

Staying in Vegas: Opening Bets



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By Maxwell Avoi

Smashwords Edition

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“I’m afraid you’ll have to forgive me. My lovely assistant is out sick tonight, so I’m operating without Annette!”

The audience stared at him, and Alex and his buddies barely resisted the urge to boo the magician off the stage. They were in too good a mood to mess with the poor guy; the five of them arrived in Vegas just hours before to celebrate Nate’s new job and they were going to do it right. No one wanted to think about it, but it was possible that this could be the last time they’d ever get together again for a party now that they were out of college. They were already drunk, having started almost as soon as they’d rolled in the door, and after a huge dinner at a buffet they’d decided to take in a show.

It hadn’t turned out to be a very good show so far. The singer was okay and the dancing girls behind him were hot, but the partiers weren’t that interested in listening to a guy sing about love. They’d cheered the girls loudly enough that they’d managed to draw some added attention from the guys posted by the door. So far no one had tried to throw them out or anything but Alex had quieted everyone down to make sure that didn’t happen. They’d gone back to drinking and waiting for the next act.

The Amazing Jeremiah was the one who was currently boring the hell out of the party. They groaned at the Annette joke and the magician just chuckled and raised his hands as if in surrender. “All right, all right, terrible joke that I stole from Leslie Neilson. But seriously, folks, what’s a magician without a lovely assistant, am I right?”

They loudly affirmed that he was totally correct, with a side order of “get off the stage!” from someone in the back. Jeremiah gave a practiced smile. “In that case, I’m going to need a volunteer to help me out!”

Rick immediately stood and started for the stage. Alex groaned to himself but the others laughed. Rick was tall and broad and dark, and he was always the first one in whenever there was something interesting to do. Alex’s groan was because Rick was also prone to taking things too far; if there was a way to escalate a situation to dangerous levels Rick would be the one to find it. Alex made mental preparations for he and his friends being thrown out of the casino but he didn’t try to stop Rick. It wasn’t a bad situation; whatever was about to

happen would be a great story later on.

Rick stepped up onto the stage and The Amazing Jeremiah came forward to greet him. Up close, the magician showed his age; he was developing a paunch, and his last dye job was about two weeks ago. He had yellowing eyes and was sweating under the lights. Rick judged him as a man who wasn't going to last a lot longer. But that wasn't his concern; the magician was a grown man, after all. If he wanted to be up here when he was obviously sick, that was his concern.

“And what's your name, sir?” said The Amazing Jeremiah, all smiles in spite of the sweat and slightly labored breathing.

“Rick.” Rick grinned and waved at the audience. The others in his party cheered.

“Nice to meet you, Rick. Wouldn't you agree that a magician like me needs the help of a lovely assistant?”

“Absolutely.” Rick thought the man needed all the help he could get, but he held his peace for now.

The Amazing Jeremiah chuckled. “Thank you for your candid response, sir. Now! I need your help getting such a lovely assistant. Are you game, Rick?”

“Sure, I'll help.” Rick nodded.

“Wonderful. A big round of applause for Rick!” The Amazing Jeremiah spread his arms to the crowd, who gave a half-hearted round. Nate's party cheered again. Rick waved and laughed.

“Now please come this way.” The Amazing Jeremiah led Rick to a small stand that supported a curtain just big enough to hide one person from the audience. “Rick, please show the audience that there's nothing funny about the curtain. Do as you will!”

Rick stepped forward, a little hesitant, but he opened the curtain and swished it back and forth, even pulling it off of its rod to the general delight of the audience. After he put it back up he went back to The Amazing Jeremiah and said, “Looks like a curtain to me.”

“Quite right, quite right!” the magician chirped. “Now, if you would be so kind,

please stand behind the curtain while I say the incantation that will allow you to help me find a lovely assistant?”

Rick shrugged and went behind the curtain, laughing and pointing at his party the whole time. They yowled back until Alex caught the guard eyeing them again and he shut the guys up.

The Amazing Jeremiah spoke a few words that penetrated the noise in the theater. They hurt the ears and sounded painful to say. He started waving his arms in strange patterns at the same time, and the audience watched in rapt silence. As his display went on, he started to gasp a lot more and began to look pasty even under his makeup. He spoke a few more words and then made a pained face before pressing his hand to his chest and keeling over.

The audience quieted further but now it was the breathless hush of a group of people witnessing a potential tragedy. Attendants for the theater rushed in from both sides and closed the curtain. Nate’s party immediately stood and headed for the side door, wanting to see if Rick was all right. Warren reached for the door and was almost bowled over when it burst open. A spectacular blond woman in high heels and a sparkly one-piece suit ran into him and bounced off, coming to rest at the foot of the stairs. Her expression was a combination of shock and relief for a moment before it melted into terror.

“Warren!” she cried. “What the fuck happened out there?”

Warren blinked at her. Alex and Edward blinked at him while Nate gawked openly at the fallen woman’s legs. Alex had to admit that they were incredible legs, but there were priorities.

“I’m sorry, do I know you?” said Warren.

Alex punched him lightly in the shoulder. “Dude. Rick probably pointed us out so that they could pick us out of the audience for something. Let’s go find him and get the hell out of here.”

“You found him!” the blond cried. “I am Rick!”

Now was the time for all the guys to stare at her, in combined attraction and wariness. She looked totally serious, which made a couple of the guys step back a pace. She was hot, sure, but nobody wanted to attract the crazy.

Warren was still in the lead thanks to having reached the door first. “Yeah, lady, okay, but we have to get our friend.” He held a hand out to help her up but she just glared at him.

“I am Rick, you fucktard. I was up on stage and he was doing something to me when he collapsed, and now I’m like this. Actually, you know what...” She reached up and took Warren’s hand, hauled herself to her feet, and stormed back up the stairs. Her ass in motion was worthy of a monument of some kind.

She headed for the stage and the guys followed her. They kept their distance, not wanting to get too close to an angry crazy chick, and therefore they heard her screeching before they saw her yelling at The Amazing Jeremiah’s attendants. “I don’t give a fuck if he’s dying!” she yelled. “He has to wake up and turn me back to normal!”

When she reared back to kick the magician, Nate stepped forward and carefully pulled back on her raised leg. She stumbled to one knee and swore again. Alex stared, recognizing both the kick and the counter. “Nate, get her out of here,” he said, his tone brooking no argument.

Nate grabbed the woman by the shoulder and pulled her away from the scene just as the EMTs arrived. She was off-balance, easy to maneuver, and Nate wasn’t exactly upset about having his hands on a girl like her. She swore some more as they went. The guys followed them offstage and down the stairs.

Alex nodded to a deserted table that was out of the way and Nate plunked the angry woman in one of the chairs. Warren got in her face and said, “What the hell happened up there? Where’s our friend?”

“I don’t know how many ways to tell you this, but I’m Rick! Why won’t you guys listen to me?” She looked torn between anger and bursting into tears.

Alex said, “I believe you.”

Nate nodded. “Me too.”

Edward and Warren stared at the other two guys. “What are you talking about?” said Edward. “Rick’s a guy. She is extremely not a guy.”

The woman gave him the finger, and Alex held up his hand before the situation

could degenerate further. “Hang on, hang on. Have either of you guys ever been in a fight with Rick?”

Warren and Edward shook their heads, looking perplexed. Alex nodded and said, “Well I have, and so has Nate, and I’m telling you, Rick is all about kicking someone when they’re down. And Nate is all about stopping him. We both recognized what she was planning on doing up there to that magician, and Nate stopped her without thinking about it. I don’t understand how it happened, but I’m thinking it’s possible that she might be telling the truth. Okay, lady, tell us something only Rick would know.”

She glared at Alex for a few seconds before turning to Nate and sneering. “Two words. Dick wart.”

Nate went pale and worked his mouth, trying to get something to come out. Alex said, “I don’t want to know. But is that good enough evidence for you, Nate?”

“You...you bitch!” said Nate.

Alex rolled his eyes. “Okay, that’ll do for Nate. What about me?”

She turned an evil grin in his direction and said, “There was that whole thing where you woke up naked in the field that one time, remember? And you had to walk home, and it was like a mile away? What was her name again, Dandelion? Yeah, she said to call her Dandy Dee. What a slut.”

It was Alex’s turn to try to speak while the others stared at him, Warren and Edward in confusion and Nate with a gratified expression. Finally Alex said, “It’s Rick. What the fuck, dude? What happened?”

“Wait,” said Warren. “You’re convinced by her talking about dick warts and girls named Dandy?”

Nate said, “No one else knew. Until now. Fucker.”

“Same with me,” said Alex. “Now tell us what happened, Rick.”

“What kind of dick wart?” said Edward.

“Bite me,” said Nate.

“Will you guys shut the fuck up?” said Alex.

“Look, I went up there to volunteer. You saw me do that,” said Rick. The others nodded reluctantly and she went on. “So he put be behind that curtain and started saying that weird shit, and I got really dizzy but I couldn’t move.”

“That makes no sense,” said Warren.

“Bite me. It’s how it was. And then he keeled over and I could move again. And when I could move again, I was like this. That loser magician did this to me! Turned me into...this!”

Alex was about to answer when they were interrupted by the sight of the EMTs wheeling a stretcher to the edge of the stage. They lifted it down to the main floor. The Amazing Jeremiah wasn’t entirely covered but he didn’t look ready to run a marathon. One of the EMTs carried an IV bag high in the air as the other two hurried the magician out the front door. One of the attendants went to the front of the stage and said, “Sorry folks, looks like The Amazing Jeremiah has had a bit of an accident. I’m told that he’s going to be just fine, and the show will go on.” She swept the curtains open again, letting a comedian out onto the stage.

Nate’s party ignored him. “What do we do?” said Nate.

The woman that had been tentatively identified as Rick stood up. “I know what the fuck to do. We’re gonna follow his ass to the hospital so he can cure me.”

“You sure?” said Edward, looking Rick up and down. “It’s not like you’re sick. You look better than ever, in fact.”

Rick invited Edward to do something anatomically improbable, and she fell in as the guys headed for the door.

“This sucks,” she said, glaring at either the ground or her small, beautifully shaped tits, it was hard to be sure. “I need more to wear than just this. Everyone’s staring at me.”

“Yeah, but at least you don’t look like you normally do,” said Warren. “Then they’d be throwing up.”

“Die in a fire. This shit isn’t funny.”

Alex tried to be the peacekeeper again. “You’re right. Guys, lay off. Let’s head back to the hotel to find something for Rick to wear, and then to the hospital.”

“No, screw that, buy something from the gift shop. I don’t want to lose track of that bastard,” said Rick.

They piled into the car they’d rented, which was a different prospect now that Rick was in such a new and delightful form. They finally decided to let her sit in the passenger seat while Alex drove, and the other three squeezed into the backseat.

The ambulance belonged to St. Joseph hospital, and they headed after dialing it up on Nate's GPS. At Rick’s frantic insistence they drove into the ambulance entrance and were immediately kicked out with an admonishment to not do that. They also learned that The Amazing Jeremiah would take a little while to process, and was probably going into surgery soon.

Alex found a parking spot and the four guys and one lovely assistant trooped into the visitor’s entrance. There as a gift shop immediately to the right and Rick turned to the others. “I need some money for clothes. Whatever he did to me got rid of my wallet too.”

They shrugged and chipped in, getting enough together to buy Rick a t-shirt with the hospital’s logo of a flying monk on it. They would have gotten more for her, but that was all the shop sold in terms of clothing. The guys didn’t complain; Rick’s legs were amazing. Rick just stuck with trying to ignore their stares.

Rick introduced himself as Rikki, The Amazing Jeremiah’s niece, when they went to find out where the man was. The nurse at the station tried to get her to fill out the paperwork but she insisted that she didn’t know anything. It degenerated into an argument before Nate stepped in and bodily pulled “Rikki” from the counter to sit with the other guys. They'd learned that The Amazing Jeremiah was in surgery so there wasn’t anything they could do yet anyway.

Rikki sat with a huff and looked around, her arms crossed over her chest (not much of a feat; The Amazing Jeremiah had obviously been more into legs than boobs, and Rikki was pretty flat). She crossed her legs in front of her, inspecting herself for the first time. “This is pretty sick, and all, but DAMN I have great legs.”

“Be too bad to let them go, huh?” said Warren, grinning.

“Screw you. Hey, what happened to Edward?”

They looked around, noticing a certain lack of the quiet Edward for the first time. Alex shrugged, and Nate didn’t even look up from his phone. “Probably off getting something from the vending machines,” said Alex.

“Yeah, but he usually says something. Where the hell is he?”

Edward was tied to a bed. He blinked and looked around as he woke up, his head aching. He wanted to look around, but there was something restraining his head as well and he had to settle for what he could see just by moving his eyes. It wasn’t much; there was a bright light above him. He could hear someone moving around nearby, though. “Hwwgh?” he said. He worked his mouth, surprised to find that he was gagged.

“Ah, you’re awake!” said the owner of the restless feet Edward could hear moving around nearby. “Lovely, I had to check and make sure that I hadn’t damaged anything getting you down here. Now, how much is five and eight?”

Edward’s mind raced, mostly focusing on the problem of how the hell to get out of whatever was happening to him. Some tiny sense of self-preservation organized a few neurons and came up with, “Hrrheen?”

The voice laughed. “Correct! Oh, that’s a treat, he keeps knocking out the test subjects, but he was hitting them too hard! It’ll be wonderful to work with an unhurt brain!”

“AIN?” said Edward. Fuck.

“Yep! Oh, I’m sure you’re confused and upset now, but don’t worry! You’ll soon be seeing things differently, and you’ll find that your new frame of reference will be vastly improved. Now say goodnight!”

“Hghi?” said Edward, all that he managed to get out before a needle slipped into his arm and everything went black.

“No,” said Rikki, “You go look for him, I’m going to stay right here.” She leaned over and picked up a magazine that she’d already read and opened it with a huff.

Warren was worried about Edward; he’d vanished shortly after they’d gotten to the hospital and hadn’t been seen since. He’d tried to get the others organized into a search party and had been met with overwhelming apathy. They felt that they’d reached their weirdness limit for the day and that Edward, as a grown man, could take care of himself.

Finally Edward and Nate approached the desk. The nurse gave them a look that told them that whatever they wanted had better be fucking amazing and said, “What do you need now? Your friend’s uncle is still in surgery.”

“Oh, um, no, it’s about another friend,” said Warren.

“What about him?”

“We haven’t seen him in a while and, um, we were hoping that you could maybe page him here?”

She sighed and gave him a look that underlined her previous one. “Honey, we’re short staffed. We’ve been having a hard time keeping people lately, and night shift isn’t exactly a priority, so this needs to be the last thing for a while, okay? Tell that little girl with you the same thing or I’ll sedate both of you. Now who am I paging?”

Slightly subdued, Warren said, “His name’s Edward Riley.”

The nurse gave him a final punctuating look and paged Edward. They slunk back to the chairs and sat back down. Warren leaned over and said, “Hey Rick. Uh, Rikki. The nurse says that-“

“I heard,” she said. “It’s not my fault that they’re short-handed. Who lets a hospital get short-handed, anyway?”

“There, now let’s see if the anaesthetic is working yet...can you feel that? Ah, lovely. Now, Adam, please hand me the saw. We’ll have you set up very soon. Such a delight to finally be so close to the end!”

A huge hand passed a medical saw to another, smaller figure on Edward’s other side. Edward’s eyes were open to those widest point; he hadn’t heard anything from the direction of the huge hand before this moment, and now he heard something that didn’t reassure him: heavy breathing.

Then, on the other side, he heard something that he liked even less: the sound of the saw starting up.

“No, he’s out of surgery and in recovery, miss,” said the doctor. He was tall enough to look Rikki in the eye, which was good because she didn’t react well to men staring down at her. She displayed a certain lack of understanding when it came to men looking at her chest, as Alex’s swelling eye could attest.

“That’s fine, doc, but when do I get to see him? I’m, uh, worried about my uncle.”

He nodded, glancing down at the clipboard. “It shouldn’t be too long, but I’ll have the nurses give you a call when it’s time.” He failed to see the entire paragraph that the receptionist sent his way at that comment. “He’s going to be fine, just make sure that he gets enough rest. We’ll get you information on how to help him change his diet, and-“

“Okay, doc, okay, I’ll get that for my aunt, it’ll be awesome. Just let us know when we can visit him.” Rikki gave him a dangerous smile and the doctor decided that there were plenty of sick people in other rooms that he needed to help.

Rikki sat down again. She looked at the clock and then back at the magazine. She slammed it down on the table and said, “Where the fuck is Edward? Didn’t you guys page his ass?”

Warren looked over at the nurse’s station, and the woman there gave him a look that would have made a tiger back off. He shrugged at Rikki and said, “I guess he found a cute nurse? Or something?”

She made a disgusted noise. “Never could hold his liquor. Probably sleeping it off somewhere.”

“They said I was mad when I came up with this plan, you know,” said the man who was cutting into Edward’s skull. “‘It’ll never work!’ they said. ‘Stuff of old sci-fi!’ they said! ‘Tiny dick!’ she said! Well, who’s laughing now? You’re going to feel a little pinch, by the way, but don’t panic! Panic is what caused all the problems last time.”

Edward was already soaked in panic; it formed most of his world. The parts of the world that weren’t formed by the gag, the endless prattling of the man with the saw, or the sounds of deep breathing from the other side of the table where he lay. To be fair, those things were contributing to the panic.

“Hnop!” he cried, or tried to.

“Oh, it’ll be fine! Trust me, you’re going to love this once we get everything done. And don’t worry, it won’t hurt. I made sure of that.” The saw started up again and Edward felt a pressure on his head.

He wanted to thrash and struggle but his body wasn’t interested. It was on vacation thanks to whatever he’d been drugged with and was in no hurry to get back to work.

“Now remember, no panicking.”

Edward’s vision went first, just bam, gone. It was quickly joined by his sense of smell and then feeling, and then he was imprisoned in his own mind without any input of any kind. He seemed to float in limbo, with no sensations of any kind, as if he’d died.

The sudden return of feeling was as overwhelming as being struck by lightning, and then when he felt a movement inside his head and his eyes suddenly worked again he thought about crying. The movement continued and his other senses came back to life as it did. He didn’t know what had happened but he knew that he was no longer quite as restrained as he had been. When the movement stopped and he heard the psycho doctor step away for a moment, Edward found that he could move his head. He turned it slightly and looked to his left.

He saw himself lying on another table next to him, a stupid look on his face and the top half of his head missing.

This time, when the darkness came, it stayed for a while.

Alex jumped a little when he felt someone shaking his shoulder. He segued from a disturbing dream about Rikki to looking into Rikki's irritated face. "Hwuh?" he said, snapping his eyes away from her chest. It had been a much more impressive chest in his dreams.

"Wake up, loser. Quit looking at my tits. The doc said we can visit my uncle. You know. The Amazing Jeremiah." Her delicate lips twisted in a sneer when she said the words.

"Hey, you have to admit that he seems to know at least one real spell," said Alex. They hadn't been dwelling on the existence of real magic. Rikki's situation was plenty to distract them from that brain-burster, and Alex had allowed himself to dwell on her problem until he'd drifted into a dream that would have made Rikki attack immediately if she had known about it.

He stood and the little group followed the signs into the correct wing. The Amazing Jeremiah was in a room by himself, so they just walked in. The magician looked shrunken, lying in bed by himself with multiple tubes going into him and the sheet pulled up to his chin. He was asleep when they came in.

"Dammit. I should have asked if he was going to be able to talk," said Rikki. She sighed and approached the bed to shake the injured man's shoulder, and The Amazing Jeremiah groaned.

Nate jumped forward and slapped Rikki's hand away from the magician. "Holy shit, dude, you're gonna shake a tube loose or something!"

"Oh, fuck you. They tape everything in. I need him awake to take this spell off of me!"

The Amazing Jeremiah groaned again and his eyes opened. He looked around at the three guys and one woman, looking confused. "Hell am I?" he whispered.

“Hey! Hey fucker!” said Rikki, struggling against Nate’s grip. She dragged him over to the bed and leaned over into the magician’s line of sight.

The Amazing Jeremiah’s eyes widened and he gasped a few times. The machines beeped a little and then settled down as he got hold of himself. “Jessica?” he whispered.

“No. I’m not fucking Jessica. I’m the guy you turned into Jessica before you had a heart attack!” Rikki was almost screeching by this time. Alex went to close the door while the other two tried to get her to lower the volume.

“Shit,” whispered the magician. “So sorry.”

“I don’t care! Change me back!”

The Amazing Jeremiah shook his head a little. “Can’t now. Takes too much out. Of me.”

“You better figure out how to do it or I’ll take your fucking skull out of you!” said Rikki. Warren and Nate carried on restraining her.

“Rick!” said Alex. “Get the hell out of here. I’ll find out how to fix this, but you need to go wait somewhere else. Nate, Warren, take him.”

It took a little longer but the two guys managed to get Rikki out of there. She shook their hands off of her and slumped against the wall across the hall from The Amazing Jeremiah’s room. She took in a breath to start in on Nate and Warren when there was a rumbling boom from down the hall.

“What, are they shelling us?” said Nate. He headed down the hall to check to see what was going on. Warren followed but Rikki stayed right where she was, glaring at the magician's door.

A nurse’s station was at the intersection of the halls. The guys were surprised to find the place deserted but they didn’t get a chance to work out where everyone was. A roar echoed down the hallway, full of anger and pain, and the two of them looked down the hall to see if they could catch a glimpse of what on earth was going on.

They saw a hulking man running toward them. Neither of them had ever seen a

human as large as he was; he reminded Warren vaguely of Andre the Giant, but the huge man didn't have Andre's brutish features. His face, though set in an expression of utter rage, was classically handsome and topped with a thatch of blond hair. He was the source of the roaring.

He was chasing a nurse. Her eyes were wide and she appeared just as terrified as her pursuer was furious. Warren and Nate's eyes were drawn to her body in spite of everything; some women are built to be runners, with lean lines and meager curves, but she didn't fit any of that description. Her uniform was tight around outrageous curves, all of which were brought into thrashing focus thanks to her pace. She was unsteady on her feet, which only added to the agitation, and the movements distracted the guys for a few seconds as she approached. The giant had no such problem, moving so quickly that he burst through a stray cart without seeming to notice.

"Nate!" the spectacular nurse screamed. "Warren! Help!"

The guys moved, their survival instincts overriding the stupid monkey brains attached to them. Warren caught the pneumatic nurse and turned her momentum so that she ended up running down the hallway toward Rikki. He followed her but Nate stayed behind. The nurse's pursuer charged Nate, the giant's momentum too much for him to stop quickly. Instead, he focused his rage on Nate and accelerated.

Nate jumped to the side as the giant came roaring at him, rolling away just in time. The huge man plowed into the nurse's station, splintering wood and breaking the countertops around him without any apparent damage to his own body. By the time he was able to stop and look around, Nate was already well down the hallway and accelerating.

The Amazing Jeremiah was not in the best shape and it didn't help him to keep having shocks like people bursting into his room. Alex turned from the magician and was just about to chew Rikki and Warren out when he saw both their terrified faces and the outrageously curvy nurse. "Alex!" said the nurse, her marvelous bosom heaving. "We have to get out of here right now!"

"Uh, well, I was visiting The Amazing Jeremiah here, and I thought that we were cleared to—"

“I’m not a nurse! It’s me, Edward! We have to get the hell out of here before Adam kills us all!”

The door slammed open again before Alex could react, and Nate tore into the room. He looked back over his shoulder and said, “We have to go now!”

“We can’t!” Rikki yelled. “He has to change me back!”

“No time!” said Alex. He didn’t know what was going on but Nate wasn’t prone to freaking out without a good reason. “I got some information from him, let’s go!”

The door burst open for the final time, this time right off of its hinges and into the room. The giant followed, slightly dazed from his impact with the heavy door. He staggered a bit, and the incredibly well-made nurse slammed The Amazing Jeremiah’s bedpan into the giant’s jaw with all her strength. There was a sound like a jousting helmet hitting a brick wall and the giant fell to the floor in a hail of filth.

“Go!” shrieked the nurse.

They went.

The flight through the hospital was made easier because the woman who claimed to be Edward was wearing a uniform. She certainly drew the eye, but at the sight of her leading the other four the security officers who were heading for The Amazing Jeremiah’s room immediately dismissed the five fleeing friends from their minds. They didn’t stop until the nurse had led them to where they’d left the car.

“Wait, wait!” said Alex. They were all breathing hard except for the nurse; her previous breathlessness had apparently been from fear rather than exertion.

“Who the hell are you?” he said.

“I told you, I’m Edward!”

Rikki held up her hand to forestall everyone’s questions. “Okay, seriously, can we skip all the shock and surprise shit? Open the car up and then she can tell us all about it.”

Alex went along with it. He got into the driver's seat and Rikki let the nurse take the passenger seat once they realized that the nurse was taller than the others. Rikki reluctantly squeezed into the back seat with Warren and Nate, giving them such a baleful glare that they wedged themselves up against the door in an effort to give her some clearance.

Once they were all settled the nurse said, "Okay, I was just getting something from the vending machines and hit me in the head. I don't think I was gone from the group for ten seconds before it happened. I blacked out and then when I woke up I was tied to a bed."

"Wait, wait. You're saying that this happened when you were Edward?"

She nodded, her dark hair spilling over her monumental tits. "Yes! Fuck, anyway. This crazy doctor started talking about how he wasn't crazy and he was going to show them all and shit, and then he cut my brain out and put it in this body."

She gestured at herself, as if the others hadn't noticed a difference between her and Edward.

"Bullshit," said Warren. "No one can do that."

"Hello!" she said, pointing at Rikki. "I don't know what the hell you think is going on, but it ain't normal!"

"Shut up, guys. What happened then? Who was the giant?" said Alex.

The nurse made a face and said, "His name was Adam. He was another person that the doctor, um, made."

"Made?"

She nodded and tugged at her collar, pulling it down a little so that everyone could see the point where her collarbone joined her neck. There was a deep cut that was held together by giant stitches with thick thread. She pulled her sleeve up a bit and showed that there was a similar joining just below the point where her arm joined her shoulder. The skin on either side of the cuts was slightly different colors, as if it had been tanned.

Or cut from two different people.

“Holy fuck!” said Nate, pushing back away from the nurse.

“No shit. There were parts from nurses all over the place in freezers. He made this body to be a bride for Adam, but then he put my brain in it because he couldn’t get ahold of anyone else the right size,” she said. She sounded slightly stoned, as if she was trying to ignore her own words. “When I woke up like this, I broke out of the restraints and the the doctor with someone’s leg. Then Adam came after me and I ran, and then I found you guys.”

“Yeah, and thanks for that, by the way,” said Rikki. “That thing probably killed The Worthless Jeremiah. No wonder the place was short-handed.”

“We have to go back and get you back in your real body!” said Nate.

Edward looked down, breathing faster again. “I...I think that it’s dead. I mean, he took my brain out, and I think Adam stomped on it or something. I don’t know if it’s even an option anymore.”

“We can’t just give up,” said Nate. “Come on, let’s find you some different clothes, and get something for Rick, and by the time we get back I’m sure the cops will have that Adam thing in custody.”

No one else could come up with a better plan, so Alex started the car and drove to a nearby Wal-Mart. They all went in, drawing stares as they went. Rather, Rikki’s legs and Edward’s entire body drew stares. Edward tried to slouch and hide behind the others, but she was taller than anyone in the group by at least six inches. Warren, the shortest, wasn't quite eye-level with her majestic tits.

They sorted quickly through the clothing area, finding things for Rikki without any trouble but having more difficulty for Edward’s new body. Eventually she stuck with the underwear that she was already wearing and wound up with a t-shirt that was too loose and a pair of jeans that was slightly too tight. They would do, though, and Alex went up and paid for everything. Rikki remarked that she felt a lot better with some real clothes but still couldn’t wait to get out of this body. The guys universally regretted the loss of the view of her legs but didn’t say anything for fear of drawing her wrath.

The hospital was cordoned off when they got back. The officers in charge

wouldn't listen to their increasingly strident pleas to let them in, saying that someone had released a dangerous animal inside the hospital and no one was coming in unless they were necessary staff.

"Fuck," said Rikki when they got back to the car. "You probably could have gotten back in if you were still wearing that nurse outfit, Ed."

Edward nodded, her eyes shining and her head down. She let a small sob escape and the others stood there trying not to make eye contact. The situation was awkward and difficult enough. Her crying got louder, though, and Nate finally stepped forward and put his hand on her shoulder. She seized him in a hug and he said, "Hrk."

She didn't notice, nor the fact that he was turning purple in her grip. "Edward. Edward! Let him go!" said Alex, thumping on Edward's arm. It felt like a piece of oak encased in soft skin.

Edward realized that she was strangling her friend and let him go. "Shit, sorry," she said, sniffing. She used the bottom of her shirt to dab at her eyes, revealing a beautifully smooth belly and a couple more stitch points with some more mismatched skin. "Don't know my own strength yet, I guess."

"Yeah, well, it's Hulk level. I thought you were gonna pop my head off," said Nate, rubbing his neck.

"Listen, we'll figure something out," said Alex. "Maybe this guy that we're going to visit next will be able to help."

"Where are we going, anyway?" said Rikki.

"The Amazing Jeremiah told me about this guy who does real magic, if you've got the money for it. I figure we can go ask him, see what he says. It's better than waiting around here, making the cops nervous."

The five of them got into the car, keeping their previous seating arrangements. Alex had a hard time keeping himself from looking at Edward's spectacular new form but Edward was too sunk in her private misery to notice. Rikki's glare kept the other two on their side of the seat.

Alex drove for a while, checking his directions with the GPS, and the

neighborhoods gradually got worse and worse. Finally they pulled to a stop in front of an old-school casino on the outskirts of town. They got out and looked up at it. Some of the windows were boarded up, none of the neon was working, and bits of the trim had faded and fallen off. A tilted sign out front said, “Welcome to the Lady.”

“This place looks like it’s going to collapse any second,” said Rikki.

“I think it needs a good burning down,” said Warren.

“Look, it’s not pretty, but it’s open and this is the place that The Amazing Jeremiah said might help. I vote we go in, try not to, you know, nudge the walls, and see if there’s someone in there worth the trip.”

They started in, Rikki leading the way. Warren stopped and said, “Hey Rick.”

“What?”

“I thought you bought long pants.”

“I did.”

“Well, when did you change?”

“I didn’t.”

Rikki looked down at her legs and stopped in surprise. Alex bounced off the back of her, and Edward bounced delightfully off the back of him. “What the fuck?” said Rikki.

Where she’d been wearing long jeans earlier, she now wore a pair of cutoffs that ended well above mid-thigh. Her glorious legs were on display again. They all stared, but it was Nate who noticed something else. “I think they’re getting shorter.”

The bottom of her jeans, made of soft white fluff, was indeed creeping upward. By the time they stopped the jeans were so short that they nearly showed the bottom of her pockets and the lower curves of her spectacular ass.

“That’s fantastic,” said Rikki, glowering downward. “The fuck kind of a spell is

this, anyway?”

The guys wisely decided to keep their mouths shut. “Look, let’s just find the guy and get out of here,” said Alex.

Rikki let Alex take the lead, hoping to blend in to the rest of the group even though that seemed less likely every second. Fortunately, her cut-offs didn’t shrink anymore.

The casino was nicer on the inside, at least. It was set up in a classic pattern, without all the wild lighting effects that were seen in the more modern places. It wasn’t packed but there were a few gamblers there. Alex looked around for the floor manager while the others stayed in their clump.

“Is it hot in here to anyone else?” said Edward. She fanned herself, her jet black hair moving with the currents she generated.

“No, not really. I thought it was kinda cold, actually,” said Nate. Edward frowned but didn’t say anything else. She kept tugging at her collar as if it bound her neck. She’d been feeling warm since changing in the Wal-Mart, but she put it down to a side-effect of her different body and tried to ignore it.

The floor manager finally located, Alex asked the man if Two Jack was up. The others stared at him, but the floor manager seemed to understand what this cryptic question meant. “Yeah, sure. Why?”

“I have a friend he might want to meet.” Alex gestured at Rikki, who gave him a look that would have made the hospital receptionist proud.

The floor manager grinned at the sight of her and her legs and said, “Yeah, all right. C’mon dis way.” He turned and led them off into the gloom. Along the way he leaned in to Alex and said, “Hey, that tall one with anybody?”

“Tall one?”

“Yeah, the brunette.” He nodded to Edward, who still seemed distracted.

“Uh, well, she’s...gay,” said Alex, unable to think of a better response.

The floor manager shrugged. “All it takes is the right man.”

“Trust me, she’d break you in half.”

“Just the way I like ‘em.”

Alex was spared further conversation when they stopped at a craps table. It wasn’t a well-attended one. The croupier was there and the only gambler seemed to be the man throwing the dice as they arrived. He was dressed in a dark suit that looked antique and he wore a matching fedora. Every line was straight and perfect, as if he’d been assembled in a factory. His face had no lines or blemishes though it gave the impression of age.

The gambler looked at the floor manager, who nodded, and then at the five friends. “Can I help you?” Even his voice sounded like it was full of straight lines and angles.

“Um, Two Jack? I was told to tell you that in the light of the gibbous moon, the-“
“F’fuck’s sake. Jeremiah. Yeah, all right, follow me.”

The gambler flipped a large-denomination chip to the croupier and turned to lead the group toward a large set of double doors. Every movement was precise, with nothing wasted, as if his internal computers were conserving energy any way they could. Alex resisted the urge to check the man’s head for solar panels.

The doors were ornate, in much better shape than the rest of the casino, and the room they opened onto was the same way. It was much smaller, only four tables set up on a sea of black velvet carpet. Two Jack closed the doors and stood in front of them, radiating confidence and irritation in equal amounts.

“So what’s The Amazing Jeremiah want?”

“Oh, um, he sent us here. He’s had a heart attack, and he’s in the hospital right now,” said Alex. The gambler never blinked. Alex realized that he couldn’t tell what color the man’s eyes were even though he stared directly into them.

Rikki pushed forward. “He fucking turned me into this and now he says he can’t turn me back because he’s too sick or some shit, and he said you might be able to help.”

Alex covered his eyes with one hand. “No, Rick, what he said was that we

needed to make sure that we didn't show weakness or he'd pounce on it."

Rikki deflated a bit. "Ah. Well, still."

The gambler watched them with his all-colored eyes. He gave them a very precise, cold smile. "So much for that plan. So you need to be changed back to... what, were you this guy's girlfriend, what?"

"I was a guy. The Fucking Jeremiah turned me into this because he said he needed a lovely assistant, and then he had a heart attack before he could change me back. Then we went to the hospital and we were trying to get information out of him and we got attacked by a gorilla or something. He said to come here." Rikki folded her arms over her chest and glared at him.

"The gorilla told you to come here?"

"No, that Jeremiah guy did. The gorilla was trying to get at our friend Edward. Where the hell did she go, anyway?" Rikki looked around but the guys just offered her varying degrees of shrugs and uncomfortable silence.

Edward had wandered off from the group in an effort to find a place to sit and relax a little bit. She'd felt strange ever since waking up in this body, beyond the obvious weirdness of waking up in this body. The doctor who'd done it had told her that she was going to be Adam's perfect mate in all ways, and she was starting to worry that he'd done something more to her than just stitching her together out of a pile of nurses and then inserting a male brain.

She'd felt sort of tense and warm ever since waking up, the sensations growing every time that she'd looked at another guy. It hadn't been until stepping into this casino that she'd reluctantly admitted that she felt horny. It wasn't right, though; when she looked at Rikki's legs she didn't feel anything. When she looked at, say, Warren, she felt herself heat up a little more. The worst part was that it didn't fade like it used to; the desire just stayed there, getting stoked higher and higher every time that she looked at one of her friends or any male at all. She needed to take some time to herself and regain control.

Edward wandered into a side room that was nice and quiet. It was a little dusty, giving the air of a room that hadn't been used in a while. Most of the lights were

off so that it was dim as well. She sat back on one of the deep couches that littered the area. She closed her eyes and tried to think male thoughts, but that just led to her thinking about males instead and that led to her getting more worked up. She made a frustrated noise and worked to just clear her mind instead.

It was only now, with time to herself, that she was able to finally acknowledge what had happened to her. She put one arm over her face, the back of her wrist pressed to her eyes, and she concentrated very hard on not crying. Now the fears boiled forth, wrapping her mind in a blanket of near-panic as teardrops began to leak from the corners of her eyes.

She lashed out, punching at the couch on which she lay, surprised to find that her delicate fist went right through the back of it. Wrapped up in her fear and panic, she didn't stop; she kept punching at it, soon reducing the couch to a pile of broken wood and cloth. When the destruction was done she found that she felt better. She looked at her fists in wonder; they were unmarked in spite of her tantrum.

Edward went to another couch across the room, lying on it so that she could stare up at the darkened ceiling. It seemed that she'd traded her manhood and identity for this new existence, complete with super powers. She just wished that she wasn't so damn horny and incredibly female; the lust had come back now that she had discharged some of her negative emotions. In fact it was worse than ever, strong enough that she felt her massive nipples tighten as her body warmed.

She sighed and reluctantly placed one hand on one massive breast. She found her nipple and stroked it, groaning slightly at the pleasure. Guys often joked that if they had tits they would never leave the house, but the reality felt like less of a joke. She had to admit that it wasn't a bad sensation; she could feel the warm springiness with her hand and the way that it made her feel, and neither sensation was a bad thing.

She kept at her breast, massaging and tweaking, and the other hand went down between her legs. This was new territory, something she hadn't possessed or explored before, and she was nervous about touching herself. The raw lust drove her on, however, making her stroke gingerly at her new pussy. She groaned again, soft and low, and then she found her new clit.

Her hips jerked when she rubbed the tiny nub, and a sharp gasp burst from her new lips. This was what women had? No wonder they loved it when someone went down on them! She shed some of her reluctance, rubbing her middle finger up and down against that magic button, gradually becoming slick with her own

juices. She whimpered and moaned.

“Surely a woman like you doesn’t have to do this sort of thing by herself, does she?” said a male voice from the gloom. Edward gasped, sitting up and looking around. The door was closed now, cutting off the view of the rest of the casino, but there was enough light that she recognized the floor manager standing next to her couch, staring at her.

“I...I...” She wanted to stop, wanted to yell at him until he left, but she couldn’t force herself to let go of her breast. It felt as though her hand belonged to someone else, someone who wanted nothing more than to play with her new breasts until the end of time. She heard herself moan.

“She’s probably in the bathroom or something,” said Warren. The others nodded and dismissed it.

The gambler watched them quietly, waiting for his chance to speak. “What do you bring to the table, if you want me to change you back?”

Rikki immediately looked nervous. “What do you want?”

He offered a polite smile again. “What would you bet?”

She swallowed. “I guess I’d...offer anything.” She took a half-step, displaying the goods to her advantage even though she obviously didn’t want to. The guys stared in shock.

He shook his head. “Nothing like that, What do you bet?”

“Bet? Uh. I didn’t know there was...listen, I’m really bad at dice, and...”

He shrugged. “One of your friends can throw for you.”

Rikki turned to Nate. “Please, dude? Everyone knows you’re like, a freak when it comes to this stuff.”

“Geez, thanks. Dick.” Nate didn’t disagree, though; he was lucky enough in card and dice games that he had a hard time finding anyone who’d play with him.

“Come on.” Rikki managed to pout, an occurrence that was simultaneously appealing and disquieting.

“Fine, fuck, what are we betting? If I win you’ll turn him back, or what?”

The gambler smiled again and said, “Something else first. I can sense that I’m not the only one who knows the touch of the Lady. My luck against yours, one throw each.”

Rikki said, “Wait, now, hold on. First we have to take care of-“

The gambler waved his hand at her as if she were nothing but an annoyance. “I’ll change you back when I win this.”

“So...one throw to see who’s luckier?” said Nate.

The other man nodded. “My luck against yours.”

Nate looked at him for a minute and then said, “Fine, but I get to choose your dice, and you choose mine.”

The other nodded and offered his hand. “Two Jack.”

Nate blinked and shook, and then said, “Oh, um, Nate.”

Two Jack nodded and called the croupier back over. Alex came forward and took hold of Nate’s shoulder. “I don’t like this,” he whispered.

“Shit, me either, but if this is what it takes, you know? It’s not like I’m gonna lose, and if it makes him happy then I’ll go with it. We’re not gonna lose anything either way. It’ll be fine.” Nate shook free of Alex’s hand and went to choose his opponent’s dice.

He chose two at random from a set of five and then Two Jack did the same. They exchanged dice and rolled to see who went first. Two Jack won that roll. He cupped the dice loosely in his hand and then offered the hand to Rikki. “Always get a pretty girl to blow some luck on them,” he said, showing no emotion of any kind. Rikki rolled her eyes and blew on them, and he nodded to her. Then he threw the dice so they bounced off the other edge of the table. One stopped on a six, and then the other one spun for a moment before doing the same. The four

friends let out a breath that they hadn't realized they were holding, and Nate stepped to the line.

Nate blew on his own dice and then threw. They bounced and rattled across the felt and off of each other, finally ricocheting off the other edge to land...six and six.

The entire room was silent as the two gamblers picked their dice up again. Two Jack went to the line, showing no expression at all as he offered the dice to Rikki before he threw. Double sixes again. Nate stepped up and did the same.

Now it was so quiet that the casino felt as if it was made out of velvet; there were no echoes, no whispers or clinks of glasses, no smacks of hard-placed cards or rattling roulette balls from the other room. The three observers felt as though they were in a bubble, trapped with the two gamblers who were matching luck to luck.

On the fourth throw, Two Jack threw two fives. His eyes widened slightly at the sight of them, and the three observers drew in a breath for what felt like the first time in hours. Nate stepped up and let the dice go just as a woman's muffled scream broke through the silence.

Edward writhed as the floor managed calmly unbuttoned her shirt and unhooked the bra, allowing her breasts to fall free. She wanted to protest but instead she felt a thrill of joy that her bosom was open to easier exploration. Her hand resumed its work as her eyes closed; it felt so amazing to touch her new body that she didn't even think about how it would look to the man who was patiently undressing her. The only thing that mattered was the heat.

He relished every moment. True, she looked as though she'd been in some sort of accident, with scars crisscrossing her everywhere, but in his mind a woman who'd really lived was one who was really capable of love. He traced the scars with gentle hands, enjoying the contrast between the past injuries and her otherwise glorious body. Her skin was strange, differently colored as if she'd been put together from others, but that was silly. Surely it was just a side effect of the surgery. He was willing to bet that she didn't think of herself as beautiful. He would show her that she was wrong.

Edward, constructed to be a perfect mate, couldn't stop herself from reacting to his touches. She gasped and whimpered, her magnificent hips rolling up and down as the heat and desire built. Her new body simply overwhelmed her mind, and she couldn't even stop herself long enough to beg for his touch.

He was gentle, timing his movements to slide her pants off as her hips moved, and soon she wore absolutely nothing at all. The scars covered her, each one invoking nothing but tenderness from him. She had been so badly hurt. He just wanted to bring her comfort and reassurance.

Edward's hands roamed over her body, her breath coming faster as each touch sparked off another ripple of pleasure. She opened her eyes to look for him when she realized that she hadn't felt his hands in a while, and she saw him standing there wearing nothing at all. Her emotions were a welter, none of them able to fight to the fore, and her body took advantage of the confusion to spread its legs to him.

He smiled and knelt on the couch between her legs, He leaned down to kiss each diamond-hard nipple, and then he slid into her an inch at a time. She groaned, her body clenching down on him

She understood that her strength was dramatically greater than it had been, and the effort she spent in concentration to keep from accidentally crushing him was enough that she wasn't able to keep her body from reacting to him. She moaned when he leisurely withdrew and then surged forward. Here was relief, said her body. Here was what she was made for. Here was her purpose, and her body embraced it enthusiastically.

Edward bucked hard against her lover, matching his rhythm with her overcharged muscles and crying out with the pleasure that came with his ministrations.

She felt as though she was being compressed. He was gentle in all things, touching her softly and whispering words of love and comfort in her ear as he drove her further and further. She felt as though his touches and words were pressing her into a smaller and smaller space, until she could make only tiny movements or risk exploding. Finally the explosion came, of course, and she screamed as her body convulsed beneath him. Her cries were full-throated and genuine, as much beyond her control as her arousal and her body. "YES!" she

screamed, again and again as she climaxed.

Rikki had time to say, “What the fuck was that?” before Nate’s dice landed. Nate and Two Jack watched the dice bounce off the bumper, their eyes locked on the tumbling cubes. The others looked around in confusion as the distant shrieks continued for a few seconds and then tapered off.

“Shit,” Two Jack whispered when the dice stopped.

“Nice, twelve again,” said Nate. “Looks like my luck’s a little stronger than yours, huh?”

“That...that can’t be possible,” said Two Jack, losing his cool for the first time as he showed the shock that filled him.

“Hey, it happens,” said Nate, looking worried. “I mean, no hard feelings, right?”

“You idiot!” Two Jack snarled at him. “You took my luck! Give it back!”

He lunged at Nate, who happened to stumble at the right time to pull himself just far enough away for Two Jack’s fingers to miss his neck. Two Jack fell on the floor and growled something in a language that none of them had ever heard. He stood up to take another jump at Nate but they were all frozen by the sight of a woman appearing in midair over the craps table.

She floated there, regal and impassive, staring down at them from the most desirable face that any of them had ever seen. Each of them saw different features, but everyone saw the one thing that he or she wanted the most. “Two Jack,” she said, her voice filling the casino without once being louder than a whisper. “Your magics have failed. I am free once more.”

“No!” he cried, pounding the floor with one fist. “We had a deal!”

“You took improper advantage of that deal.”

“Um...who are you?” said Nate. Of all of the onlookers he was the only one who was able to speak coherently at the sight of what had to be a goddess.

She smiled at him, showing emotion for the first time. Her smile felt like sunlight, like a day when nothing could go wrong and you were invincible. Nate shivered at the sight of it, her face appearing to him as the delicate features of the Japanese woman he'd fallen in love with during college. To have her smile at him again was worth anything. "Nate," she whispered, "You've gained his luck as well as yours. You won the bet."

"That's th'Lady," said Two Jack, his voice gravelly with despair.

She inclined her head. "Lady Luck is one of my aspects, one that Two Jack has kept locked away for long years. Now that his luck has failed, so has his magic, and I am free again. Free to do as I please, and I think that a man so lucky should have his heart's desire."

"What...what do you mean?" said Nate.

The Lady drifted closer and reached out with one tiny hand to touch his forehead. Nate sucked in a breath as he felt her power fill him, the white light mingling with some quality that he'd always had inside and now recognized as the luck that lived there. His form glowed and then glared, so brightly that no one else could look at him.

When the light finally faded the others stared with round eyes. Nate felt different; everything was larger, for one thing. "What's wrong?" said Nate.

The Lady smiled when Nate's eyes widened at the sound of the voice that asked those words. "You have my power, now, so use it wisely!" Then she vanished.

Rikki, Warren, and Alex stared at the beautiful, slender Japanese woman who stood there where Nate had been. "You have got to be fucking kidding me," said Alex.

The sight of her was shocking but all it did for Rikki was to remind her of her own situation. She stormed over and took hold of Two Jack's shoulder, half-lifting him and shaking him. "Now turn me back!" she cried.

"Crazy bitch! Let me go!" He fought her off, pushing her away.

"What...what..." said Nate, trying to get past that first word. Her dulcet voice matched her serenely beautiful features perfectly.

“I can’t do anything for ya now,” said Two Jack. He heaved himself up, using the table for support. He looked a lot less composed than he had before.

“What do you mean? You fucker, you said you’d break this curse!” said Rikki. Alex took hold of her arm to keep her from attacking. She lifted a foot to kick and Alex pulled her further away.

While Rikki tried to break free of Alex’s grip Warren stepped between them and said, “Why can’t you break the spell?”

Two Jack sagged against the table, looking beaten. “Got no more magic now. It was all tied up in keeping the Lady here, so that the casino would run, and now that’s gone with my luck. I couldn’t light a match.”

“Well...what the hell do we do now?” said Alex. He kept hold of Rikki, who appeared to be swelling with rage.

“Just follow our noses and trust to luck,” said Nate. The others looked at her. She shrugged. “Something tells me that’s what’s going to help. Maybe we should go back to the hospital, I dunno. I have a hunch that if we go back to where Edward was changed, we might find the next step.”

“Where is Edward, anyway?” said Warren.

“Right here!” They looked the other way and saw her heading toward them. Edward looked relaxed, and the buttons on her shirt were one removed from their correct holes, but she seemed cheerful. “Sorry, I, um, got lost.”

“Well...shit,” said Rikki. She relaxed and Alex let go of her. “Looks like this loser’s not gonna be any help.” She spit on Two Jack, who didn't react.

Edward nodded and looked at Nate, her eyes widening slightly. “Who’s that?”

“That’s Nate,” said Alex, sounding resigned.

“Um, Lady Luck turned me into this,” said Nate. She seemed to be relaxed about the situation.

Edward blinked. “Uh, okay. Look, what do we do now?”

“The queen of luck there says we should go back to the hospital,” said Rikki, sounding as if she was sulking. She glared at Two Jack.

“Maybe we should go to the police,” said Warren.

“Right. Because the cops are totally set up to deal with this kind of weirdness,” said Rikki.

Warren shrugged. “It was a thought.”

“Fine, back to the hospital,” said Alex. “Can we please keep from changing anyone else into women?”

“Or fucking change us back?” said Rikki.

Nate, still half in shock, nodded, and Edward took her arm to lead her away from Two Jack.

In another part of the casino the floor manager lay back on the remains of the couch. He was naked, with blossoming bruises and a set of sharp pains that he recognized as at least three cracked ribs. The couch had taken the brunt of Edward's climax, shattering into a pile around them as she'd orgasmed helplessly beneath him. He sighed and smiled into the darkness. “My kinda girl,” he said.

Back in the car, Warren sat between Rikki and Nate. Nate kept staring at her own body, turning her hands back and forth while wearing the expression of someone who'd never seen hands before. Warren didn't look particularly upset about his placement, and Rikki just glared out the window. Nate's new body wasn't lush like Edward's or leggy like Rikki's but her glorious face and slim form more than made up for any possible lack of over-blown femininity. She looked like the old paintings of the goddesses of Japan, almost painful to look upon.

Progress had been made in the problem plaguing the hospital. There were still several police cars scattered about, along with a fire truck, but people were able to enter and leave again. The five of them walked to the door, and just as they got there the officer on duty was called away for something. They were able to

go through without any obstruction. Alex looked at Nate, who gave him a shrug. “This luck stuff isn’t bad, huh?” she said.

“Yeah, too bad about the body, though.”

Nate nodded without answer but she looked thoughtful. They headed in and found a quiet waiting room without any onlooking nurses. “Okay, Edward, you’re up,” said Rikki. “Let’s find this place and start losing tits.”

Edward looked around, confused. “I’m not sure where it was,” she said.

“What?” said Alex, stunned. He hadn’t considered this possibility.

“Well, I was running from a giant psycho at the time!” said Edward. “And you know, hey, I was suddenly a stitched-together woman.”

“Alicia?” said a passing nurse. She stared at Edward’s face.

“What? Uh, no, not Alicia, sorry,” said Edward, blushing slightly.

“You look just like her, but...” The nurse looked down at Edward’s prodigious curves. “Um, I guess I made a mistake. You’re sure you’re not her sister or something? Alicia’s one of the nurses who works here. We’ve been looking for her.”

“Nope, nothing like that, sorry,” said Edward, hoping to get rid of her.

“Well, you and your friends are going to have to move on unless you’re waiting for someone. We have a family who needs this room while their grandfather’s in surgery.”

Edward started to say something but Nate stepped between her and the nurse. She gave a dazzling smile and said, “So sorry for the inconvenience, ma’am. We’ll be going now.”

She gave the others a Look and led them down the hallway. They caught up with her and Alex said, “What was that about?”

“First off I thought it would be a little luckier for us if we didn’t piss off the nurses,” said Nate. “And not only that, I just felt that it was the right thing to do

to head this way, and-

Nate was cut off when a nurse ran into her and bowled her over. The nurse was profusely apologetic, and the little group didn't recognize her at first. It was only when Rikki mentally added a scowl and a counter that she realized that the woman was the desk nurse who'd sent her so many dirty looks while they had waited to see The Amazing Jeremiah. It seemed like a lifetime ago, particularly now that the girls outnumbered the guys.

"Oh, it's you!" said the nurse. "I was looking all over for you. I have some paperwork for you."

Rikki backed away a step or two. "Oh no, I'm not, uh, legally eligible to do that, or whatever."

The nurse shook her head, a shadow of her previous exasperation crossing her face. "Not that. Since there was a gas explosion, the hospital isn't going to be able to let you see your uncle for another day or two, so we're issuing hotel vouchers to family so they can stay nearby."

"Wow," said Nate. "Lucky you ran into me, then."

The nurse nodded absently, missing Nate's grin and Alex's subsequent eyeroll. The nurse flipped through her clipboard and found a few sheets, which she passed over to Rikki. "Those'll hold you. We have an understanding with a Holiday Inn. It's not five stars, but it's clean and nearby." She turned to go and then turned back to look at Edward. "Are you...related to a nurse named Alicia?"

Edward shook her head mutely and the nurse bustled off on another errand. Edward sighed mightily and said, "Okay, bad enough that I'm in this body and we don't know where to go to fix that, but it's worse to be in a place where people keep recognizing parts of me."

Warren snickered and Edward turned red. Rikki said, "I'd love to get to know parts of ya when I get back to normal."

"Drop dead. Now what are we gonna do?"

Nate said, "I think that we should follow our luck."

“What does that even mean?” said Alex.

She shrugged, momentarily distracting everyone. “I mean, we got those vouchers by luck, so we should just go with it. I don’t know what we’re going to find, but it just makes sense. And there’s a lot to be said for a good night’s sleep.”

The others agreed with that last part, anyway. It was getting late, and they were all exhausted from the emotional toll of the day. As much as they wanted to keep searching for the cures for their various situations, they were wiped out, some physically and some, like Edward, emotionally.

“I don’t know if I do get tired anymore,” said Edward as they headed for the car. “I mean, I know I’m really strong now, so maybe I have other stuff going for me.”

“She says, as she bounces along without a bra,” said Rikki. Edward glared at her.

“I mean like my strength, you skinny bitch. Like maybe I don’t have to sleep anymore or something. I don’t know. Who knows what that psycho did to this body before he caught me?”

“We’ll work it out, geez,” said Alex.

They got in the car and Nate said, “Yeah, trust to luck.”

Rikki rounded on him as Alex started the car and pulled out of the parking lot. “And what about you?” said Rikki. “How come you’re suddenly little miss Buddha about the whole thing? You’re in the same fucking boat we are.”

Nate gave her a serene smile. “Sort of. The difference is that I like this.”

Silence ruled until Rikki forced its abdication. “You what?”

“Weren’t you listening when Lady Luck was talking? She gave me what I always wanted.”

“I thought you were in love with that girl, dude, not that you wanted to be her,” said Warren.

Nate shrugged. “It was a little of both, really. It’s why we finally broke up. I’ve been trying to figure out what to do ever since then.”

“That’s...that’s great,” said Rikki. “So you got your heart’s desire and I got a woman who can’t wear pants. Fucking awesome. You wanna trade?”

Nate shook her head, still smiling. “Just trust to fate. There are worse things in the world, you know.”

“I guess I could be a slut,” said Rikki. Edward suddenly became extremely interested in the traffic passing them.

Alex was glad to see the Holiday Inn come into view. Warren was half miserable, sandwiched between Nate and Rikki as he was; Rikki tolerated no slightest implication that Warren thought of her as anything but Rick but Nate didn’t seem to mind if Warren pressed a little close, and that freaked Warren out even more.

The five of them went to the desk and turned in the vouchers. The receptionist looked at them. Rikki wore nothing but a sparkling swimsuit by this time thanks to the spell, and she looked spectacular with her amazing legs on display. Nate’s outfit fit her perfectly, and she presented the serene air of a beautiful woman who had everything in life figured out. Edward towered over everyone else, her overripe body barely contained in a mis-buttoned shirt and jeans that clung lovingly to magnificent curves; at her wrists and just under her neck, a few stitches were visible. Warren and Alex were hardly noticeable against the women they accompanied.

The receptionist didn’t even blink. “Rooms for the ladies and for the gentlemen?” she said, sounding bored.

“Uh, yeah,” said Warren. She passed over the keys.

“1401 and 1403. We don’t rent 1403 most of the time, but the hotel’s booked up for conventions.”

Warren picked up his bag, but Alex didn’t budge. “Why don’t you rent 1403?”

She shrugged again. “Haunted.”

“Haunted,” said Warren. “This is a Holiday Inn.”

“Wasn’t always. It got bought out, um, six years ago? I think? Building’s been around a lot longer.”

“And the room’s haunted.” Alex seemed stunned by this.

“That’s what they tell me. I don’t believe in that kinda stuff myself, but there ya go.”

Alex looked back at the three women who had been, until that day, his male friends, thinking about how a person's sense of the impossible could be wildly altered in a short time. “Is it supposed to be a dangerous ghost?”

“Nah, some of the guests heard squeaking and crying. Maybe it’s a mouse!” She offered her first actual expression at this, a smile that made her look like someone who relished the idea of a mouse being tormented as a ghost for the rest of eternity. The five friends made a beeline for the elevator.

Once there, they distributed keys. “The guys can sleep in the fucking haunted room, make friends with the ghost mouse,” said Rikki as she grabbed one of the keys to 1401.

Warren shrugged and took the other key, handing a copy to Alex. The crew split up, with the newly-minted women heading to 1401 and the guys taking the room next door.

“What do you figure they’re doing over there?” said Warren. They were lying in separate beds, both privately glad that the alleged ghost seemed to be taking the night off. They’d seen enough weird shit for the day.

“Naked pudding pillow fights,” said Alex.

Warren blinked at him. “What’s seriously?”

Alex sighed. “No, dumbshit. Nate seems perfectly happy, so she’s probably asleep by now. Rikki’s probably drinking the mini bar dry while Edward’s watching TV and not sleeping. I don’t know.”

Alex had no way of knowing it, but he was at least half-right. Nate fell asleep

quickly and slept better than she had in her entire life. Everything about her new body felt right, and she found herself enjoying every breath and movement even when asleep.

Rikki drank from the tiny wet bar in the room, unconcerned with the ridiculous prices on each tiny bottle. She wasn't used to her new body's limits, and fell unconscious across one bed before too long. She threw up a little, but any that made it onto her slender body disappeared as if she was under the influence of a spell that kept her looking her best, which she was.

Edward started feeling warm again shortly after getting her room key. She got hotter, the same lust building up that had forced her to sleep with the floor boss at the casino. Finally, her nipples so hard that they were painful and her pussy soaked and aching to be filled, she made her way down to the hotel bar. She hooked up with a short, round salesman who couldn't believe that this goddess would look twice at him. She spent the rest of the night loudly making his fantasies come true, slipping back into her room around five in the morning after draining him completely. She took a shower and lay down next to Nate, only to find that she didn't actually need sleep anymore. Instead she lay there staring at the ceiling and wondering if her new form could get pregnant.

Alex found himself awoken a few times in the night by squeaking and the occasional low moan, but each time he just rolled his eyes and went back to sleep; he'd seen the sheer weirdness that magic and science could bring, and he wasn't about to get upset by a few noises unless they brought something more dangerous to the table. His sleep was untroubled and surprisingly restful.

Warren dreamed.

The room was older when he looked around, decorated like he'd seen in pictures of the forties and fifties. He didn't get much time to look because the man on the bed was reaching for his throat. Warren wanted to cry out and pull away, but he just sat there while the man with the wide eyes and strangler's hands reached for him. They sat on a single bed, the other having vanished.

Then his hands were at Warren's throat and Warren heard a woman giggle. The hands didn't clench, were gentle, and Warren felt them worrying at something. Then they were pulling away and taking something with them. Warren looked

down, or rather, was forced to look down. He didn't feel in control of his body in any way, as if there was someone in charge and he was simply along for the ride.

The dress was simple, cotton with a built-in pattern of tiny interlocking blue flowers. The hands at Warren's throat had undone the soft tie that held the dress together, and they were now pulling it away from him. Warren mentally gaped, shocked by what he was wearing and what it concealed. His skin was much darker now, liked toasted almonds, and the dress hid a figure that could have stopped traffic. He let the hands pull his dress down to his waist; they moved slowly, gently, and the man who owned them stared at Warren as if he were a glimpse of home after months on the road.

Warren's new bosom was encased in a wide-strapped, awkward-looking bra that was built more for strength than for looks. There was good reason for that, as he saw when the man came closer and reached around to undo the hooks in the middle of Warren's back. His new breasts tumbled free, soft and quivering and enormous. His nipples were even darker than the rest of his skin, and they puckered in the cool air.

"Like what you see, honey?" Warren whispered. He was suddenly aware of the need for quiet, though he wasn't sure why.

"They're beautiful," said the man, lust and something else warring in his voice, something darker. He reached out and hefted one breast, and Warren sighed. Still an onlooker in his own body, Warren wasn't able to slap the man's hand away like he wanted to. Instead, whoever was in charge enjoyed the touch. Sure, said an alien thought in his mind, he was a whore, but that didn't mean he couldn't savor the feeling.

Warren stood, heavy breasts bobbing wildly with every movement, and he slid down the dress over long, strong legs. They were healthy rather than beautiful, said that alien in his mind, but his hips and behind more than made up for it.

The white man on the bed frantically tore at his own clothes, trying to get his pecker out before he blew. Warren felt a sense of amusement flood through him. Some of these white boys had never seen a real woman naked before, said the strange voice. Then the dress comes off and it's feeding time at the zoo.

He left his undershirt on, what would become known in later years as a wifebeater, but he got the rest of it off. He was pudgy and so pale that he almost

glowed in the darkened room. Whoever was piloting Warren didn't care; she had a need, an itch to scratch, and what was jutting up from his lap was what would fix her up. Some of the girls worked for powder or pills but she had never needed that; she worked for a different reason. It was one of the ways a colored woman could get ahead and it allowed her to satisfy something inside her that was always hungry, something none of the other girls seemed to feel.

She lay on the bed, Warren watching from inside, and she spread her legs to him. The white man slid in, and she and Warren closed her eyes in bliss. It felt so nice, so nice. The bed squeaked as they moved together, sounding like a family of mice. She let out a series of soft moans, her trademark sound, the sound that followed her down into the pleasure as she bucked softly against him. Warren was lost in the bliss, her body relaxed and warm against the pudgy white man, the woman who'd taken charge of his body laughing on the inside about how it took a colored girl to give him what he wanted.

She moaned louder when the pleasure peaked, her body writhing underneath him like a heat-drunk python, her bones melting in the warmth of ecstasy. He clenched closer and a gasp burst from his lips as he filled her, feeling just like any other man in any other woman.

They relaxed together, saying nothing since nothing needed to be said. He explored her, and she let him, and it wasn't long before he was hard again. She spread herself for him, but this time it was different. This time he slammed hard, urging her to do the same, and she liked that just as much as the slow time. It appealed to her wild nature, and soon she was so lost in their dance that she didn't feel it at first when his hands went to her throat again.

He pumped hard, his face set in a grin and his hands clasped tightly around her long throat, squeezing tighter with each thrust. She tried to get away but she was exhausted by her earlier climax and a lack of air. She struggled weakly but she didn't last long. The last thing she felt was her traitor body clenching around him again as she came, and it was so sweet, so sweet. She rode the pleasure down into nothingness.

Warren was in the shower when Alex woke up and he lay there staring at the ceiling. He just enjoyed the quiet, the few moments that he had to himself

without anyone else being turned into a woman or other weird shit happening. He didn't open his eyes when the shower stopped or the door to the bathroom opened; he just relaxed until he felt the bed shift under the weight of Warren sitting on the corner. Then he opened his eyes in surprise.

The woman in the bathrobe was dark-skinned and beautiful, her wet hair incredibly short and her face set in an expression of amusement. "Morning, baby," she said, her voice low and rough.

"Who...uh..." Alex pushed himself away, sliding under the sheets to the other side of the bed. He thought about getting out entirely but he realized that he was naked.

She grinned. Then she pulled up the sheet, glancing underneath before he had a chance to cover himself. "Mmm, darlin', you don't know how long it's been. I'm not sure how long it's been either, but time kinda gets away from you. I'm Mae."

"What...where's Warren?"

"You mean that tall tasty boy? He's right here." She tapped the robe between her heavy breasts. "He's such a sweetheart to let me take over for him. He's asleep right now, but he's got so many dreams."

"Take over? Oh my God, you changed him into a woman."

"Nah, now, honey. Just when I'm in charge and he's asleep. We worked out a deal."

"What? When did this happen?"

She laughed and stretched, revealing that her robe wasn't cinched shut. Alex fought against a sudden hard-on. She said, "We worked it out last night when he was dreaming about me. And now, like I said, honey...you don't know how long it's been for me."

She reached out and gently placed her hand on the tented fabric that hid Alex's groin, and he groaned a little. "But it's not right," he said.

"Feels right to me." She shimmied her shoulders and let the robe slip off them. Alex groaned again at the sight of her jostling breasts.

“We have to meet up with the others,” he protested weakly.

“Then it’ll just have to be a quickie.” She grinned at him and pulled the sheets back, and he didn’t protest. She slunk forward and straddled him, every move controlled. She never lost her smile, right up until the point where she lowered herself onto him. Then her face closed in a long, silent vowel before relaxing into the most relieved sigh that Alex had ever heard. He was so lost in her reactions to him that he almost didn’t feel the way that she gripped him, like a jellied glove, her slick heat welcoming him in.

“Ohhhh, that’s what I needed,” she whispered, rolling her hips to work him inside of her. Alex reached up, half in shock, and cupped her soft breasts in his hands. She smiled and said, “You boys can never resist those, huh? Well, go on, play.” She leaned forward a little so that he had better access. “Mmm, that’s nice.”

Alex put the last day out of his mind. It was nearly impossible to think of this woman as his friend Warren, and she didn’t make it any easier with her actions and attitude. It had been too damn long since his last time with a woman anyway. He would never say it, for fear that Warren was listening and upset, but he quietly gave thanks to whatever gods were involved in the romp and settled in to give it his all.

Across the hall, lying in her bed, Nate smiled and nodded in quiet welcome.

A while later, Alex gasped out, “What is that you want?”

Mae giggled. “What makes you think I want anything else?”

“So you’re...what, you’re done now, and you can go on to your rest?”

She snorted. “Hell no. I’m here to stay, baby.”

“I thought Warren was asleep or something!”

“He is. I don’t wanna take over completely from him, just often enough to

scratch my itch and have some fun being alive again, that's all."

Alex covered his own face with a pillow, wondering if he was just going to go ahead and smother himself. It was a seductive thought. Finally he pulled the pillow away and said, "What are we going to do now?"

Mae didn't answer, and when he looked over at her she was gaping at her own chest. "What...what..." she gasped, and then went completely silent when she looked over and saw Alex's cock lying sated on his leg. The trail that led from him to her left very little doubt as to what was going on.

"Shit," said Alex. "I didn't think she'd just leave you like that."

"She? What? Leave me like...I'm stuck like this?"

"How the hell should I know? I'm not the one with a ghost turning me into a chick here!"

"No, you're just the one who fucked her! Fucked me!"

Warren pulled away from him, overbalanced thanks to her new proportions, and fell with a great flailing of long legs onto the floor. Alex barely contained a gasp of laughter, and about that time someone knocked at the door.

Warren grabbed the sheet and yanked it off the bed, wrapping it around herself toga-style before going to answer the door. The other three women of their group stood there, Rikki with her hand extended to knock again. They stared. Warren tilted one hip and stood with all of her weight on the other, her arms crossed over a substantial chest.

Rikki rolled her eyes and said, "Fuck me. Are you Warren or Alex?"

"Warren. With a ghost passenger named Mae who takes over sometimes and fucks people." She pointed an accusing finger at Alex, who had managed to get his boxers on and come toward the door. "And that son of a bitch didn't even try to stop her."

Rikki gave Alex and surreptitious thumbs-up while Edward looked away from both of them and shuffled her feet. Only Nate seemed unconcerned. She said, "Well, that's a difficult situation. Let's all get dressed and go have breakfast

before we do anything else, huh? Everything will feel better with some food in our stomachs, and then we can figure out where to go from here.”

There was a less-than-rousing, ragged chorus of approval of the idea, and they peeled away to go back to their rooms. Warren closed the door and glared at Alex.

“Look, I’m sorry!” said Alex. “I thought you guys were in agreement, or something!”

“You just thought about getting yourself a piece of ass,” she retorted. She stormed to the suitcase that held Warren’s clothing and glared down at the items on display. “Now I don’t even have anything to wear, and…”

She trailed off. Her head twitched, and suddenly she relaxed. Alex stared; her stance and carriage changed so drastically that it was like watching another person. She turned and gave him a wink, and he said, “Mae?”

“In the flesh, baby. Just thought I’d come and see if there was anything I could do about the clothing. This old sheet should do nicely.”

She closed her eyes and concentrated. Her full lips were slightly apart, and from that space Alex heard a low moan issue from her, a moan that sounded a lot like the ones she made during sex. He was so distracted by her moaning that he almost didn’t realize that the sheet wrapped around her curvy body was changing. It gradually crept up her legs and changed its pattern and form. By the time it was done, she wore a pencil-skirt dress that came to her knees and clung lovingly to her body. A pair of earrings formed in her ears, and a thick silver chain wrapped around her throat. Finally the changing stopped, and she grinned at Alex. “Bet you wish you could take this off of me, huh?”

He opened and closed his mouth like a fish, trying to come up with an answer, and she laughed. “It’s okay, baby. Maybe we’ll get to play again sometime soon.”

Then her stance shifted, becoming less confident, and Warren said, “No we fucking won’t.” Alex felt himself deflate at the change and he averted his gaze so that he could get dressed. Warren stood there and stared as he did so, making it the most uncomfortable dressing session that Alex had ever had a part in. Every time he looked over at her, she just gave him a get-on-with-it gesture with her

head and kept watching him. By the time he was dressed he wasn't sure if he would ever get hard again.

It felt strange to be the only man at the table when they finally got together for breakfast. The other women were sympathetic to Warren, even Rikki with her attitude and crackling anger. Alex just shrank back into his seat and tried to be unobtrusive.

“So what are we going to do first today?” said Rikki. Her clothing had again slowly reformed itself into a sequined swimsuit and she looked uncomfortable with the attention she drew.

“Hang on. Look, the TV,” said Nate. Everyone looked, turning in their seats to see the morning news report. They saw a fleet of police cars outside the hospital that had most recently housed The Amazing Jeremiah, and underneath it was a headline that read “MURDER IN THE MORGUE!”

Nate went up, smiled at the waiter, and quickly talked him into turning the volume up. It seemed that investigators had discovered a room full of human remains near the morgue, including a lot of missing nurses and several missing tourists. Edward groaned softly at the pictures that came up, recognizing some of the features that graced her spectacular body. She groaned further when her own picture came up, a shot of him smiling into the camera with no idea that he would become a woman years later.

“Okay, this is bad,” said Alex. “Look, we need to find a place to lay low and regroup while we figure out what to do next.”

“We need another magician to change me back and give Edward his real body back, and maybe get rid of whatever the fuck happened to Warren,” said Rikki.

“Yes. Good. We'll start looking for one of those. But for right now let's find someplace nearby that's going to be cheaper than this while we search.”

They agreed; Vegas was magical but it was also expensive, and their reserves of cash were running out. It didn't help that every time one of them changed into a woman, their wallets vanished. Alex paid while the others went back upstairs and got their stuff.

Back in the car, they headed out of town. Las Vegas had plenty of smaller,

satellite towns that had better deals on motels, and the five of them were eager to get away from the site of so much turmoil for a few days.

As Vegas faded over the horizon Nate suddenly tensed up. She sat in the back seat between Rikki and Warren, and both of them looked at her. “What’s wrong?” said Warren.

“There’s something...strange coming up. Something unusual.”

“No,” said Alex, “Fucking no. I don’t care if you’re Lady Luck now or what! We’ve had enough weird shit happen to us!”

That was when the car died. It went from running to simply coasting in the blink of an eye, all systems dead. The morning wasn’t dark but it suddenly got a whole lot brighter. With a sinking feeling Alex joined the others as they craned their heads out of the windows. They saw a triangle of lights coming at them from out of the sky just before everything went black.

Alex had strange dreams. They were sex dreams, but rather than participating, he was outside of the act. He watched a huge, muscular man driving hard into a tall woman with lush curves. Alex tried to get closer but there was something that kept him from joining in. He kept trying to take over the man’s spot, or take over his body, or something, but nothing worked. Finally he tried to enter the woman from behind and found his mind inside her body. He was instantly wracked with pleasure, such incredible bliss that he had never imagined could exist in the world.

The shock of it made him open his eyes. For a few seconds he couldn’t figure out where he was, and then he realized that he was floating in some kind of tank, naked and completely submerged. There was a device stuck down his throat that fed him air, though he couldn’t stop himself from gagging on it. His skin crawled; there was something wrong with the water, some silvery sheen that made it different.

Unconsciousness crept over him again, and he was back in the void, staring at the two people as they fucked. Again he was rebuffed from the man’s body, but he had no trouble at all entering her mind. This time the pleasure wasn’t such a shock and he allowed himself to enjoy the feeling of the ecstasy that washed her.

He could sense her thoughts, too, the desire to be with this man and the raw joy of submitting to his strength. Feeling the man's cock pistoning in and out of her was the strangest thing that had ever happened to Alex but the pleasure of it made it hard to be disgusted. He felt himself relaxing into it, just enjoying the ride as the man pounded in and out of her, and then suddenly the surge peaked and she came in a cascade of cries and helpless convulsions.

It was another level, one that kicked him out of the dream again. He was still in the tank but this time he saw that the sides were transparent and that he was under observation.

They weren't large. In fact, they appeared to be no taller than four feet. Their heads were oversized and their midnight eyes contrasted with their grey skin. They stared at him and he tried to scream.

Back in the dream it was easier and easier to slip into the woman's body every time he tried. It got harder to leave it, in fact, even though part of him hated the feel of the huge man's cock sliding in and out of her like that. More and more of him not only went along but learned to like it, and about a thousand years after the treatment began, Alex found that there was no difference between himself and her. He was the one wrapping arms and legs around his giant lover. He could no longer leave her body; he was starting to gain control.

Endless orgasms later, Alex found that she was finally able to pull free of him. He wrapped his arms around her and Alex reveled in the feeling of being held by her strong protector. Then she reached down, fully aware of what she was doing, and squeezed gently at his cock, bringing it back to life. He smiled at her, releasing her, and rather than running, Alex slid herself onto him, rolling her hips and arching her head backward at the sudden rush of bliss, fucking him just as enthusiastically as he had fucked her.

This time when the climax came it was stronger than the others by an order of magnitude. It kicked her out of the dream for the last time, and she saw her diminutive observers nodding to one another. In the other tanks, she could see her friends thrashing, bubbles leaking out of their mouths and noses, their faces set in expressions of ultimate pleasure or pain.

Then the dream took her again, for a few more centuries of joyous lovemaking, and then everything went black for an eyeblink. When she opened her eyes again

she was sitting in the driver's seat of the car. She turned the key and it started, the dashboard clock showing that only a few minutes had passed since... something had happened. She felt as though she'd fallen asleep. Weird. The other girls, so recently men, also seemed to be in the process of waking up and looking around in confusion.

"Hey guys, where are we?" said Rikki.

"I have no idea," said Eddi. She shifted in her seat, her prodigious bosom swelling and pressing against Alex's shoulder for a moment.

"I thought we were...leaving?" said Alex.

"Why would we leave?" said Mae. She was in charge of Warren at the moment; you could tell by her attitude. Mae was so much fun.

"Leave Vegas?" said Natalie, her voice tinged with fear at the idea.

"Fuck that," said Rikki. "I mean, we've still...got...something to do? Don't we?"

Alex nodded. "Sure we have. We'd better get to it, too."

Rikki gave her a relieved smile, snuggling back down into her seat. "And we won't have to fucking tell anyone. You know what they say about the stuff that happens in Vegas."

Alex nodded and turned the car around, heading back to the city of dreams. There was something that they had to do and she didn't want to miss a minute of it.