday?"

"Frank, I can explain. Please. You... You can't tell anyone about this."

"So what are gonna do about it? Nothing."

James could see it all unfolding out in front of him. He'd be practically radioactive. His life would be over if this got out. "Frank, you can't tell anyone! You just can't!"

"Oh, I'm gonna tell people. I'm gonna tell everyone. This is the end, Sanders. I'm gonna enjoy this."

"No, please!"
James dropped to his knees.
"Please!"

Pamela came over and interrupted. "Can I help you, sir?"

"Yes ma'am. I came in to get some clothes for my sister's wedding rehearsal dinner tonight, and then I run into this guy. Did you know your new employee here is a tranny?"

Pamela's eyes flared with a fury and rage. "What my employees *are* or *are not*, is none of your concern Frank."

"Wait. How did you know my name?"

"Frank Bates, right? Small world. I'm going to your sisters rehearsal dinner tonight. I've seen you before – I've seen the video."

Frank's face went white with fear. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"Yes you do. The video, Frank. The one your sister posted but then you had pulled down." Pamela got uncomfortable close for Frank. "But I saw it. I have it. I saved a copy."

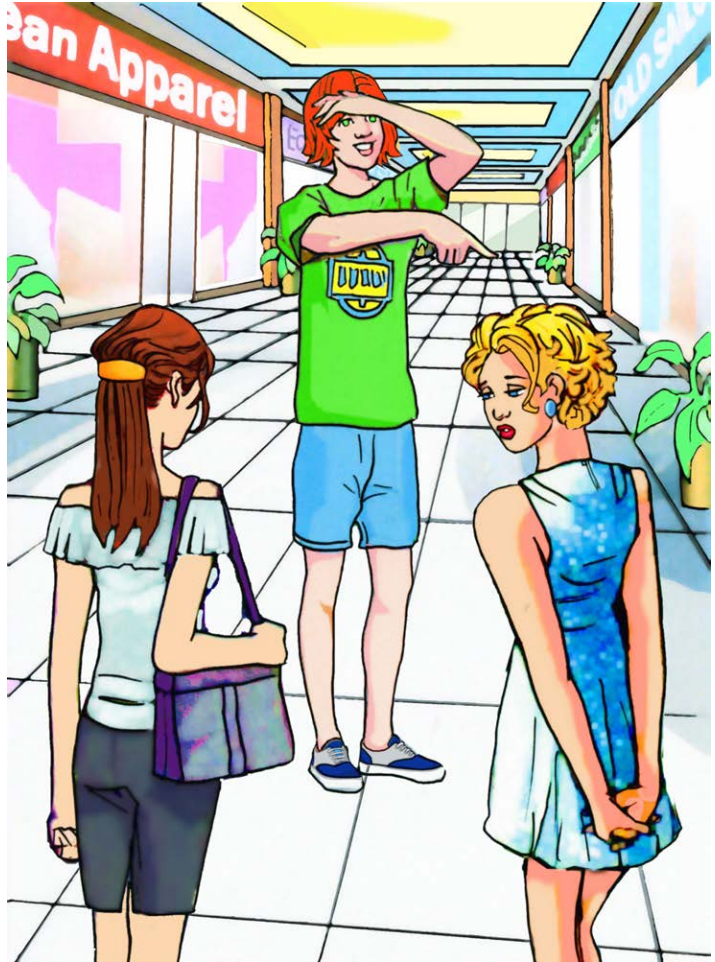
"They're gone." Frank shook his head in denial. "Erased."

"Oh Frank, I don't think so."

"You're lying!"

"Am I? It's what your sister caught you doing with her undergarments."

"No!" Frank objected. "No, we got it deleted!"



"I've heard you like my friend's little sister, Grace. You're trying to get serious with her. I wonder what Grace would think if she saw that video. I don't think she'd like it." She turned to James. "What do you think, Jamie?"

James was grinning ear to ear. It may have been under unexpected circumstances, but he finally had the worst bully in school right where he wanted him. "So that's what the vice principal meant by 'the video?' Well, I don't think Grace would like it at all."

Pamela brushed some dust off Frank's shoulder. "Didn't you say you were getting an outfit for your sister's rehearsal dinner, Frank? I think I can help you with that." She addressed James. "Do you think Louise and the girls upstairs might be able to help Frank?"

Immediately, James got Pamela's drift. "Yes. Yes I do."



Two and a half hours later, the store was closed. James was waiting at the door, holding his purse, digging through it for his mom's car keys. As he heard the heels clicking down the steps he glanced up to see Pamela coming down the stairs wearing a black and white strapless print cocktail dress, with her hair twisted in the back, and piled high on top of her head.

"You look great," James said honestly.

"Thanks. As you know all too well, those girls in the salon can work miracle, can't they... Francine?"

James' attention was brought back to the top of the stairs, as he saw Frank trying desperately to make it to the bottom in his 4-inch heels. He was wearing a pearl pink cocktail dress, sleeveless, a bow at the side of the waist, and a flared skirt. He looked adorable, despite the fact that he was stumbling around, in the pearl pink platforms. Along with choosing his dress, James had also chosen the shoes, and made sure they had the little bows on the toes that Frank was apparently so fond of.

The salon had done wonders on his hair. They had styled it into a tight straight bob, and cheek-length bangs on the side, falling slightly over his eye. With his perfect makeup, and his flower-jeweled earrings, he looked every bit the picture of an elegant, feminine beauty.

"Please don't make me do this," begged the pink-clad boy.

"It's too late now. I've already cleared the outfit with your sister. She said it was okay as long as you didn't look better than her. I guess she doesn't much like you, either. So if you're a good girl tonight, then maybe the only people you'll have to explain this to will be your parents. Any problem with that?"

James could see the anger building up for a powerful, angry response.

"Video!" Was all Pamela needed to say to deflate Frank. "So, any problem?"

"No," he meekly answered.

"Good. You can ride with me. I'm sure someone will give you a ride home from the rehearsal." And with that, she pushed Frank out the door to wait for her.

Smiling with a satisfied grin, she spoke with Jamie. "I don't think he'll be telling anyone at your school about this. Or about you." She handed James a garbage bag.

"I don't either. What's this?"

"It's Francine's old clothes. I don't think she'll need them anymore tonight. You can wear them to school next week. You'll have to wear the same thing everyday, but I guess you think that's better than nothing."

James looked into the bag, to see clothes that were roughly his size and didn't stink. It had been so long. He was nearly in tears.



As James sat at his desk awaiting the morning bell, his attention was pulled towards the door, where a new beauty had entered the class. It seemed that Francine was making another appearance, dressed in a pink sweater and black capris. The newcomer gingerly tiptoed to the desk, in a pair of simple black ballet flats. “She” looked gorgeous with her straight ‘do, with bangs sweeping so gently to the side, accented by the pearl studs adorning her ears. The immaculate and tasteful makeup could do nothing to hide the natural blush gracing her cheeks. It looked like Frank the bully definitely wasn't going to be a problem anymore.

James did his best to hold back a chuckle, reveling in the only victory he felt he'd had in the past few weeks. As the feminized boy crossed the classroom clutching a little pink shoulder bag, James realized that he took great pleasure for his part in his oppressor's humiliation. A lucky break that had resulted in the embarrassed maiden before him. Well, luck and a deep need for revenge.

James was even more grateful for helping make ‘Francine’ – not just because very little attention would be directed his way today, but he also really liked the idea of taking one of the biggest assholes in his life, and turning him into what appeared to be a helpless young woman.

He trailed Frank around school for the



rest of the day, making sure Frank could see him. James kept his mouth shut and never got too close. He just wanted Frank to know he was there, watching, and ready to reveal Frank's secret. It was also fun to watch Frank get relentlessly teased by those who recognized him.

More than a just feeling a deeply satisfying sense of revenge though, James could something else. A sense of... Power?



Back home, days later, James was dreading having to get ready for work. It had been wearing him out. Yes, the more he worked the faster he'd be able to pay off his debt with Pamela, and the faster he'd be back to normal. That didn't make the day-to-day slog of an after-school job any easier, though. He longed for the days when he'd come home after school and just veg out.

Having entered the living room, he couldn't help but notice Carl, his sister's lazy-ass boyfriend, passed out on the couch. He and Melody had spent the night, as the frequently did, and he'd obviously been drinking heavily. Melody couldn't be bothered to wake him up before leaving to go to her new job, which was a common occurrence these days.

James' mom wasn't usually home during the day, instead working to provide for her children. Melody's new job had lightened some of the strain, but she was already complaining about it. Speaking of Melody, she had been a good sport since James' shopping misadventure. Despite still believing he deserved his fate, his sister did her best to help him with his hair, and teach James everything he'd need to know until he received his first monthly paycheck and make good on his debt.

Carl was a different story, as he was fast becoming a relentless tormentor. At first Carl seemed bemused by James' situation, but as time had gone on, Carl had started to go beyond gentle teasing and had gotten to the edge of abusive. He'd call James "Fag" or "Princess" in front of his mom, and treat him like a maid.

"As long as you're pretending to be a woman, be useful and make me a sandwich," Carl had said last night. He then made comments on how James would "make a wonderful housewife one day." It was funny how sexist his views were, considering he hadn't worked in the three years Melody had been dating him.

Carl always had excuses. "I can't get a job because I don't have any nice clothes to wear in an interview, and I'd need a job to afford nice clothes." Melody knew he was a bad egg, but for some reason loved him anyway. She just wished for a way to, as she put it, "bring out the best in him."

James found his purse and keys and finished getting ready; he was ready to walk out the door and head off. James had been trying not to get into his bubbly salesgirl character right away, but it was hard not to, teetering around in three inch blue loafer pumps, a form-fitting red v-neck dress, along with a gold link necklace with matching stud earrings. Gone was the messy hat hair he used to have, replaced by perfectly curly blonde locks with sweeping bangs, crowning a meticulously made up face emphasized by long lashes, and a subdued coral lip gloss. Whether he liked it or not, Jamie was here, and she would be for a while.

Reaching inside her purse, Jamie retrieved his pink crystal-encrusted phone, and realized there was an hour and a half left before work began. "I'm getting too good at this," he thought, absent-mindedly admiring his nails. His pink French-tipped nails. He was surprised no one at school noticed them, but just assumed it was all thanks to Francine's appearance. "I feel kind of bad for Frank, but I guess he does deserve it," he thought, before looking across at the passed out drunkard on the couch. Remembering back to how he felt when he first saw Frank stumbling down the stairs in his heels and dress, James could feel a pleasant rush of powerful emotions. He wanted to feel that way again.

"...If Frank and I deserve it, this asshole definitely does!"

Work began swiftly, as James cut off all of Carl's clothes, stripping him down to nothing. Gently, he placed a pillow over his privates before sliding towels under his legs and torso, ready to run at the first sign of Carl stirring. After the application of Nair (and its removal with a damp wash cloth), it was clear Carl wouldn't have woken up if the house suddenly flipped upside down. Once the eyebrow tweezing started, Carl occasionally swatted at the invisible mosquitoes biting at his forehead, but James became very adept at dodging his smelly hands and quickly resuming his labor.

After dressing him in a simple black bra-and-panty set (with stuffing in the right places), James re-dressed him in feminine versions of the clothes he had been wearing. His shorts replace with a miniskirt and his nasty blue tee replaced with a v-neck silk top in the same color.

The makeup was kept very subdued, with Carl's bright lipstick being the flashy bit, which drew attention to his rather large lips. With a little bit of teasing (and lots of pinning), the drunkard now wore a French twist with a little height. "Timeless and easy." James said aloud, stepping back to admire his work. The final two additions were a pair of silver drop earrings and a simple onyx medallion. James set Carl's head back down carefully, as not to ruin his new creation, and turned his attention to the newly dragged boy's wallet.

"Oh my god, there's \$1000 in here! This asshole borrowed \$20 off of Melody last night!" James really wasn't sure where he'd gotten the money, but it definitely wasn't from a legitimate source. He threw the wallet inside the family safe (which would absolutely wouldn't let Carl get his hands on it), as

well as his keys. James then sat down and wrote a very detailed note to Melody about the discovery, as well as letting her know that Carl was no longer going to be a burden. He might not be able to afford nice clothes of his own, but he could definitely borrow his girlfriend's! Jamie taped it to Carl's enhanced breast, and left the new lady for Melody to find once she arrived home. He then grabbed his purse, and ran out of the door for work, a little surprised by the extreme nature of his actions... but thrilled nonetheless. He was in a good mood the rest of the night and sold up a storm at Jillington's.



One night, as James and Pamela returned from dinner, James' phone chimed. He checked and found a forwarded text message from a number he didn't recognize. It read, "James Sanders, fashion plate," and featured a picture of Jamie, strutting across the mall in the most feminine of manners. Underneath was a line of text: "I just thought you'd want to know."

James was so nervous he was barely able to type as he texted back. "Where did you get that?"

Another text came through. “Wouldn’t you like to know?” That was followed by, “And yes, it’s going out to everyone in school.”

James put his phone back in his purse, determined not to make a scene. He wouldn’t give them the joy, in case whoever it was was still nearby, watching. The Junior Assistant Manager-in-training returned to his work area, and zoned out for a while, dreading the impending doom once he returned to school. As he stood there, biting an acrylic extension on his thumb absent-mindedly, a young guy in his early twenties approached her.

“Hey there, beautiful,” he said. “You okay? You look upset.”

James looked up to see an obvious metal fan, as indicated by his Slayer t-shirt, his scraggly chin beard, and his long black straight hair, which fell to his side in a low ponytail. “I’m fine,” James replied. “I guess you could say I already know I’m going to have a bad day tomorrow.”

“Work, huh?”

“Nope. I’m actually off tomorrow. School.”

“School’s overrated. Don’t worry too much about it. High School doesn’t last forever.”

“It does while you’re in the middle of it,” James said.

“Don’t sweat it. You’ll probably survive.”

That comment caused James to smile. “I guess I will.”

“Sure you will. Maybe I’ll see you later, pretty lady. I’ve gotta jam.” The young man gave James a little salute.

As James watched him walk away, he could help but let out a little wistful sigh. If he really was a girl, he could see himself getting a little soft on a boy like that.



After a night of fitful sleep, James awoke to an empty house. He threw on the same old jeans and t-shirt he'd worn the day before, and begrudgingly made his way to school. He knew he was in for the most humiliating, degrading and possibly dangerous day of his life.

Sure enough, from the very moment he stepped foot on campus, there were whispers and stares coming from all directions. In his classes, it seemed like half the class were turned in their seats to stare at him, mumbling and giggling between themselves. That is, everyone except for Frank, who sat quietly in a cute purple sheath, relieved at having lost some of the attention. James wished the floor would swallow him whole. Just before the bell, someone snuck up behind him, and yanked off his ski cap, exposing the beautiful blond locks beneath. The room filled with giggles of laughter, and James knew the rest of the day was going to be more of the same.

As he tried to avoid people and keep his head low, he ran into last person he wanted to see. He literally ran right into him, almost knocking himself over. James lost his balance and staggered back a few steps, looking up to see who it was. It was Bret Jacobs.

He alone could save him. Maybe that minute they shared smoking was enough. All Bret had to do was pat him on the shoulder or just nod. That was all Bret had to do. He was James' last hope. What he saw instead was Bret's disapproving face, shaking his head back and forth. "Not cool, dude," Bret said, before moving on, through the crowd of people watching.

James could feel his pride crumple like a ball of tin foil.

At lunch, James snuck off to the side of the building. He tried to get away from the increasingly creative ways people were calling him a sissy. Going to light a cigarette, he saw Frank standing there, already smoking, and looking in his direction. "I should kill you for this, you know?" Frank said, as he pulled the cig away from his perfectly painted lips.

"Kill me?" James replied. "Are you serious? You were going to expose me to the whole school. Why are you still dressing like that anyway?"

Frank took a deep drag on the cigarette – a ladies slim cigarette – and then blew the smoke high into the air. "When I showed up at my sister's rehearsal dinner, wearing that godforsaken dress, and had no reasonable explanation, Dad thought I was trying to cause some kind of a scene to ruin my sister's big day. He lost his mind. I've never seen him so angry. He stared daggers at me for an hour, and swear he face was so red he could have keeled over from a heart attack. Finally, after the whole thing was over, he said that if I wanted to dress like a girl, I was going do it for the rest of the semester. He called me an 'attention whore.' "

"Since then, my mom's just been relishing the opportunity to doll me up every morning, and dress me in Megan's old things. Worst of all, Megan was always such a preppy priss." He picked at the dress he was wearing. "I hate this stupid dress. I hate all of her stupid clothes!"

On anyone else, Frank's story would have garnered some sympathy. Not so for James. "How do you think *I* feel?" He snapped. "I was caught snooping in a ladies' dressing room, and I was blackmailed into spending all of the money I was supposed to spend on a new wardrobe on girly things! My mom threw away everything I owned, and now I'm stuck working at Jillington's, saving up for some fucking boys' clothes. At least my mom's a little sympathetic, but she still thinks I did this to myself and I deserve it."

"So *that's* what happened," said a voice from around the corner. It was the vice principal. "Sorry for listening in, but I've been looking for you all day, Sanders." He looked at the two with lit cigarettes. "I'll pretend I'm not seeing that."

James immediately discarded his.

"Sorry it's been so rough, but it sounds like you've created this situation," the large man said.

"Yeah, I know," James said, shoving his hands in his pockets.

"What about me?" Frank asked, exasperated.

"You got what you deserved," the man said. "Look, as far as you two are concerned, the school administration doesn't want to interfere with this... *Private* matter. But some unofficial advice? Hiding like this makes it worse."

"Like there's an alternative?"

"I've worked this job for twenty years. I see it time after time. If you let people pick on you, they will continue to pick on you. You have to take away their satisfaction."

"How?" Frank asked.

The vice principal coughed into his closed fist. "If I might make a suggestion, have you thought about making the best of it?"

"What do you mean?" Both of the feminized boys asked, looking utterly perplexed.

"You're both carrying this off. From what I've seen, you don't look like guys in dresses. Why don't you just act as if it's nothing to be embarrassed about?"

"Easy for you to say. You don't have to dress like you're having afternoon brunch at the club every day," said Frank, stomping out his cigarette beneath his platform pumps.

"From what I understand, neither do you. According to what your dad told me, he said you'd have to dress like a girl. He didn't say anything about having to dress in any particular way, did he?"

"No. I guess he didn't," Frank said, a look of realization coming across his face.

"And you," the man said, pointing at James. "You work at a department store. You could get anything you wanted."

"I guess," James replied.

"I'll let the two of you figure the rest out," the school employee said, as he left them. "But for God's sake, don't run and hide."

James and Frank just spent a serious minute looking blankly at each other. Of all the people in the world they needed advice from, the vice principal was the last person they expected it from.

"I tell you what. I've got some store credit and some discounts. You come and meet up with me tonight and we'll see what we can do. You can get some things you might be more comfortable in, and then I'll get some stuff for myself. Then we can walk into the school, heads held high, together. What do you say?"

"I'm in," said Frank. "How much worse can it get? I'll take anything over being 'Ms. Prim and Proper.' How long will it take?"

"A couple of hours."

"What the hell. Might as well."

The two dispersed, and James endured the onslaught of taunts for the rest of the day. For every insult, it just made him more and more resolute. He couldn't wait to see what the reaction would be when everyone met Jamie.



James walked into his room, dropped his books on his bed, and as he stretched his arms over his head, he caught a whiff of the shirt he'd been wearing. "Ewww!" he said aloud, ripping it off, and making his way to his room. He tried to find something casual to lounge around the house in, and after rejecting all his tees and jeans, decided on a pair of jean short shorts, and a black pullover sweater with white polka dots. "Well this just looks ridiculous," he said, noting the flat chest. He quickly shed the sweater, slipped into a simple white padded bra and put the sweater back on. "Much better. It looks like Jamie is here," James, now Jamie, said aloud. She took a seat at her mom's vanity table, and started on her makeup; simple and understated, with a light gloss on the lips. She ran a brush through her hair, and grabbing two hair ties,

she tied twin pigtails low enough for her blond tresses to fall softly in front of her shoulders.

"You've been busy, little sister."

Melody had her arms folded, and was leaning against the doorway, smirking at Jamie's startled expression. "I saw the results of your latest makeover project."

Feeling a tad guilty at what had been done to Carl, she blushed. "I guess I got a little carried away. Are you mad?"

"Not at all. I was thoroughly amused when I realized who the girl was, passed out on the couch. After I went to check my things, I saw your note, and found that money. Then I was extremely pissed – but not at you."

"What happened?"

"Follow me, and I'll tell you." The siblings found themselves in the living room, with a bottle of polish, and they began to do each other's toenails. "Your note made me realize it was time to shed some dead weight," Melody said.

"So you guys broke up? I'm so sorry."

"On the contrary. I shook that bastard awake, and tore into his hung-over ass. I asked him where he'd gotten the money, and he told me he stole it from his dad. Carl's father is an even worse drunk than Carl, if you can believe that. Apparently the drunkard had a fight, and Carl grabbed it on the way out. Then I asked him why he borrowed money from me, and he said he didn't remember doing it. He was so blackout drunk, that he had forgotten he had money in the first place."

"Jesus," Jamie said.

"I was going to leave him," Melody continued, "but he looked up at me with those big pathetic eyes, and begged me not to break up with him. He kept going on about how he'd do anything to make it work, and how I was the only good thing in his life. He did say *anything*, so I told him I'd consider staying with him, if he quit drinking and did everything I asked him to do."

Jamie listened with great attention as Melody continued. "He agreed, so I helped him up, and led him to the bathroom to clean him up. You should have heard him. He was all like 'Why am I walking so funny?' It was then that I realized he didn't have a clue how he was dressed. He got to the sink, took one look in the mirror, and I'd swear his jaw hit the tile! He turned his face up to look at me with pleading eyes, and my response was, 'You said 'anything.' You always go on about how much you love me. Well, now's the time to prove it!'"

"I helped him brush his teeth, spritzed him with some perfume, loaded him up with some coffee, and helped him get his bearings in the heels. I told him I was taking him out, all dressed up, and he had no choice if we were going to stay together. Then it was happy hour with the girls. He tried to stay in the car,

but I pulled him out, telling him the ladies should meet their designated driver. He mostly sat there quietly, and shyly accepted the compliments on his outfit.”

“Seriously?” Jamie asked.

“They said they were very accepting of alternative lifestyles.” Melody shrugged. “Who knew? Sometimes your friends pleasantly surprise you. Anyway, after two drinks I was ready to go, so we grabbed our purses and headed for the door. I have to say, I’m impressed that he didn’t take a single drink, and hasn’t since.” Just then, there was a rattling at the door, before the lock turned slowly. “That must be Carla now.”

When Carl walked in the door, Jamie’s eyes nearly fell out of her face. Carl was wearing a vintage, patterned, sleeveless pink dress, with a tight bodice and a voluminously flared skirt and box pleats. It was topped off with a matching bolero jacket, with three-quarters-length sleeves, a scoop necked collar, and a pair of tight pink gloves that went halfway up the forearm. All of this above a pair of tan stockings with visible seams, and a pair of two-inch pink pumps. With the same French twist as before, the clutch purse in one hand, and the grocery bags in the other, he looked like a housewife from the fifties returning from the market.

“Hi hun,” Carla said, wiggling over and planting a kiss on Melody’s cheek. “Hi Jamie. That’s a cute sweater. Hope you guys are hungry. Dinner will be ready in an hour.”

Jamie continued to stare in amazement. Carla took off her gloves and jacket, slipping into a frilly white pinafore apron before going into the kitchen. “Where did you get that dress?” Jamie asked. “This has got to be a dream. I can’t believe what I’m seeing.”

“I knew she’d look so cute in it.”

“I’m missing something.”

“Let me finish the story. So we get home, and the first thing that bastard does is pop open a beer and glugged it down. He said he needed to take the edge off the evening. After everything we just went through!”

“Oh, Carl,” Jamie said, shaking her head in disbelief.

“Well, that was it. I told him that if he and I were staying together, and he wasn’t going to get a job, he was going to contribute one way or another. I told him he was going to be my little homemaker from now on.”

“Really!” Jamie asked, astonished and excited.

“Oh yes. I’ve seen how he’s been treating you, and I know how he treats me. I locked up every scrap of his clothes and got grandma’s old things out of the attic. Until he shapes up, he’s going to be the lady of the house.”

James rocked back in his seat, stuffing his laughter with a couch pillow. "I can't believe it! *Carl!* No, anyone but *Carl!*"

It was clear that Melody was proud of herself from the smug smile on her face. "So *Carla* will be doing the housework, and you can forget about chores. *Carla* has them all covered. Anyway, we got home after you were in bed. I took him to my room, and dressed him in one of my nightgowns. The sex has never been so good."

"I don't want to hear that," Jamie said, nearly dropping the polish onto the ottoman.

"That's what sisters do! They share the details of each other's love lives!" Melody paused. "Well... Okay, I'll break you into that tradition later. But anyway, this morning I woke up, and he was already cleaning. I decided to help since this place was nearly in shambles, and after an hour or so, we had it nice and presentable. We decided to clean up the attic, like mom's been trying to do for a while. I found that dress, and I had to see him in it. He's been wearing it since; I think he really must be scared that I'll leave him. I can't believe he went to the grocery store wearing it."

Jamie couldn't believe it, either. 'Carla' looked like she was as happy as a clam, doing the housework.

"Oh, by the way!" Melody continued as she finished off Jamie's nails. "We decided to keep that money he took from his dad as an 'asshole tax.' *Carla* and I



will be coming to Jillington's sometime this week, and we'll take full advantage of your employee discount."

"I can't believe what I'm hearing," Jamie said. "I'm glad things are working out between you two. He, or rather she, really meant it when she said anything. She's a lucky one to have you."

The family enjoyed a nice dinner once their mom got home, who was happy to have someone else do the cooking, and turned into bed immediately afterwards. For their part, Jamie and Melody decided to tag team a manicure for Carla. Jamie was stunned, unable to believe how much her home's dynamic had changed in the last week.

She went to her room and got dressed for a late night trip to work. There was a big night ahead of her, and a bigger day tomorrow.



Jamie had arranged for a late-night visit to the store with Frank, and had told Louise to keep her schedule clear. Francine arrived looking the part of a *débutante*, wearing a simple yellow dress with a blue sweater. Jamie led Francine to the top of the stairs, where Louise was waiting. She sat Francine down and threw a cape around her shoulders, while Jamie spread a thick paste into her hair. Louise started in on her makeup, carefully explaining each step in the process. After she was done, she removed it all, and made Francine do it over and over again until she got it right. A few minutes after her last attempt, Jamie rinsed her head. After a lot of blow drying and little bit of styling, she was left to dress in the outfit Jamie had selected for her.

Louise led Francine out to a mirror as Jamie said, "I'd like the present to you, the new and improved, Francine." Gone was the image of the demure little maiden, and in its place was one badass babe. She was wearing a skin tight Bad Religion t-shirt showing off her amply padded bosom. Underneath it was a short red pleated tartan skirt, fishnet stockings, and a pair of shitkicker boots. Her makeup was dark, with black mascara and eyeliner, purple eyeshadow and dark red lips. Francine's bright red hair had been styled into Rosie the Riveter style, tied off with a blue polka dotted bandana. Gone were the pearls, replaced by a pair of captive beads, and a spiked choker. She placed her black nails up to her new do, but stopped short, not wanting to damage it. "Not Francine." He winked at Jamie. "Frankie. My name is Frankie." A smile crept into the corners of her mouth. "You're a genius, Jamie. I know exactly what clothes I want to buy. Frankie has a new kick-ass style, and I can't wait to get started. Shall we go?"

"After you," Jamie said.

It was a new kind of thrill to watch the newly christened Frankie tear into the clothes racks at Jillington's. It became quite clear to her that Frankie wasn't going to be a temporary thing. No, Frankie was here to stay.

As Frankie hopped in and out of the changing rooms, Jamie decided to pick out a few things for her own debut tomorrow at school. After all, she had been working here for a while and had a good idea of what she would get.

"Hey," a voice said from behind her. Jamie turned around and met the eyes of the metal guy that had been so nice to her a few days ago. "Good to see you again."

"Hey yourself," Jamie replied. The events of the evening had made her feel especially confident. Flirting a little bit just seemed to come naturally.

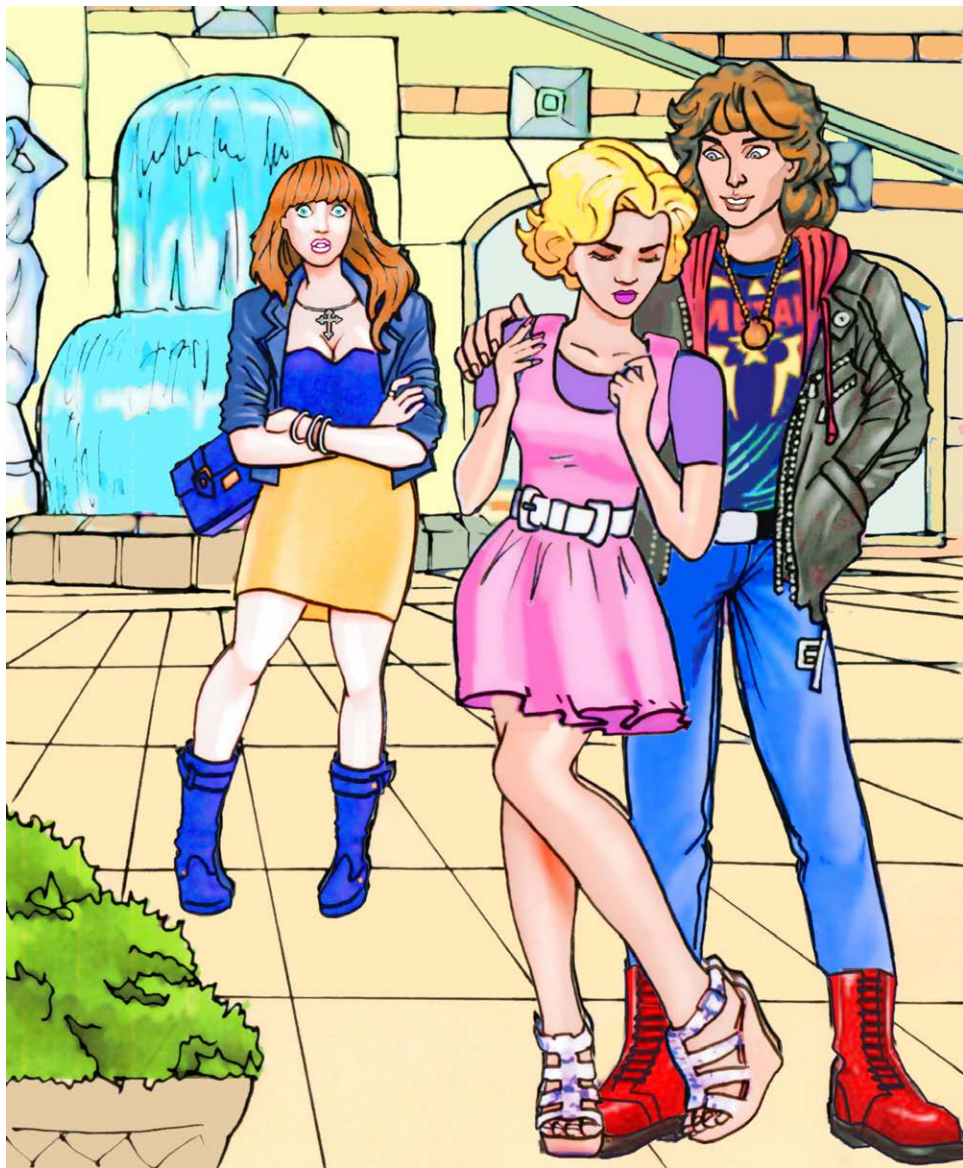
"I didn't say so last time, but I really like your look."

"Thanks," Jamie said, playing with her hair. "You're a nice looking guy, too. But a lot of girls probably say that."

"Not as many as you might think."

It was time to get to the heart of the matter for Jamie. "Your girlfriend must tell you that."





"I don't have a girlfriend," the boy said, with a grin.

Jamie almost swooned. Her heart fluttered. The door was open and all she had to do was step through. But could she? Was Jamie ready to make a move or was James going to slow her down?

"Hey, uh, why don't you come and see my band?" The boy said, making the first move. "We're playing at The Peel. It'll be fun." The Peel was an all-ages club that played host to a lot of metal bands.

"Thanks a lot," Jamie said, not exactly in love with the idea of going to a heavy metal show. "...But I'm not sure that's my scene. I'm not much into..." Before Jamie could finish her sentence, a loud voice interrupted from side.

"Marty! What the hell do you think you're doing? This isn't getting the car! I told you if I caught you flirting with some other girl again, that was it! We're finished!" The irate voice came from a cute blond, in a chic gray dress, and a double breasted sweater jacket. She held onto a bag from the makeup counter, as she stormed towards Marty, who looked absolutely terrified.

What a bitch! Thought Jamie, turning to face the angry woman. "He was just being nice," she said. "He just wanted to invite me to his show tomorrow."

"You have a show tomorrow? Why didn't you tell me? Cheat on me once, shame on you. Cheat on me twice... *Ahh!* I'm done!" She turned to face Jamie. "You seem very nice, honey. I thoroughly would not recommend going to his show tomorrow. I'm sorry you had the displeasure of meeting this asshole."

"Baby, wait!" yelled Marty, dropping to his knees. "I'll do anything. Please don't go. Anything you say, I'll do it. Please don't leave me."

The girl was irate. "The only reason you even go out with me is because my daddy is rich! All you want is my family's money!"

"No, no!" Marty objected. "That's not true, baby!"

It absolutely was true, Jamie told herself. She could see through his tired act in a second. She was stunned by the turn of events. Here she thought that she'd finally encountered a nice guy, but sure enough, he was a total jerk. She then realized that she knew exactly how to deal with total jerks. "I'm so sorry your boyfriend is lacking in the fidelity department. He does sound like he'll do anything to make it up to you though. I happen to be a sales associate here, and I also offer my services as a personal stylist. We're having a "buy one, get two" special on pumps and ankle boots today, and we're offering a \$25 gift card with the purchase of any cocktail dress, \$200 dollars or more. Is there anything I can help you or..." she turned and glanced at Marty with a wicked smile. "...*Him* with today?"

"What do you mean?" The girl asked.

Jamie led her aside for a moment to explain exactly what she meant.

Two hours later, as the store was closing, Jamie walked her two last clients to the door. "Have a good night you two, and thank you so much for your business."

"No, thank you, Jamie. You've been wonderful. I'll be in later this week. I could use some of your magic. You're obviously very good at what you do." The once irate girl said, gesturing to poor Marty. Gone were his old clothes, replaced by a very cute gold sweater, with a white collar, wide enough to hold rest on his biceps and leaving his shoulders bare. It also had white cuffs down

the three quarter length sleeves, and a pink belt work at the waist. Under the sweater was a pink circle skirt with a little flair, and at the bottom, a pair of gold strappy sandals with a four inch heel, and a platform once inch tall.

The ruby red on his nails and lips complimented his smoky gray eye makeup, not to mention those false dark lashes. Above the pencil thin eyebrows, his long dark hair had been transformed into a beautiful chestnut mane, teased high behind a gold headband, and falling down his back in loose barrel curls, with lightly feathered bangs resting gently on his forehead. The little gold balls that dangled slightly below his ears, the pink and gold metallic bangles on his right wrist, and the purple scarf looped twice around his throat with the ends tied off (leaving two short tails jauntily pointing to the left), finished the image of a fashion hound with a purpose for shopping, finishing off what appeared to be a very successful day, as her arms were now laden with shopping bags of every shape and size.

The girl was over the moon. She was clapping her hands in excitement. "I like you like this. I always wanted a girlfriend to send time with – shopping, getting our hair and nails done, slumber parties and everything I never had growing up! Now I do!"

"No, baby... Please..."

"Tut tut!" The girl said. "If you want to get a penny of my daddy's money, you're going to be my very bestest friend in the whole world."



Understand... Martina?"

"Y... Yes."

"Good. Now you're going to be the perfect girl for me, aren't you?"

It was clear that Marty wanted to fight, but the lure of the money kept him from getting out of line. "Y... Yes."

"Of course you will. We're going to have so much fun! You can move into the guest house! I'll get you started on a diet and we can get all of that nasty hair zapped off your body for good. I know the *best* plastic surgeon! You can get implants and a tummy tuck and..." She just kept rattling on with plans.

Jamie couldn't help but chuckle a little when Marty's eyes nearly fell out of his head, once he realized what he was in for. She laughed again as the couple made their way out the door, at which point Pamela came up and locked it behind them. "You're getting really, really, really good at this, almost better than me. You must have made a couple of hundred dollars off that commission, too."

"It was an easy sale. I don't think I've ever seen a guy so terrified of losing his girlfriend."

"Or losing the money," Frankie said, arms loaded with a dozen shopping bags.

From deep inside, James thought one thing only. "I don't know what's happening to me, but I kind of like it."



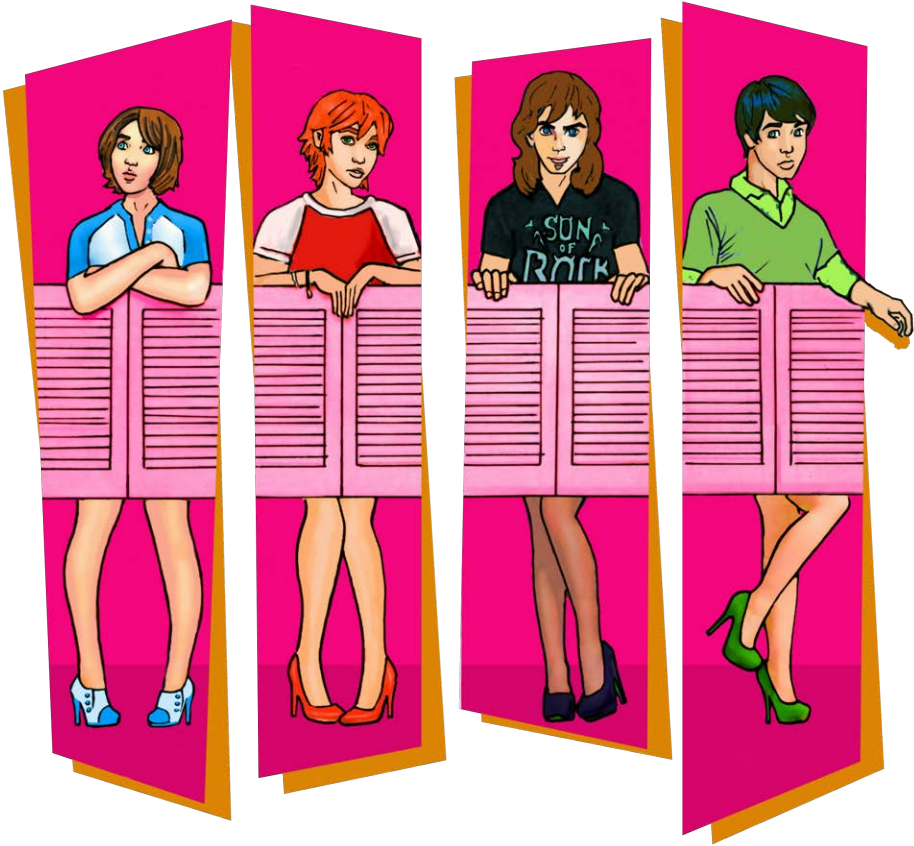
Needless to say, the duo turned quite a few heads as they strolled into the school early the next morning. The new girls walked through the commons like they had nothing to be ashamed of, and Jamie was quickly becoming convinced she didn't. She looked stunning, having donned a blue and white horizontal striped dress along with a denim jacket. She teetered along in her cork wedges, looking like she was born in them.

Frankie scurried off, while Jamie waited patiently by the gym. After a short while, Bret walked out, just finishing his morning run. He wasn't really a jock, and was actually quite small, but he did his best to keep in shape, to keep his pretty boy image going.

"What do you want, faggot?" he spat at Jamie. "I see you're wearing that shit here now."

"Why do you have to be so mean?" Jamie said, with a flirty cutesy little girl voice. "I just wanted to thank you for outing me."

"Me?" Bret said, taken aback. "What are you talking about?"



“That photo that got texted to everyone. It could have only come from someone who had an interest in taking pics of girls at the mall.” Jamie had put the pieces together. “Or did you forget we even had that conversation?”

“No way, man, that wasn’t me. I didn’t do it,” Bret said. “Besides, I’d like to see you prove it.”

Bingo. That was the admission Jamie wanted to hear. “Oh, I don’t want to get you in trouble. I wanted to thank you! Now I can be my pretty little self at school. I must do *something* to repay you.”

Bret looked dumbfounded, as Jamie stood there, absent-mindedly twirling her hair. She was practically begging to be taken advantage of. “What do you mean?” He asked.

Confidently, Jamie approached him and whispered into his ear. “Maybe a BJ will suffice?” she said, before kissing him firmly on the mouth. Bret was dumbfounded. She took his hand and led him back into the girl’s locker room. While there was no sexual thrill from the kiss, Jamie definitely enjoyed the

power she had over this stupid sap. He knew she wasn't a real girl, and yet he was almost completely powerless to fight the urge to receive a blowjob from a blond bimbo. He dutifully followed along to the back where Jamie pulled Bret's shirt over his head, and then undid his pants...

...Just as Frankie came from around the corner, punching Bret square in the stomach with all her strength! Albeit dressed more effeminately, Frankie was still the same hard-ass who had terrorized the school not that long ago. By the time Bret caught his breath, he had already been tied to the bench, he had a pair of silky pink panties on, and the duo of girlfriends was coating him in depilatory cream.

Frankie held his head still, while Jamie started tweezing his eyebrows into near nonexistence. Jamie then worked her makeup magic, starting on his hair. She left much of the hair's front combed forward, and then trimmed it into straight cut bangs resting at just above his eyes. After a fair amount of work with a curling iron, and a teasing brush, his blond locks were two of the biggest curliest pigtails one could imagine. After Jamie secured a large pink bow in front of the left pigtail, Frankie finally released her captive's head, allowing Jamie to step back, and survey her work. Once Bret was able to look around he realized that Frankie was standing off to the side, shooting the whole thing with a phone.

"What the hell did you sissy faggots do to me?" he screamed, struggling to escape despite the obvious futility.

"You've got two choices," Frankie said. "You can either stay here, and wait to be found before gym class, by which point we will have circulated the video of you following this 'sissy faggot' for a romantic encounter. Ending with two girlie boys making you their bitch... Literally... Or you can put on the outfit we brought for you, walk to class and tell anyone who asks that you realized the courage these two have, that you've discovered something new about yourself and you'll be dressing this way from now on. If you deviate from that at all, this video gets out. What's it going to be... *Brittany?*"

Jamie was impressed by Frankie's ruthlessness, but kept a stern face as she glared at the helpless young'n before her. After a few moments visibly fighting his emotions, Bret spoke.

"You'll never spread the tape?" He asked. The three nodded. "And you'll never tell anyone that I was going to let Jamie suck my dick?"

"If you can call it that," Frankie said, still brimming with rage.

"...Alright, fine. Give me the damn clothes."

Out of the bathroom walked three girls. The two who'd garnished so much attention in the morning, and a new one. She was definitely a girly-girl, wearing a pair of pink pumps, a white pleated miniskirt, and a pink crop top angora sweater, which as Frankie put it, showed off that flat tummy that she'd been



working so hard to keep. With the pigtails, the bow, the white plastic hoop earrings dangling from her ears, the heavily padded bra, and the large perfectly painted glossy DSL lips that looked irresistibly kissable, she was going to turn more than her fair share of heads. She slung her pink patterned purse over her shoulder, and begrudgingly broke away from the group and headed towards her homeroom class.

“Have a nice day Brittany!” Jamie yelled loudly, drawing the attention of everyone in the halls.

"She's going to break a lot of hearts in that outfit." Frankie said, laughing to the point of near tears.

"You should see what I have for her tomorrow." Jamie said. "She's going to wear a lot more pink than I do, and I can't wait to see just how big I can get that hair."



"Where's James?" Melody asked as they were sitting down for dinner. She had just arrived, and everyone was waiting to tuck into a leg of lamb that Carla had spent most of the day making.

Melody's mom looked a little annoyed. "Oh, Jamie was called into work to cover for another girl who became sick. They really work her hard, the poor thing."

"'Jamie?'" Melody asked. "'She?'" You sound like you already think of him as a girl."

"A mother knows," Mrs. Sanders said. "Besides, It's just easier for me to keep straight," she said with a shrug.

The door from the kitchen opened and out came Carla, in a new red dress with a knee-length ball gown skirt, with short cuffed sleeves and a turn-down v-neck collar. "Bon Appétit!" she chimed as she laid down the steaming main course in the middle of the table. She discarded her oven mitts and sat down beside Melody.

"Oh, that looks simply delicious, Carla," Mrs. Sanders praised. "How did you get it to caramelize so well?"

"I was hoping you would ask, Helen!" Carla replied. "You just have to keep brushing the jus on as it cooks so it never gets the chance to burn."

"Oh that smells so good!" James said as he strutted into the room. "I'll be back by eleven."

"What in the...?" Melody said, as her fork dropped from her hand. She hadn't seen James in a few days, as she had been busy at her new job. "What the hell?"

"Oh, hi, sis!" James said with a wide smile, noticing Melody at the table. "Did mom tell you? I have to pick up a shift."

Jamie was dressed in a mod green dress that showed off his long, lean legs, the hem at the knees. He wore a crazy variety of necklaces that loudly jangled whenever she moved. He had a pair of saucy five-inch spike pumps on his feet, and big matching hoop earrings dangling from his ears. His bouncy blond hair was impeccable, and his face was made up with strong red lips and thick black

mascara.

“Are you working at the store or picking up men at a swingin’ jazz club?” Melody asked.

“Very funny! It’s the latest fashion!” Jamie replied. “Hey, once you’re done eating, why don’t you come by Jillington’s? We’re having a great sale. 30% selected women’s separates plus men’s jeans and tees. It’s now through tomorrow, only at Jillington’s The place to fill up on fashion!”

“Uh, I guess...” Melody searched for the right answer. “...Maybe?”

“Thanks! You know, there’s always time to catch up on the latest looks, Mel! You have to come by Jillington’s and let me personally guide you through our amazing selection of practical clothes for the working girl! It’s all at Jillington’s, the place...”

Melody cut him off. “The place to fill up on fashion, I know. Are you all right, James? You don’t seem like yourself.”

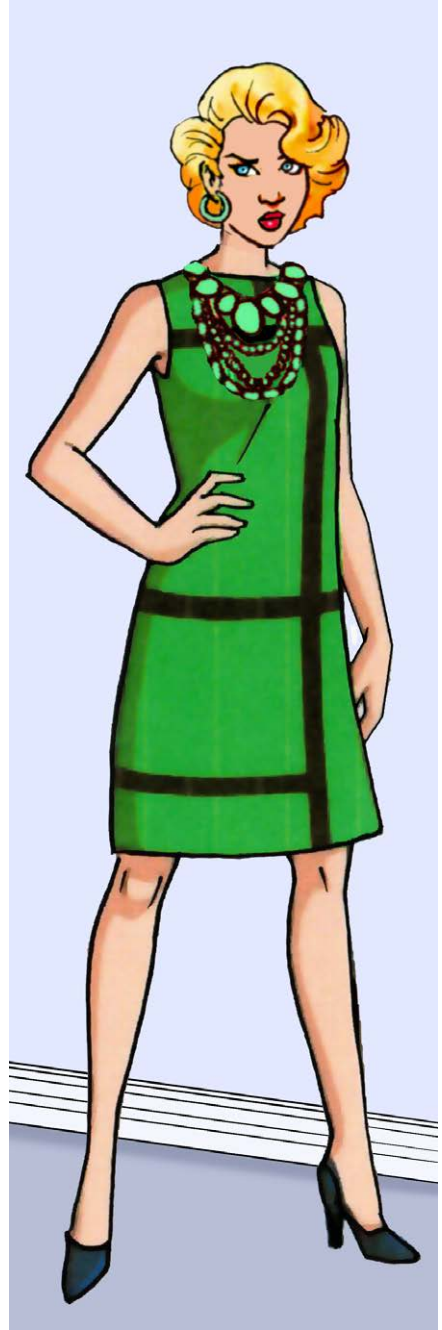
“It’s the new me!” Jamie proclaimed, doing a little spin. “Get used to it! I’m having a great time at work! I’m have such fulfilling interactions with our guests and giving great customer service! I really found something I love!”

“Does this sound familiar?” Melody cleared her throat. “*‘That store and that mall are symbolic of everything I hate in life.’ Or, my favorite, ‘It’s like their lives are just a black hole of despair and they keep stuffing it full of clothes to fill the emptiness, never to find it.’*”

“That was so last month,” Jamie replied with a giggle.

James looked at the slim sliver watch on the underside of his wrist. “But I have to get going. Sorry to run!” He said. “Save me some lamb.”

“Sure thing sweetie!” Carla said.



"After all, I'd hate to ruin your day's work, Carla, you happy homemaker you." Jamie winked at Carla to let her know that he was well aware of how much he was enjoying this.

"May I... See you in the kitchen for a sec, Jamie, dear?" Carla said, honey practically dripping from the sweet tone in her voice.

"What is it?" Jamie asked when they got to the kitchen counter. "Is my hair okay?"

Carla used her forearm to pin Jamie up against the fridge with a thud. "Knock it off!" Carla growled in a whisper. "I know that *you* know I'm enjoying this, okay? But Melody believes she's punishing me, and as long as she thinks I'm hating this, she'll keep me in dresses! So don't blow this for me!"

"Oh... Uh..." Jamie struggled to find the words. "What?"

"I've been crossdressing since I was a five year old! I've kept it secret for years! Being forced to dress up in vintage dresses, tottering around in a kitchen, cleaning and being the perfect fifties housewife is a freaking dream come true! If you ruin it, I swear to God I'll snap you like a twig!"

Carla released her prisoner and Jamie took a second to try and get her breath back.

"Do we have an understanding?" Carla growled.

All Jamie could do was nod in agreement.

"Okay, does anyone need a refill?" Carla sang, returning to the kitchen with a pitcher of lemonade.

Jamie trailed her slowly as she was still digesting the situation. "Okay, well, I'll be going, then!" she said, finding her chipper tone again. "Remember, our winter sale-a-thon is coming up next week! Plan accordingly!" And she was off.

Melody looked at her mother, who looked at Carla, who looked at Melody.

"I think that place has broken her brain," Melody said.

Mrs. Sanders chewed her food before she spoke. "She's been running the store training videos endlessly on her computer. I do wish she'd get some rest."

"Well, I'm happy for her," Carla said with a bright smile. "She looks so carefree. What do you think, Helen?"

"Less talking and more food, Carla, sweetie."



The week went on as smoothly as could be expected, with Brittany and her overly feminine outfits garnering most of the attention. Eventually the new

girls became a part of the scenery, and were less and less interesting as time went by. Before Jamie knew it, Friday was here, and it was payday.

“Should I take this as your notice?” Pamela asked, as she handed Jamie the check. “There's enough there to get you anything you could ever need from a men's store.”

“Actually, I think I'm going to buy a few things for the family. They've been so supportive – especially my sister. She's been way too good to me, and it's time I returned the favor. There's always the next check.”

“Can't say I'm not happy you're staying. Oh, could you go see what that woman needs?”



Jamie walked over to her department, and saw a middle school age boy snapping and cussing at his mother. She approached her and asked, "Can I help you?"

"I don't know, maybe." the exasperated woman responded. "I've been all over this mall to get him some new things, and he didn't see anything he liked. He's just been showing his rear ever since, and I've been searching this store top to bottom trying to find anything that will quiet him down. Do you think you can help me?"

Jamie was just about to let her know that they didn't carry men's clothing, but instead she took a long look at the young boy, who was way too old to be throwing such a temper tantrum. His chin length hair was going to look so cute in an auburn shade, with a little wave to it, and Jamie knew just the perfect floral print cap sleeved dress that was going to hang from his slender body in just the right way. "Yes ma'am. I am absolutely sure I can help you."

"There's always the next check... Then I can definitely get those Jimmy Choo's I've had my eyes on."



The light peeked through the blinds of Jamie Sanders' apartment, as the sun rose across the horizon. It was a new day and it was time to get up and face it.

She rolled over in bed, trying not to wake her slumbering mate. She wasn't quite successful, as the girl stirred partially to life. "Is it time to get up?" She asked Jamie.

Jamie patted her on the thigh. "You can stay in bed, sweetie. You don't need to get up yet."

"Mrfgood."

Jamie pulled on a silk robe and tied it around her thin waist as she padded into the kitchen. It was nice and modern, as the apartment building was almost brand new. She had just moved in, glad to finally have a place that was so close to the Fair Oaks Mall and her job. In fact, it was just beyond the edge of the mall parking lot.

Jamie started the coffee machine and decided on a shower to begin the day. As she got the water running in the bathroom, she disrobed, exposing her nearly perfect female body. Dieting, working out and the assistance of hormone therapy had done wonders for the former boy. Unless you had medical clearance to check, no one would have ever guessed that Jamie was anything but the gorgeous, well-endowed blonde woman she now was.

"Bimbo looks, brunette brains," was her motto.

As she bent over the sink to check her fresh and feminine face in the mirror, she was grabbed from behind as her lover started to play with Jamie's ample chest. She tried to swat away her darling's hands. "I said you didn't need to get up, Frankie."

"Too late," Frankie said. "I can never sleep once you run the shower anyway. Did you start the coffee?"

Jamie kissed her girlfriend on the cheek. "Yes, honey."

"Good girl."

It had been four years since they had been in high school, and Jamie hadn't waited a minute before beginning hormone therapy and her transition. Frankie decided to do the very same thing, and they wound up sharing the same doctors and therapists. After a couple of years of trying to find the 'right' person, dating several women who didn't quite understand the situation, and spending so much time together, Jamie and Frankie just kind of fell into having a relationship.



Neither of them regretted it. Jamie wasn't sure if the girl in him was in love with the boy inside Frankie, or if it was the boy inside Jamie that was in love with the girl who was Frankie, but somehow it all worked. Jamie knew that she and Frankie, the bully who had made his life miserable for years, were a great couple, in and out of the bedroom. It was a matter of time before marriage.

"Mrs. Jamie Sanders-Bates," she said to herself, as she practiced the name she would eventually have.

After an hour doing her face and hair, Jamie surrendered the bathroom to her girlfriend and dressed for work. Wandering into her oversized walk-in closet filled with the best Jillington's had to offer, she took the better part of twenty minutes to decide what to wear. She selected an embroidered white blouse and maroon blazer atop a pair of charcoal grey short shorts and black wedges. She wrapped a charcoal grey scarf around her neck and grabbed her trusty Louis Vuitton bag.

"I'll see you at the mall!" Jamie said as she rapped her knuckles on the bathroom door.

"See ya! Lunch at one!" Frankie called back. She was the manager of X-Zone, the alternative clothing store, and they didn't need her to be there until a few minutes before they opened at nine.

But for Jamie, it was a different story. She jumped in the car and drove the few hundred feet from her apartment building to the front entrance to Fair Oaks. She had to arrive in style, and walking across the tarmac was not stylish. She parked and then fished out her name tag: "Jamie Sanders, Jillington's Store Manager."

Pamela had been promoted three years ago and was working at corporate. After a few short-term fill-in managers, Jamie was given the Store Manager title, even if she was the youngest manager in the chain. She hadn't let them down either, as her store was top in sales per square foot and tops in customer satisfaction.

"Hello, Miss Sanders!" said the employees waiting for her to arrive.

"Good morning, ladies!" Jamie said with a smile.

"Brianna, do you have my calendar ready?"

"Yes, Ma'am!" said the blond girl.

"Trianna, I need HR to have their candidate list for the housewares department done by noon. No excuses."

"Yes, Ma'am!" said the other blonde girl. They still dressed and looked alike, even though they were Jamie's personal assistants now, not sales girls.

"And Brittany, make sure the signage is up to date in activewear."

"Yes, Ma'am!" Brittany replied. She, too, was dressed just as Brianna and

Trianna. In fact, after Jamie had arranged for Brittany to get a job at the store, the new girl had gradually become best friends with Brianna and Trianna and they had become inseparable from each other – and indistinguishable from each other as well.

Brittany had fallen into the same feminine trap as Jamie, Frankie and Carla had: forced into dresses and then too addicted to get out of them.

As for Carla, yes, she too was still in dresses and heels. Further, she also began taking hormones and had started to naturally fill out her extensive collection of vintage shirtwaist dresses. Carla had taken over running the household from Jamie's mother, who was happy to let those responsibilities go. She got a new job running a craft store in the university district and was far too busy to do much else. Carla and Melody moved in full-time.

So Carla ran the house like a reincarnation of Donna Reed, and was as happy as a person could be. Jamie only dropped in once and a while for a dinner, as she had her own friends and social life now. But when she did drop by, she couldn't help but notice how the dynamic between Carla and Melody had changed dramatically.

Melody had grown quite accustomed to having a second mother to dote on her all day long, and if she still believed she was punishing her ex-boyfriend, she certainly was in no mood to stop it. They were no longer a couple, as she had started to sporadically date other men, and Carla was far too in love with her new life to even care.

Maybe it was only Jamie who noticed it, but Melody had begun to regress a bit. She had left her job and was picking up part time work here and there. Mostly, she just sat around the house and let Carla look after her, cooking her meals, cleaning up after her, picking out her clothes and taking her out shopping.

Jamie wasn't too sure if that was healthy, but she deserved a little TLC after her years with the loutish Carl, even if she was becoming more and more Carla's daughter every day.

Jamie could certainly sympathize with that. She felt very maternal for all of her "girls." They were all adjusting so well! She hadn't lost one yet.

So on this Saturday, Jamie Sanders looked triumphantly over the



Fair Oaks Mall. Fate had led her here, a place she loved more than any on Earth. It felt like it was filling her soul every second she spent here. She and the mall were one.

Fair Oaks Mall just gave off the best vibes. It was all about dreams and fashion. So many dreams for so many young women. Maybe it was just fabric stitched in some sweatshop in China, but the burning desire to improve one's self through fashion made Jamie dizzy, with butterflies in her stomach. The building was full of stores showcasing the most exciting styles and fashions to the teenage girls who hopped from store to store all day long.

The whole place was a tribute to the beauty of chasing fashion. So much money, time and energy devoted to finding the perfect clothes. Style was about finding the truth inside, truth that could only be revealed by the right look. As far as Jamie was concerned, there was no better way to spend your time than figuring out which colors to wear and how long your hemlines should be, rather than getting muddled in the troubling world outside. It really did make her



crazy. The futility of life was never more acute to Jamie than when she was at the mall.

Her home.

The End



Titles by Sick Puppy Press

Sick Puppy Comics

Making Friends

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack. Three college students sign up for a six-month isolation experiment. Things start to get a little strange, and they begin to lose their masculinity day by day. Yet, they don't seem to even notice... Full Color Comic Book / 38 pages

The Pet Sitter

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack. Asked to look after a supermodel's pet for a while, James finds himself thrust out of his own apartment and into hers. Day by day, it seems like circumstances adapt James to become the resident of a supermodel's lifestyle. Full Color Comic Book / 29 pages

A Curious Curse

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack. When teen goth Brandyn gets his drivers' license, he thinks it's a ticket to adulthood. Unfortunately, he's already cashed a ticket in the opposite direction. Full Color Comic Book / 27 pages

Boys Will Be Girls

Story & Art by Fraylim, Script by KK, Ink & Color by Joe Six-Pack. The "Summer Blossom" camp welcomes anew group of young men. But although it may be an all-boys camp when they arrive, it's girls-only when they leave. Full Color Comic Book / 100 pages

Teens Transformed

She Made Me Into My Sister

"A Little Too Clever" by Joe Six-Pack. Wyatt wanted to help his girlfriend get revenge, but at what cost? As it turns out, a cost greater than any boy could have imagined. Book / 88 pages / 20 illustrations

Gone Girly for Good

"Big in Japan" by James J Craft. Mike and Ken were one-hit-wonder rock stars. Then they discovered they had fans in Japan, so they left to become famous. Then they discovered that the Japanese didn't know they were guys. Book / 77 pages / 26 illustrations

One Year in Tokyo

By James J Craft, illustrations by Kwon Lee Tran. Mickey is forced to spend a year with his father in Japan. However things often get confused when words get translated from English to Japanese, as Mickey soon finds out... Book / 87 pages / 20 illustrations

Students, Exchanged

"French Dupe" by Joe Six-Pack. Kelley Sue's convinced a French exchange student to disguise himself as a girl. What happens when she realizes he has no intention of returning back home? Book / 57 pages / 15 illustrations

He's a Valley Girl, Fer Sure

From the files of TGStories.com: "Corey Taylor's Big Bodacious Adventure" by Joe Six-Pack. For Corey, the only way he can get into college is to pretend to be a girl. But when does it stop being pretend? When he's cheerleader? A girlfriend? A beauty queen? Book / 78 pages / 17 illustrations

From Boys to Bridesmaids

"Always a Bridesmaid, Never a Groom" by James J Craft. Two spoiled and privileged boys are about to be put in their place by their new step-mother. And their place is by her side as her bridesmaids and daughters. Book / 77 Pages / 16 illustrations

Little Mis-ter Popular

"My Two Moms" by James J Craft, illustrations by rocketxpert. Thanks to his aunt's "Confidence Club," Leon will find a way to become popular, and to get over all his hang-ups... Including his masculinity. Book / 77 Pages / 17 illustrations

Bride to Be

By Joe Six-Pack. Derek and Cole grew up together as kids. One year, though, Cole has to start pitching in at the family wedding business. His life will never be the same. Book / 63 pages / 25 illustrations

Winning is Everything

"Costume Drama" by Joe Six-Pack. Seth made a funny little bet for Halloween. He needed to pull off the impersonation of a Cheerleader for a party. What's at stake? 100 million dollars and his manhood. Book / 215 pages / 37 illustrations

Tales of Transformation

He's the Wrong Girl

"Office Chemistry" by Joe Six-Pack. James had to fill in at the reception desk. Problem is, the business is a bio-genetics company. And all of the sudden the coffee tastes funny. Book / 53 pages / 14 illustrations

City Boy, Country Girl

By Joe Six-Pack. Richard's long-forgotten aunt is sick, and he goes to care for her. His calls back home leave his wife Janice confused and unsure about his return. So she goes to find him. But is there much left to be found? Book / 64 pages / 25 illustrations

Thames Greene

By James J Craft. Ira wanted something better for his family. A new start. But in Thames Greene, everyone's getting a new start, whether they want it or not. Book / 77 pages / 26 illustrations

Hiding in High Heels

"How Not to be a Sissy" By Joe Six-Pack. Vince was on the run from people who wanted their millions back. Howard was a friend with a funny little idea and a knack for making subliminal CDs. Mini-Pix / 48 pages / 15 illustrations

A Blessing in Disguise

By KK, illustrations by Kannel. Jay was a witness to a murder, and now he's the target of a vicious criminal. Resorting to a female disguise, he becomes trapped with no way out. Book / 84 pages / 16 illustrations

I'm Your Dolly

"Barbie-in-a-Box" By Joe Six-Pack. Tyler wasn't much of a boyfriend anymore. Jessica wanted to throw him out, but then a better idea came to her, in the form of the Barbie-in-a-Box service. Tyler better get used to pink. Book / 126 pages / 26 illustrations

His Life as a Trophy Wife

"The Puppy Mill" by Joe Six-Pack. Nick had a great life, but then it evaporated. Now he's down on his luck. In steps a wealthy executive willing to pay him handsomely to pretend to be his wife. What can it hurt? Book / 210 pages / 16 illustrations

Male Monday, Girl Friday

"Hey, Cutie!" by James J Craft. Daniel is going to be promoted from his average life to an exciting executive position. At least, that's what his bosses are telling him. They may not be telling him everything. Book / 58 pages / 20 illustrations

The Happiest Place on Earth

From the files of TGStories.com: "The Fairest One of All" By Joe Six-Pack. Will is a kid looking for a job. He gets one, performing as Snow White at a theme park. For Will, he doesn't suspect that playing the role and wearing the costume is slowly changing him, day by day. Book / 51 pages / 21 illustrations

Hello, Nurse

From the files of TGStories.com: "Quality Health Care" Dane is filling in as a nurse for his pal Jimmy at his new office. Although both are doctors, Dane begins to take to his new role as a nurse. Soon, he feels compelled to be the ideal nurse. Book / 44 pages / 15 illustrations

My Boss, The Bimbo

"If I Were a Betting (Wo)Man" By James J Craft, illustrations by blackshirtboy. CEO Lucas has a superiority complex. When his long-suffering secretary is able to feed into Lucas' competitive nature, he'll make any bet to prove his dominance over women. Book / 38 pages / 10 illustrations

He's the Girl They Want

"Rallies" by Joe Six-Pack. Spencer has a great new executive job in the food service industry, but first he's got to learn the ropes of the business by waiting on tables. He just doesn't quite fit in with the cheerleader theme. Yet. Book / 63 pages / 22 illustrations

Demoted and Degraded

"Trixie the Secretary" by Angela J. Cindy didn't much like Tom Jones attitude and his advances, so when she has the opportunity to help take the wind out of his sails, she takes it. But she had no idea that it was all designed to make Tom into Trixie the secretary. Book / 87 pages / 17 illustrations

I, Candy

"Sissy Sweets" by James J Craft, illustrations by rocketxpert. Inheriting his family's bakery requires this young man to become the new face of the business. A female face. Book / 45 pages / 15 illustrations

Boyz II Girlz

"The Making of the Ballroom Brats" by Joe Six-Pack. The Ballroom Brats become the newest worldwide celebrity sensation. How did four unsuspecting guys at a fast food joint become the hottest girl group in music? Book / 113 pages / 34 illustrations

His Strangest Desire

"Employee of the Month" by Joe Six-Pack. Mick is declared Employee of the Month, and he's going to find himself hurtling headlong into facing his weirdest inner desire. Book / 59 pages / 19 illustrations

Hard Time or High Heels

"I'm Turning into My Mother" by James J Craft, illustrations by rocketxpert. Colby got deep into debt to a local gangster. Before long, he's on the arm of that very same gangster as his reluctant girlfriend. Book / 75 pages / 20 illustrations

Seriously Skirted

"The Show Piece" by KK. Illustrations by Joe Six-Pack. Mel finds work at a clinic as a secretary. He slowly begins to fit to role. Book / 75 pages / 19 illustrations

Stories of the Supernatural

A Change for the Better

"Do-Overs" by Joe Six-Pack. Evan wants a chance to do over his biggest mistake. He gets the chance, but he keeps wanting his new life to be a little bit better than the last. Book / 59 pages / 18 color illustrations

Changed and Rearranged

"Wrongs Make Right" By Joe Six-Pack. Chris and Matt were rivals. Then, Matt decided to watch everyone how smart he truly was by impersonating a teacher. But the disguise becomes more and more real, much to Chris' dismay. Book / 74 pages / 19 illustrations

From Pals to Gals

From the files of TGStories.com: "Mandate of the People" By Joe Six-Pack. Teens Jeremy and Stewart are good friends, but a bit thick in the noggin. When they jokingly nominate each other for Prom Queen, they slowly become the perfect candidates, thanks to some magic. Book / 45 pages / 16 illustrations

Crossed Fiction

If the Shoes Fit

"Hand Me Downs" By KK, illustrations by Fraylim. Sydney is a teen who is just trying to make it through the summer with no money. He finds himself wearing hand-me-downs from his sister, and that takes his life in a whole new direction. Book / 98 pages / 30 illustrations

Sisters for the Summer

"Camp Counseling" By Joe Six-Pack. Brock McCade always thought of himself as a real man, or at least he would be one, someday. After summer camp, he's no longer so sure. Book / 76 pages / 17 illustrations

They're the Girls for the Job

"Peace and Harmony" By James J Craft. Illustrations by blackshirtboy. Pete and Harmon need jobs bad. How far would they have to go to get them? Book / 64 pages / 19 illustrations

Blondie's Lost Summer

By KK. Illustrations by Fraylim. Carl's dream summer was about to become three months of dresses, heels and makeup. Book / 159 pages / 48 illustrations

Blondie's Lost Year

By KK. Illustrations by Fraylim. Book Two in the Blondie Series. Carl's trip to Florida has been horrible enough, trapped in dresses and makeup. Now, high school has presented a whole new level of humiliation for him. Book / 221 pages / 52 illustrations

I Never Wanted to be a Woman

"Politically Corrected" By Cheryl Lynn. Illustrations by Joe Six-Pack. Michael's politically active mother has decided she's going to make her hippie son over into the daughter she always wanted. Book / 64 pages / 19 illustrations

Seriously Sissified

A Family Femmed

"The Femmed Family Robinson" by James J. Craft & Cheryl Lynn, illustrations by Sortimid. The Robinson boys all had dreams of their own, once. Now they have new ones, thanks to their stepmother. Book / 96 pages / 29 color illustrations

Auntie's Girl Time

By Cheryl Lynn. David was just a young teenage boy who wanted all the things in life a man could look forward to. His aunt, though, is going to make sure he never gets them. Book / 79 pages / 20 illustrations

Revenge of the Cheerleaders

"Pansy Cheers" By Angela J. Patrick Sears was a football player trying to sleep with every cheerleader at his small college. He'd have to pay for his conquests. Book / 116 pages / 19 illustrations

He's Got His Mind Made Up

By James J. Craft. Illustrations by kinkyrocket.

Corey has just a sliver of a chance to get into college, but that chance involves becoming his stepmother's maid. And she wants him to fit both the role and the dress. Book / 68 pages / 16 illustrations

Web Classics Revisited

Two Forms of ID

By Joe Six-Pack. Harvey had the unusual ability to convincingly imitate a teenage girl. In desperation, he has to use that talent to make some money. But when is enough enough? Paperback / 194 pages / text only



Reading is Fun de Mental!