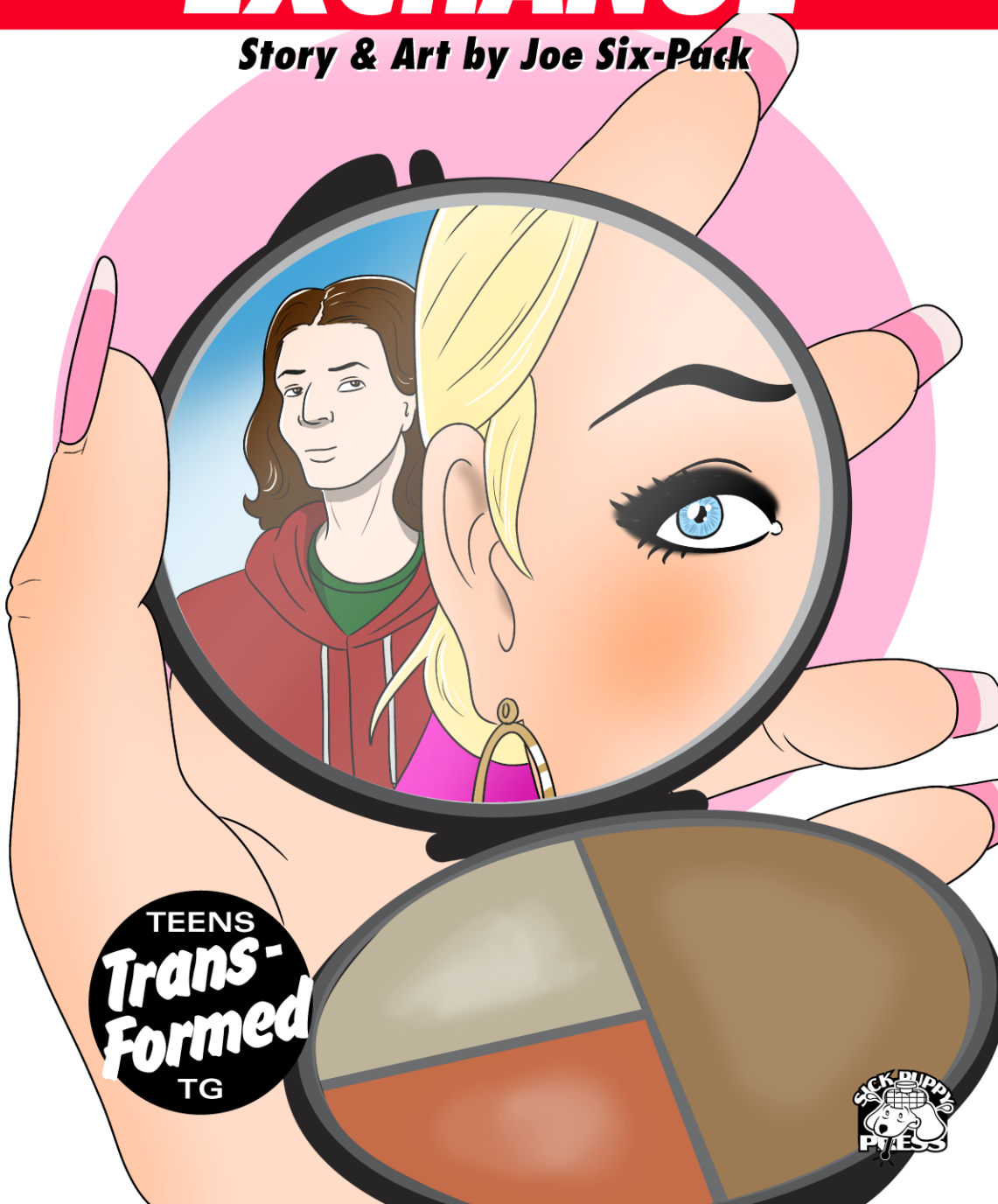


ADULTS ONLY

77 pages 22 illustrations

STUDENT EXCHANGE

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack



J O E S I X P A C K

STUDENT EXCHANGE

**Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack
A Teens Transformed story**



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STUDENT EXCHANGE

The terminal at Will Rogers World Airport was mostly empty on this night. The vendors had closed down, and only a few of the seats were occupied, mostly with dozing business travelers. A vacuum cleaner could be heard off in the distance somewhere, the only recognizable noise to be heard. The lights were dim, the sun had set for the night, and the gate area was dark.

A man dressed in a powder blue suit and cowboy boots was laying straight in his seat, trying to nod off. He adjusted the cowboy hat on his head to take a look around. What he saw, amongst the metal and the black seats was a young teenage girl, holding a sign that said "Welcome to America!" on it. She was dressed in a purple and turquoise sequinned mini dress held up with spaghetti straps, and wore a pair of knee-high high-heeled boots. Her blonde hair had been pinned up in an intentionally messy bun and her face shined with a fresh coat of makeup.

The man in the powder-blue suit placed the hat back over his eyes and tried to go back to sleep. He had lived in Oklahoma long enough to recognize hick white trash when he saw it. The poor girl would get married in a few years, probably to some jock football star, raise some bratty kids, divorce her husband, live off alimony, and spend all her money on plastic surgery to stay young looking. She'd be a burnt-out cheerleader with a smoking habit. Same old story. Hell, he'd married that sort of girl. Three times.

Kelley Sue Crawford, holding her sign and bubbling with excitement, had a different view of her life. Yes, she was a cheerleader dating the school's starting quarterback, and yes, she wanted to get married soon, but there was no way she was staying in her home town. Winstonville only had ten thousand people living there, and she was determined to get out of that tiny town. She was just too good for them. She knew she had the looks and talent to go far. More than once, people on the street – people she didn't even know – would ask her if she was a model or a beauty queen or something the like.

"Not yet," she'd reply, with a flashy smile and a shake of her blond hair.

Her plan for her future was centered around a television show, "Top Model USA," which was scheduled to come to nearby Stanton Valley. There, they'd tape a show where area girls would compete to go to Hollywood for a chance to be a part of the national finals in the Summer. She had made that her mission. She was going to win that show if it killed her.

Key to this plan for success was aboard the plane she had just seen land off in the distance.

On it rode Michelle Bouvier, the French exchange student she was hosting for the rest of the school year. She was going to give Kelley Sue the advantage in the Top Model USA competition. If there was one thing Kelley Sue knew, it

was that she needed to have an edge over her competition. In the one spark of truly innovative thought that she might ever have, it occurred to her that she was just another country girl who was going to compete against others exactly like her. To win Top Model USA, she needed something more. She needed the style and sophistication she couldn't get in Winstonville. That's why she brought the exchange student in. She was going to teach Kelley all about international sophistication. She was from France, after all. *Paris*. The ground zero of all things style.

How much more sophisticated could you get?

Michelle came from the country that invented fashion and style. Now, she was going to benefit from Michelle's expertise and wow those judges at Top Model USA. It was like she had just hired her own personal style consultant.

Kelley Sue bounced with excitement as she saw the Delta commuter flight pull up towards the gate. It wouldn't be long now. She was on her way to stardom.

She wasn't shy about her plan, either. Kelley Sue had bragged to her friends about how she now had the secret weapon to win. "Y'all ain't gonna recognize me after Michelle teaches me all about elegance and culture," she told Randi and Joelle her closest friends. "I'm goin' to be one high-class lady," she told her family. It wasn't uncommon for her to say to her schoolmates and teachers, "I wouldn't be surprised if Michelle didn't make me so sophisticated I'll be modelin' dresses n' stuff in Paris by the end of the year."

As the plane pulled into the gate, some folks gathered around, ready to welcome whomever it was they were waiting for. Nervously, Kelley Sue looked around for her parents, Ron and Chandra, but they were still absent. "Probably got lost parkin'," Kelley Sue said to herself. "Either that or they're still poutin'."

Her parents didn't really like the idea of hosting an exchange student this year. They were against it. That was probably because Kelley Sue hadn't told them about it until three days ago. She had made all the arrangements, and fed the forms into a stack of other things she had her Daddy sign for school. When the student exchange rep called to schedule an interview, Kelley Sue had made sure that it would just be too long a drive and her parents were just so gosh darn busy that an interview wasn't possible. That technicality didn't stand in the way of being approved. Just two weeks ago, Kelley Sue had been phoned to notify her that an exchange student was on the way from Paris by the name of Michelle.

Her parents might have strongly objected, but her parents would do what she wanted. She had her ways.

"Darlin', you know you need to tell us about these things," her Daddy had said. "This is goin' too far!"



“Oh, but Daddy, you won’t have to do nuthin’!” Kelley Sue protested. “She’ll be with me all day and she’ll sleep in the guest room next to mine! You’ll never even know she’s here.”

“What your father said, Kelley Sue!” Her Momma snapped. “You have no right! We’ll have to just call and cancel! We can’t just put some... *Foreigner* in our house! We don’t know anything about her! What if she’s a terrorist?”

“Well I can call the student exchange people and tell them our family can’t host a student,” Kelley Sue replied, “and I just hope they won’t blame us for some sort of international incident!” She put on her best expression of innocence and concern. “If some other family in Winstonville should try and get an exchange student and be rejected, I certainly hope they won’t be told they can’t do it because they don’t trust Winstonville. Imagine! They’d say, ‘We all can’t send an exchange student to you folks, because of what the Crawford family did.’ Wouldn’t that be just *horrible*?”

That was all Kelley Sue needed to say. She knew that her parents were touch sensitive when it came to their social status in Winstonville. Why, her mother was the president of the booster club, and jealously guarded her high position of status. Her Daddy was especially thin-skinned, as the family made good money from being the only tool & die shop within 100 miles of Winstonville. It had bought them the biggest home in town at two whole stories. Ron Crawford Tool & Die made the biggest float in the 4th of July parade, and every year Ron Crawford waved to the community like he was the mayor.

No, she knew her parents would never jeopardize their social standing.

So that was why, as the gates opened up and the passengers came off the plane, Kelley Sue knew that she had already won. She always won. That was the fun of being Kelley Sue Crawford, the Queen of Winstonville.

As the about twenty or so passengers disembarked from the small commuter plane, Kelley Sue imagined showing her new possession off to the people of town, and most importantly to her schoolmates. She’d let everyone know how it was her family and her family’s good reputation that awarded the exchange student to them. Michelle would be a walking trophy to display, shined and polished for people to admire.

Then, as they saw Michelle and Kelley Sue around, they’d remark how much more worldly and stylish Kelley Sue looked. They’d notice as she started to dress in modern fashions and carry herself with European grace and poise. In six months, she’d be unrecognizable as the country girl she was now and she’d walk and talk like an elegant supermodel, the type you see in beer posters.

As the crowd started to thin out, it suddenly occurred to Kelley Sue that she didn’t see her exchange student. There were nothing but haggard business travelers in beaten suits. No one was left behind. Not a soul. Except for...

Oh, no, thought Kelley Sue. It couldn't be. She turned to the only passenger that was still standing around, waiting. She approached, still holding her sign. "Scuse me, darlin..." she began.

The young man raised his head and nervously smiled. "Allo. I am looking for Kel Eeee Craw-ferd?"

"Oh, uh," Kelley Sue was reluctant to confirm her name. "Who are you?"

"I am Michel," he handed over his forms from the student exchange organization. "Michel from Paris."

"Yes!" Kelley Sue replied brightly. "Where is Michelle?"

The boy blushed. "Non. I am Michel."

Kelley Sue, confused, took a glance at the papers she held in her hands. The name read "Michel Jean Bouvier."

This couldn't be. She shook the papers angrily. "This is not right!" She looked around for any assistance. Seeing the clerks at the gate, she stomped on over to the ticket desk. "Excuse me!" she said loudly. "Excuse me!"

One of the clerks turned to face Kelley Sue and he gave her a courtesy smile. "Miss?" He asked.

"Yes, hello. How are you?" Kelley Sue replied, sweetening her smile just as much as the clerk. "We have a situation." She produced the papers from the student exchange. "There's been a little mix-up? You see? I have graciously consented to share my home with a French female exchange student by the name of Michelle."

The clerk gave Kelley Sue's papers a cursory glance. "Yes..." he said, unable to put together the pieces yet.

"Well, as you can see..." She pointed to Michel, still standing where he was, dressed in his skinny black jeans and baggy pullover. "That's not a girl named Michelle."

"Yes." The clerk pointed to the papers. "It's pronounced the same as...."

"I have not finished my story yet. Please do not interrupt me." Kelley Sue straightened her posture. "I have no need for a boy. There's obviously some sort of error."

The clerk replied by silently nodding.

"So, you need to send him back," Kelley Sue concluded. "Okay? Thank you!" She began to turn away.

Blinking rapidly in a sign of total non-comprehension, the clerk gathered his incredulity together. "I don't understand."

"I don't want this student," Kelley Sue re-stated. "I'm returning him. You send him back to France."

The clerk decided against just walking away and laughing, and stood his ground. "Miss, we don't have any way of doing that. We have nothing to do with the student exchange program."

"I'll sign whatever you want me to sign. Just put him on the plane and send him back. Do you need me to write a note?"

The clerk needed to end this. "Miss, this is not an issue for the airline. I can give you our customer service number if you'd like, but if you have a problem with the student exchange program, you'll have much better and faster service if you contact them directly."

Kelley Sue considered this. "You think so?"

"Oh yes, miss."

Kelley Sue then saw her parents approaching from the far side of the terminal. She didn't want to be seen having a problem, as if something wasn't completely under control. "Thank you for your help, then."

"Thank *you*," the clerk replied before swiftly escaping through a door.

Kelley Sue hurriedly returned to Michel to make sure she had time to think of something before her parents arrived. As she did, Michel smiled, and undid the tightly bound stubby pony tail at the base of his neck. "Veree long flight," he said, shaking his long hair free. Now unrestrained, his brown hair was past chin length and very healthy. "I would ask a shower, no?"

The new appearance of her exchange student caused Kelley Sue to pause momentarily, as that long hair made him look like the girl she wished he was. In fact, he had a very effeminate face, except for the large beaky nose on him. She started to think that maybe, since he already looked kinda female... That... Possibly... But before she could get her thoughts in gear, Ron and Chandra were there.

"Bon Jor No!" They said together in a loud Texan drawl.

"How Dee," Michel replied, returning the gesture of speaking in the native tongue.

Ron, Kelley Sue's father was the first to venture into conversation. "So, welcome..." he paused, as if to consider who, exactly, he was talking to. "...Michelle."

"Welcome to Oklahomal!" Chandra said, giving Michel a hug. "Um... Michelle."

Both parents seemed to be a bit skeptical, so rather than create a scene, Kelley Sue filled in the doubt with a lot of activity. "Michelle's luggage is coming in, Daddy, so why don't you go down to the basement to see if it's arrived. Momma, I promised Joelle I'd pick something up from the gift shop, so here's twenty dollars, please find something nice for her. Meanwhile, I need to take Michelle to the ladies room to freshen up."



With orders, the group broke up and headed off in separate directions. Kelley Sue knew well that the luggage claim was not down in the basement, and that all the vendors were closed. That would have her parents wandering round for a while, buying her some time.

She was shocked that her parents still seemed to think that Michel might yet be a girl, but looking at him, she could understand their hesitation. Michel didn't seem to have much in the way of masculinity. He was small, had long hair, no beard, and spoke in a soft voice. Knowing that she was living on borrowed time, she whipped out her cell phone.

Kelley Sue argued for about ten minutes, loudly, with the student exchange people who refused to even acknowledge that sending Michel back was an option. Even her usual brand of intimidating charm wasn't making a dent in their denial of her simple, reasonable request. As she suspected, she was stuck with Michel, and it was time for a new plan. Frustrated, she clacked her phone shut and dragged Michel into the empty ladies' room.

"But eet is not for me!" Michel objected, as he was being steered to the bathroom with the skirted figure on the door. "I am not..."

"Stop complaining, Frenchie!" Kelley Sue commanded, as she shoved him inside.

Michel covered his eyes with his hands. "This eez embarrassing!" he cried. Kelley Sue ripped his hands from his eyes.

"Knock it off!" She barked. She rubbed the temples of her head for a few moments, and then made paced a few feet left and right before she put her hands on her hips and took a deep breath. "Okay," she said to the air. "Okay. Look. I don't have a choice."

She turned to Michel and then dropped to her knees. "Please pretend to be a girl!" She said, her hands clutched together to beg. "Pleeeeeease!"

"What?" Michel replied, astonished at this girl's unhinged behavior. "Non!"

"I told all my friends and teachers I was going to have a French girl!" She cried. "I can *not* go back and tell them Kelley Sue Crawford failed! I can *not* do that! Failure is *not* an option!"

His exit blocked, Michel backed away from Kelley Sue as far as he could, to the other end of the bathroom. His horrified expression spoke volumes. He was just on a plane from his home country and in the first five minutes of landing, he was in the middle of some bizarre scene beyond his imagination. "Please do not hurt Michel," he said.

"I will pay you anything! Good American money! I will do anything! I *have* to have a girl to show everyone!" Kelley Sue pleaded. "I will *not* be the laughing stock of Winstonville!"

"Je prie..." Michel started to say. He tried to speak another word, but knew he was lost. He grabbed a small book from his pocket titled "Expressions Anglaises" and flipped through it. "Please, where... is... the consulate?" he said, haltingly. "I would like... to see... The embassy."

"The embassy?" Kelley Sue said. "Darlin, there ain't..." An idea struck her, as if a light bulb had gone off above her head. She then stopped talking for a second and then her expression changed from compliant to commanding. "Oh, no!" Kelley Sue said with mock concern, as she stood up. "Oh, Darlin!" she placed her hand over her lips, in a dramatic display of concern.

"Quel set..?"

"When I was told that a French student named Michel was coming, I assumed it was a girl," she said. "Now this is my fault and I do apologize. But I told the immigration people that our houseguest was going to be female."

"Im eh gray shun?" Michel tried to repeat.

"The government, honey. You know, the people with the guns and tanks?"

Michel's expression was suddenly stricken with horror. He rightfully feared the American government. The dangerous reputation of what the border police did to foreigners was on the news every night.

Kelley Sue approached Michel and placed her hand on his shoulder sympathetically. "I'm afraid that the government is expecting a female to be living with us. If they should find out that you're not who they think you are..." She held Michel's hand, and held it close. "I do not want to think what they might do to a foreigner. Have you heard of waterboarding?"

Michel jolted back into the corner, his eyes open wide with horror. "Quoi!"

"Now I am begging you, Michel, if you don't let me help you, you'll be thrown in jail before we even leave this airport!" She removed a tube of lipstick from her purse. "We can do this together, Michel. I won't let them take you!"



Ron Crawford checked the road sign that indicated 65 miles as it flew by. The Chevy crew cab truck careened down the highway at 70, meaning it was going to be another hour until they got back home. He looked over to his wife, who was already halfway through a pack of Marlboro Lights. She dangled her lit cigarette out the window to keep the smoke out of the cab.

"So is it Spring in France?" Chandra asked, looking at Michel in the rear-view mirror. "I heard that when it's Fall here, it's the opposite over there."

"That's Australia, Momma," Kelley Sue said, exasperated.

"They're all in the same place, aren't they?"

"No, Momma!" Kelley Sue stared at Michel, as did both Ron and Chandra in the mirrors.

"You might be thinking of Austria?" Michel said, softly. He made his voice even quieter and softer, even though he really didn't need to. He ventured a smile to try and seem sociable.

Chandra was interested to note that Michelle wore the same shade of lipstick as her daughter. Perhaps Kelley Sue was more in style than she had given her credit for. She also noticed how Kelley Sue seemed to be constantly fiddling with Michelle's hair, brushing it and spritzing it.

"Do you like chicken? We can stop by KFC," she asked Michelle. "They have these wonderful things called Famous Bowls where they take mashed potatoes, gravy, chicken and corn and pile it all in a single bowl." Michelle looked unable to respond, and seemed to well up with tears as her mascara ran. "Poor dear," Chandra whispered to her husband, "homesick already."



"And is this Michelle?" The teacher at the head of the class asked. Everyone in the classroom who already wasn't looking at Michel turned to see the arrival of the famous, lauded, French exchange student. Every nerve in Michel's body was buzzing and he depended on Kelley Sue's hand at his back to keep him from collapsing.

It wasn't that many people. It was Kelley Sue's smallest class of the day, her first period English class, with about ten students, and not everyone had yet arrived.

Kelley Sue steered Michel over to his seat, which was difficult, as Michel was taking tiny, tiny steps in his modestly-heeled shoes. Kelley Sue had dressed Michel in something that was going to get him through his first day at school. In America. As a girl.

He wore a huge, oversized white dress shirt stolen from Ron Crawford's closet, with the collar left loose as were the cuffs unbuttoned and the tails untucked. With that she had him wear her own black dress slacks and as much jewelry as Kelley Sue could load him up with. His hair was teased out as high as she could get it, and all that left Kelley Sue with barely even enough time to do his makeup.

"Really?" Said Carla Langer, a girl who was well known for her acute love of hassling people. She was going to be a cop someday. "This is the student they sent you?" She turned to a friend sitting nearby. "*Really.*"

"It was a long flight," Kelley Sue protested. "She's got a lot of jet lag." She took a long look at Michel, who was visibly sweating. The slap-dash makeup made him look so uneven, he looked sickly. Michel's eyes were popped open like turkey timers, and his face was locked into some sort of permanent state of dissociation. It looked incredibly creepy.

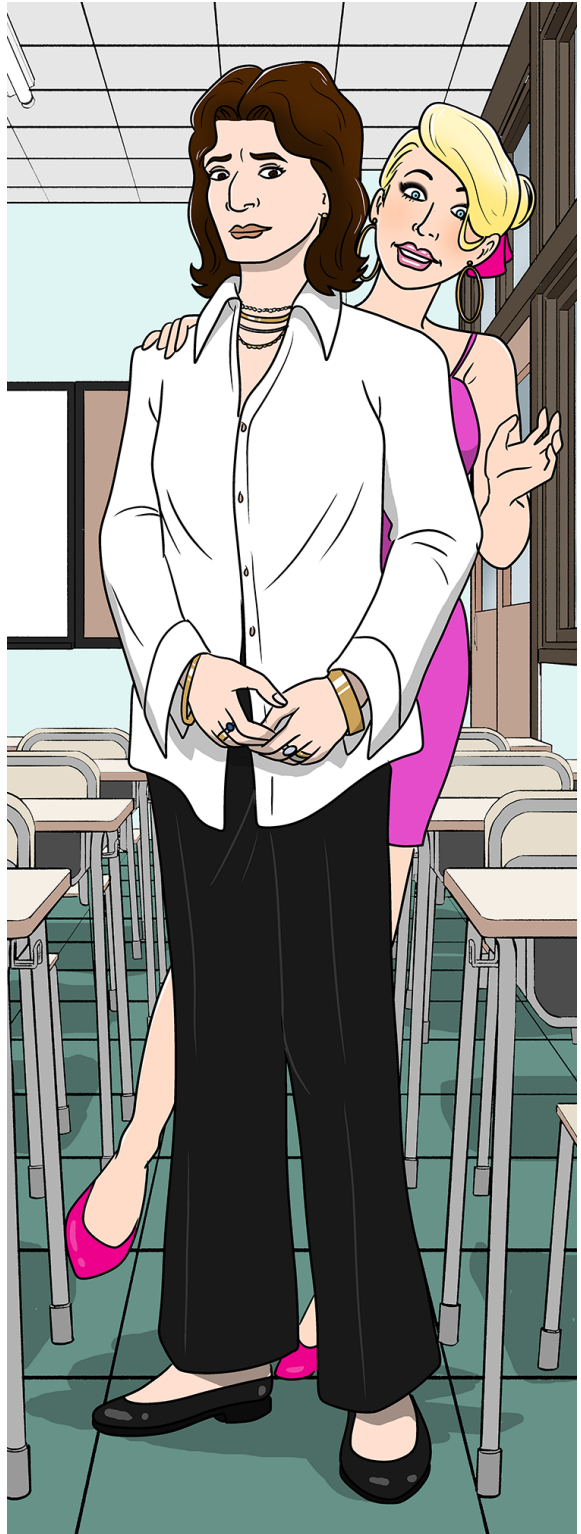
"That's Michelle?" Kelley Sue overheard another person say from a few rows away. "She's a mess."

"Welcome. To. Amer-i-ca." said the teacher, slowing things down so Michel could understand it. Michel just blankly stared back, unable to process anything at all.

Kelley Sue saw this situation quickly bucking out of control. "What's that?" She said to Michel, as if he had spoken words to her. "What did you say?" Kelley Sue leaned in closer to 'hear' what Michelle was not saying. "Miss Newman?" Kelley Sue got the attention of the teacher. "Michelle says she's very sick."

Miss Newman was alarmed. "Oh, dear! Does she need to see the nurse?"

"Oh no, ma'am," Kelley Sue said, gathering up both of their books. "She needs to go back to my place."



“The nurse is quite capable...”

“She needs her special... *European* medicines,” Kelley Sue explained. She then tugged Michel to his feet and shuffled him out. She needed to spend much more time to train and sculpt Michel into a passable female. It was going to take a while.

“Your government would only put me in jail...” Michel said as he was being escorted hastily into the parking lot. “I hear the jails are nicer here than in France.”

Kelley Sue groaned. She was looking at several days of training. What was she going to tell people? How could she invent an excuse to hide Michel for two weeks and train him to be female?

Maybe she could call it a quarantine or something. She decided that she’d just tell her parents that the school needed to quarantine all foreign visitors for two weeks as a precaution. Oh, she prayed she could come up with a better excuse.

“We are gonna need to do lots more work,” Kelley Sue said, stuffing Michel into the passenger side of her cherry-red Mustang. “But as the good Lord is my witness, I will have my Michelle!”



“Slide it around,” Kelley Sue instructed Michel. The boy reluctantly slid the bra he had fastened around his ribs around so the cups faced forward. “See? It’s so much easier that way.” She handed over some pantyhose stuffed with birdseed. “Put these in the cups.”

“You have to explain eet to them, Kel-ey Sue!” Michel begged. “Explain the err-or!”

“I will!” Kelley Sue promised. “But I need time, Michel. Now I want you to put on these panties.”

“Panties?” He asked, his face wrinkled with stress.

“These,” Kelley Sue held up a silky, lacy pair of black panties.

Michel took them, sighed, and then stepped into them. He slid them up his now hairless legs and adjusted them as they rested on his hips.

“They fit you pretty good,” Kelley Sue observed. She also observed that Michel rubbed them with his hands, feeling the silky material. He continued to adjust himself and move the panties around. “You like the way they feel?” She asked.

Michel looked up and blushed. “Non,” he replied. “Non.”

Kelley Sue gave him a pair of black stockings. "On your legs."

Taking them, Michel slid each stocking over his legs. The first one he had some trouble with, and fought with it a little. The second one he took his time with and slowly pulled it up, letting it slide against his bare legs. One all the way up, he ran his hands up and down his legs.

Kelley Sue smiled to herself. She had a sissy little panty boy on her hands. *He just may grow to like this*, she thought to herself.



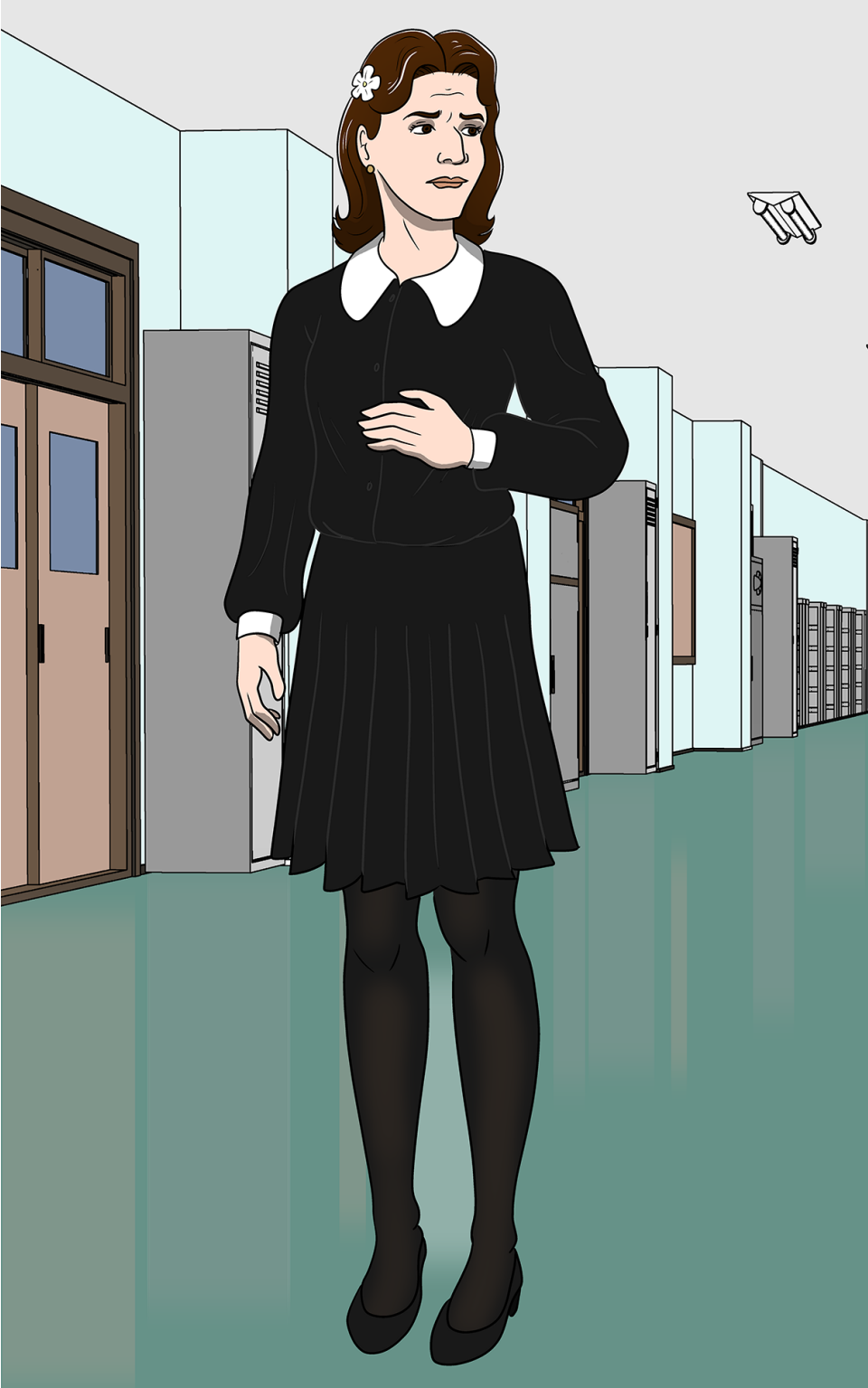
Two weeks later, Michelle Bouvier strode down the hallway at Winstonville high school, laughing with her best friend Kelley Sue Crawford. She threw her head back, letting her long, shiny hair flutter in the wind behind her, attracting the attention of every boy.

There was little doubt Michelle was a carefree spirit from a foreign land. Everything about her spoke of growing up in a different environment, a different culture. The very way she carried herself suggested that she possessed a view of the world that the students of Winstonville high could only try – and fail – to understand.

She was exotic. A living exhibit of a world well beyond the borders of the city, even the borders of the county, say nothing of the state. The glances from her knowing eyes both attracted and terrified a man, promising rewards of lavish attention and the threat of being hopelessly inadequate.

At least, that's the way Kelley Sue imagined it. The truth was that two weeks of fairly intensive training wasn't going to achieve miracles, and Michelle's





second debut at Winstonville High was only marginally memorable.

That was good enough, really. Considering the debacle of the first attempt, just being able to slip the new Michelle into the school without anyone suspecting Michel's true identity was a major victory.

Michel was dressed in the best of what Kelley Sue's closet had to offer. A few days into the training revealed that he was almost exactly the same size as Kelley Sue, if not a bit smaller. She didn't have much that could be passed off as Paris fashion, so she had kept it basic for Michel, with a black silk blouse, a black knee-length skirt, black tights and black flats. Black was always in fashion, Kelley Sue told Michel.

Fourteen whole days of drilling Michel hadn't made much of a dent in his personality, as he was still very quiet and reserved. All that Kelley Sue had been able to do was try and get rid of that "terrified beyond imagination" bad attitude of his. Kelley Sue found it helpful to make constant reminders of being exposed, picked up in an unmarked van and never seen again.

"I've never met anyone from France before," said Joelle, one of Kelley Sue's best friends. "Go on, say something French." They were sitting at the lunch tables, Michel poking around some bizarre mess of meat and lettuce called a "cobb salad" despondently.

Michel looked at Kelley Sue who just nodded back, prodding him on. "Faut p  ter dans l'eau pour faire des bulles," Michel said in his soft voice.

"Oh!" Joelle said excitedly, "It sounds so romantic!"

Michel looked around, seeing that that a small crowd of people had gathered just to stare at him. He would be excused if he felt like he was the latest freak at the circus. Turning away to stare at his salad, he didn't seem interested in entertaining the audience.

Still, as despondent as he felt, he didn't give anything away about his true gender. He didn't slouch in his seat. Michel kept himself sitting straight upright, like he had been instructed to. When he sat down at the table, he had swept his skirt underneath him and kept his knees together. If he had been eating his salad, he would have taken small, lady-like bites. That was what Kelley Sue had instructed him to do, and he was doing his best to comply.

"She really is quiet, isn't she?" Commented Randi, Kelley Sue's other close friend. "I don't think she's very happy."

"Michelle is a little down. It's her first day," Kelley Sue remarked. "I'm sure she'll cheer up when she gets adjusted to life in America." She spied someone a short distance away. "Colt! Oh, Colt!" She called.

A strong, well-muscled young man with a neck slightly thicker than his head turned around. His name was Colt Bradford, and he was Kelley Sue's boyfriend. His hair was cut short, was rakishly unstyled, and he wore the thick

letterman's jacket he earned from being the starting quarterback and All-State wrestler for Winstonville High.

"Hey, Kelley Sue," Colt said, in passing. He turned to go sit with his friends, but didn't get very far.

"Come meet Michelle!" Kelley Sue requested, in a commanding way. Colt was powerless to do anything else but follow orders. He ambled on over to the table, where he only got a clear look when he was close enough.

"Hey," Colt said to Michel, with a flinch of his head. It was his customary greeting. He then noticed that Kelley Sue had turned her cheek and stuck it out, and Colt stretched over the table to kiss it.

"Say hello to Colt, Michelle. He's my boyfriend." Kelley Sue said.

Michel raised his head. "Bonjour, Colt."

"Oh! The French girl!" Colt said, suddenly realizing what the circumstance was. He sat down, across from Michel. "Say something in French!"

"She just did, Colt," Kelley Sue pointed out.

"Something else!" Colt quickly added.

Michel put his fork down and looked at his lap. He sighed. "J'aimerais pouvoir retourner dans le ventre de ma mère."

Colt smiled. He looked at Kelley Sue. "I didn't understand anything."

"Le cerveau il etait en option chez toi," Michel replied.

A look of childlike glee spread across Colt's face. "This is awesome!"

That actually caused Michel to smile back. He looked back down at his lap, but the red lipstick he wore made the grin he was trying to conceal obvious. At least it was to Colt.

"Don't worry," Colt said to Michel. "Pretty soon you'll just be another student like any one of us. You'll be fine."

Michel raised his head just enough to see Colt. It was probably the only bit of comfort he had received since he had gotten off the plane.

"Oh, is that the French girl?" Said one girl passing by. "Sharon! Darlene!" She yelled into the lunchroom. "Kelley Sue's French girl is here!"

"Let me see!" said a voice from another side of the lunchroom.

"I gotta see that!" another voice yelled.

Detecting that the situation was getting out of control, and that an ugly scene was about to take place, Kelley Sue stood up and held her hands in the air.

"People! Whoa! Let's not be uncivilized! Now take it easy!" She then blocked off any contact with Michelle by throwing her arms out. "She is not a zoo animal!"

Kelley Sue tugged on Michel's arm, getting him up from the table. He was then led through the crowd by Kelley Sue who bravely held her hand out to fend away the crowd, even if they were just standing back and giving her plenty of space.

As they walked, Kelley Sue wrapped a protective arm around Michel, making sure he was extra safe. Kelley Sue loved seeing the glances and stares Michel was getting. No one suspected a thing. They all just assumed that Michel was a real girl, and not even questioning it.

The truth was that Michel's natural appearance did nothing to combat that female impression. He was rakishly thin to begin with, and his hair was at least three times as long as the longest male student in rural Winstonville. His light skin and near-hairless young face was clear and smooth. His speaking voice was almost musical. His body was seemingly unthreatened by any male puberty. There was virtually nothing to indicate his true gender, save the bound and tucked package in his French-lace panties.

With just a touch of makeup, a spritz of perfume and a hairstyle, Michel was a convincing female. Add in some birdseed in his bra and put him in a skirt, and the disguise was perfect.

Kelley Sue felt like a god. She had virtually created this "girl" out of nothing. The rush of power running through her veins, if tapped, could fuel a small city. She felt untouchable.

She watched as Michel walked gracefully, bashfully glancing at the students, just as she had taught him to do. "Some of the kids here have parents that work for the government," she had reminded Michel earlier this morning. "You wouldn't want them to suspect, would you?" He learned his lessons well, with the right motivation.

Finally, Kelley Sue had her Michelle. She had her prize. Everyone envied her. Even if she didn't have the fashion-savvy French girl she wanted, she still had someone from France, and that was still something. She could yet get that sense of international style she was looking for, even if it wasn't exactly, 100-percent, totally on-target what she had in mind.

All that mattered as that all eyes were on her.



Three days later, a lonely Kelley Sue sat at the lunch table, watching Michel peel away the breading on a fish fillet before he ate it. She rested her bored head on her hand, looking this way and then that, waiting for someone – anyone – to make notice of her and her guest. A feeling in the pit of her stomach

told her that Michel was no longer the sensation he once was. The novelty had worn off.

Finally, Joelle and Randi came to sit with Kelley Sue. "Hey guys," Kelley Sue mumbled.

"Bon jor," Joelle said to Michel.

Michel smirked back. "Bonjour." He had learned to at least be polite. Michel tried to take a small taste of the fish before taking a full bite. He looked to be having a difficult time.

"Did you understand that assignment in English today?" Randi asked Kelley Sue. "How many stories do we have to read? That was..."

"Yes!" Kelley Sue said, interrupting Randi. "Stories! Did I ever tell you Michelle's story?"

Randi and Joelle looked at each other, sharing a moment of awkwardness. "She has a story?" Joelle was compelled by courtesy to ask. Michel also looked over at Kelley Sue, his eyes asking the same question.

"Oh, yes! And it's so sad!" Kelley Sue said, her mind already racing. She suddenly realized how she could get that attention back. All she had to do was give Michelle a back-story that make her even more interesting and fascinating.

"Well, tell us," Randi said to Michel. "I bet it's..."

"Oh, let me tell it!" Kelley Sue quickly interjected. "Okay. So." Kelley Sue tried to think of where to start. Flashes of Lifetime Cable movies, soap operas, romance novels and hallmark greeting cards flashed through her mind at light speed. "Michelle was born to a mother out of wedlock. Her father had abandoned her pregnant mother at the altar and ran off to join the French foreign legion."

"Zis is not..." Michel tried to say.

"Shush, Darlin'!" Kelley Sue said, cutting him off. "So, in the hospital, her mother had a problem. Ever since she had lost the love of her life, her heart was broken, and she was really, really sick. She was given a choice of having an abortion and living, or giving birth and dying. She chose to have Michelle. And she dies without ever seeing her baby."

Both Randi and Joelle's eyes became teary, as they both said "Awww." Kelley Sue realized she may be laying it on a bit thick, but they seemed to be swallowing it.

"So then, then!" Kelley Sue was excited. "Then, she was raised by her grandmother, but she wasn't very healthy either, so Michelle had to beg on the streets to feed herself and her ailing Gram-gram." She paused for what might have seemed like dramatic effect, but really, she was trying to come up with the next part. "So Michelle eventually worked as a waitress at Paris' most fa-

mous cafe. There, she met a guy who was the most famous fashion model in France and they fell in love.”

Kelley Sue slowed down as she had to think some more. “So... Then, they got engaged and...”

“At sixteen?” Randi asked.

“It’s Europe!” Kelley Sue pointed out. “Anyway, um... No, they didn’t get engaged. Actually, see, what happened was that this guy was going to propose to her, but he... Died... In a tragic... Fashion runway accident.”

Kelley Sue looked expectantly at her two friends. She wanted to get some sort of feedback.

“That is *sooooo* sad!” Randi replied.

“Ohmigod! That is... Tragic!” Joelle said.

Kelley Sue felt like throwing a fist pump in the air. They had bought it.

“Why haven’t I heard this before? Randi asked. “I’ve got to tell people!”

“They need to make a movie out of this! Or a TV show!” Joelle chimed in.

“What was his name?” She asked Michel.

“Who?” Michel replied

“The guy who was going to marry you!”

Michel nonchalantly threw his hands in the air and shrugged. “Gustave?”

“Guuuustaaave...” The girls sang emotively.

“I mean Sebastian.”

“Sebaaastieennnn....” The girls sang again.

It wasn’t but five minutes before Michel had to tell the story himself. “It’s so sad! Tell us the story!” some of Joelle’s and Randi’s friends begged.

Now that Kelley Sue had made it up, she left it up to Michel to repeat. She just sat back and enjoyed the show.

“My mother was born in ze south of France, a peasant girl who met a man from rich family of power in ze north...” Michel said as he told his version of the story. “They fell in love in just a zingle day...”

Michel also found himself telling the story for some more of Randi’s friends in Algebra class. “My father was a powerful man, who was ze last in a long line of wealthy landowners...”

“My mother walked fifteen miles just to gather drinkable water for her family...” Michel added.

In wood shop, he was compelled to tell it again. “The doctors gave her a choice. Either swallow the pill that would stop her heart and have her baby... Or swallow ze pill zhat would kill her baby....”

Then, he told in in the hall as he got ready for class. "My father was hunted like a criminal. He had not killed ze old man, he had tried to save heem, but it was his blood on his clothes. My mother helped him escape to Africa, but knew she would never see him again..."

In homeroom, Michel was still telling his story. "Grand-mère loved me with every bit of her heart, but she was not well. She was blind and could not even stand for long without tiring..."

"Tell the part about the modell!" One of the students in a growing crowd shouted.

"And then there was Sebastian. When he first saw me, I was dressed in a tiny skirt and blouse as I waited tables... He asked me to sit and said he wanted to know more about me..."

"I could see in his deep, loving eyes my entire future. I would be hiz wife, hiz lover, hiz mistress. I would grow old with him and we would live in the country, watching our children play in ze fields."

At lunch the next day, he was still telling the story. "And zen one day, as he walked ze runway for the biggest fashion show in all of Paris, Sebastian was struck by a heavy light fixture as it collapsed on heem..." Michel dabbed his eyes with a tissue. "When zey took him to the morgue, zey found a ring in hees pocket. An engagement ring."

"For you, Michelle?" A student asked.

"Oui," he replied turning his face away as he melodramatically brought the tissue to his eyes again. "It was for me."

The bell rang to start class again, and Michel dashed away, as if he couldn't bear to talk about Michelle's tragic history one moment longer. His short, flirty skirt fluttered behind him as he ran, whisking against his bare legs. He was surprisingly sure-footed in the three-inch heels he wore, and his small black vest he wore over his leotard top drifted in the wind he created.

"Hold up!" Kelley Sue called after him. She was much less mobile in the four-inch heeled boots she was wearing. Michel dipped into a small alcove and Kelley Sue soon caught up.

"They love zat storee," Michel said with a grin.

"Well, every time you tell it it gets even more outrageous," Kelley Sue said as she panted. "I think maybe you need to take the sauce off that tall tale, Darlin'."

"What?"

"Tone it down?" Kelley Sue clarified. "I didn't make you 'Michelle' to steal all the attention, you know."

"Oh, I think people like it. Who knows if zey believe it? I zink it is just fun."



Kelley Sue was not liking this one bit. Michel and his story were getting out of control. Students were crowding around him begging for him to recite it. It happened every break, every off-period and before and after school. She needed to nip it in the bud.

“Say, instead of you just hanging around, why don’t you come with me to dance squad practice after school?” Kelley Sue said. She needed to keep him on tighter leash. “I think we should share my locker, too. That way we don’t have to be apart practically at all!”

“But I wanted to...”

“I insist, Michel,” Kelley Sue said with her toothy insincere smile. “Oops! I mean *Michelle*. I hope no one heard me.”



At practice, in the multi-purpose gym, the girls of the cheerleading squad and the dance squad were going through their routines. Their squeaky sneakers on the floor and shrill cheers echoed off the walls of the room. They would rather be outside, but these practices were secret. The homecoming game was coming up in a couple of months, and it was by far the biggest event on the calendar for these students.

Winstonville High celebrated homecoming with more than just a little dance. It was an event all of the people in town came to, filling the stands and grounds of the Winstonville football stadium every year. The school put on the best show they could, with a marching band and cheerleaders on the artificial turf field, under the lights.

They usually picked a theme, and this year they had picked “Sooners” (not for the first time), celebrating the people who settled Oklahoma and Winstonville in the land rush of the 1800’s. As such, they had invested most of the budget on costumes for the occasion, based on traditional homesteader motifs, like sexy cowgirl outfits and chrome-plated six-shooter props.

As the girls “danced,” Michel watched from a distant corner, the shocked look on his face exposing his apparent concern as to why a school would endorse a blatant burlesque show featuring its’ students. It had his full attention, as he watched the girls jump, shake and strut with glittery pom-poms, big boots and fringed glittery outfits. He leaned back and squinted his eyes in concentration.



“So how was school, girls?” Chandra Crawford said, as Ron Crawford joined them at the dinner table. Michel and Kelley Sue were waiting patiently, as they were expected to.

Michel, despite a slight cringe at being called a girl, was the first to speak. “Well, Mrs. Crawford, I met...”

“Homecoming is going to be the best ever!” Kelley Sue interrupted. She subscribed to the philosophy that the most important people always speak first. “Our costumes are going to burn the house down!”

“I hope they’re a little more tasteful than last year,” Ron said.

“Daddy, it’s 2017!” Kelley Sue scolded. “Besides, it’s not like we’re performing at the church.”

“Oh, that reminds me!” Chandra took a drag of her cigarette and then placed it aside. “Michelle, since you’re now fully out of that quarantine, maybe you’d like to go to church with us on Sunday?”

Michel finished what he was eating, which seemed to involve elbow macaroni and possibly chicken, and swallowed. “Ex-cuz me for azking, but you are Christian, no?” He asked.

“Protestant,” Ron answered. “First Holy Church of the Witness of Christ.”

“Well, I am Jewish,” Michel said with an apologetic tone.

Chandra dropped her fork loudly on her plate. “Jewish? Well... I suppose... I’m sure that...” She picked up her cigarette and took another blow. That calmed her, and she put a 32-tooth smile on her face. “How long have you been Jewish? Did you convert, or were you forced to, or...”

“My family eez Jewish, Mrs. Crawford,” Michel said. “We always have been. But we don’t really do a lot. Just ze holidays.”

“Oh, that’s a relief,” Chandra said, fanning herself with her hand. “I don’t know what we’d do with a practicing Jewish person.” She the piled up some food on her fork. “Not that there’s anything wrong with that.”

“No, no,” Ron added. “I knew a Jewish man back in college. I think he cleaned the windows on my dorm floor.”

“There you go,” Chandra smiled. “It’s a small world.”

“Anyway,” Ron decided to steer the conversation in a different direction. “We want you to feel a bit more like one of the family. The Mrs. and I talked it over, and we hope you’ll just call us ‘Momma’ and ‘Daddy’ like Kelley Sue does.”

“Oh!” Michel relied with surprise. “Thank you.” He paused and added, “Daddy.” He turned to Chandra. “Momma.”

“Fine. Now does anyone want to hear about *my* day?” Kelley Sue said, obviously put off. “Like I was saying, the homecoming game is going to be the best we’ve ever done. We got Jarvis to make up his truck like an old wagon, and...”

“But I would like to go to church with you,” Michel said to Chandra. “Eet eez... Unique.”

Chandra blanched at the thought. “Well... I don’t know what the other wives will say...”

“Please... Momma,” Michel said.

“We’ll see. You would need some church clothes.”

Michel pressed the point. “I have enough money to pay for ze clothes.”

“I did see a nice ruffled pink dress with a lovely embroidered bodice...” Chandra began to think. “Pair that with some white tights and a ribbon in your hair...”

“Yes!” Michel enthused. “Yes, please!”

Chandra went back to eating. “We’ll see, we’ll see.”



That night, Kelley Sue clicked off the TV, finished with watching her shows. She looked at her phone and considered calling Randi and Joelle back up, but had had enough of that tonight. With a moment free, she checked the clock. It was ten PM, and it was time to check on Michel. She sighed, put the bag of microwave popcorn she had been snacking on aside, and trudged up the stairs.

“Are you done yet?” She asked Michel, who was sitting on the floor of his room, with papers and books sprawled out all around him.

Michel looked up at Kelley Sue and smiled. “Almost,” he said. “Your dress eez finished, though.” He pointed over to a red dress on a hangar.

Kelley Sue immediately lit up with a smile and rushed over to take a look. She swept it up and held the sparkling, gaudy red outfit in front of her as she looked in the mirror. “Did you follow the designs exactly?”

“Yes,” Michel said. “To ze stitch.”

Kelley Sue grabbed the printouts she had made of an evening dress design plan. She compared the rendering to the final product. She seemed satisfied. “I’m going to get the top grade with this dress!”

“Yes, I hope so,” Michel said. “Eez eet right for me to be doing all this work for you?”

“It’s called initiation, Michelle,” Kelley Sue said, continuing to enjoy her reflection. “Since you’re new, y’all have to do all my schoolwork. It’s a tradition we have with *a//* the exchange students.”

“How many exchange students have come to Winstonville?”

“Never you mind.” Kelley Sue spied a notebook lying on the bed, and picked it up. “What’s this supposed to be?”

“Oh!” Michel quickly sprang into action and tried to snap the notebook away. “Nothing.”

“That looks like my handwritin’.” She took a closer look. “And my signature.”

“Uh...” Michel’s pause was suspiciously long. “To do the homework!” He said, “It needs to look like you did it.”

“Yes, of course,” Kelley Sue said. Michel reached for the notebook, but Kelley Sue kept it out of his grasp, by taking a closer look. “Huh, it’s pretty good.” She then looked at a small box on the desk, with some woodworking tools and paint next to it. “Are you finished with my Wood Shop final project?”

“Oui,” Michel replied.

“And my French final?”

“Just a few more min-oots.”

“A few minutes? Good,” Kelley Sue said with a degree of smugness. She tore off the pages of signatures and handwriting practice and folded them up. She then returned the notebook to the bed. “What was all that business about church? I’d pay good money *not* to have to go.”

“Like I said, eet is a unique thing for me. I want to see American church at least once,” Michel replied.

“I thought you didn’t want to be wearing dresses and pretending to be a girl. Now you want to go to church as a girl? In a dress?”

“Well... Everyone seems to thenk I am a girl. I don’t thenk I will make any mistakes. I just want to be another Ok-la-ho-man.”

“Have it your way. You know, y’all seem awfully fascinated by Oklahoma.”

“Eet is why I came here,” Michel said, trying to focus on the paper in front of him. “I want to experience everything Ok-la-ho-man.”

“Well, since you want to be a gen-u-ine Ok-la-ho-man, and now a member of the family, maybe ought to just call you Michelle Crawford!” Kelley Sue laughed like it was the finniest thing in the world. “What a hoot! Michelle – no – Shelley. Shelley Jean Crawford. All American girl!” She cackled even louder.

“I’ll be done with your paper by the morning,” Michel said, trying to dismiss Kelley Sue.

Kelley Sue was failing at containing her amusement. “Shore thing, Shelley Jean,” she said as she left.

Once the door was closed, Michel got to his feet and walked over to the mirror. He held up that same dress to himself and looked at his reflection. “Shore thing, Shelley Jean,” he said, in a convincing imitation of his host.



“I hate finals,” Joelle said, as she met Randi in the school hallway the next morning.

“Yeah, finals suck,” Randi agreed. “It’s the week where my parents actually ask me about classwork and my grades and all that junk.”

“Don’t you hate that?” Joelle said with a roll of the eyes. “I mean, why are you asking now? Y’all shoulda asked when I could’a done somethin’ ‘bout it, right?”

“Oh look, here comes the Queen of Winstonville,” Randi said, mockingly.

“Great,” Joelle said, peering over her shoulder to look. “I don’ suppose if we score high enough they might let us skip on out of here?”

Randi sighed. “It’d almost be worth it, to get good grades.”

“Well, I’m going to get some *great* final grades,” Kelley Sue boasted, as she joined the girls. Randi and Joelle had expertly timed their conversation so Kelley Sue had missed the insulting part.

Joelle knocked shoulders with Kelley Sue, teasingly. “You need it, or else they kick you off cheerleading.”

“Not even worried, right Michelle?”

Michel was right behind her. He sighed. “Oui,” he said, in his quiet way.



"I recommend getting your own exchange student next year," Kelley Sue said. "It's like having a little homework maid!"

It only took a moment for Randi and Joelle to realize what that comment meant. "That's not fair!" Joelle complained.

"Yeah, not fair!" Randi agreed.

"It's just luck, girls," Kelley Sue gloated. "Are you all ready for the party at Kearney's Barn?"

"I heard someone's bringing *alcohol*," Joelle whispered conspiratorially.

"It wouldn't be a party without it!" Kelley Sue replied, she tugged on Michel's elbow. "Let's go, Michelle."

"Oh, I don't feel... I theenk I am seek." Michel said, holding his stomach. "I should go to the infirmary."

"Infirmary?" Kelley Sue asked with a condescending grimace.

"The nurse?" Michel explained.

Kelley Sue dismissed him with a wave. "Fine. Go."

"We'll take you, Michelle," Randi said. Joelle nodded in agreement.

"Well, you'll be late! Don't say I didn't warn you!" Kelley Sue said as she walked away.

"Theenk you." Michel replied, holding his stomach again as he followed the girls.

"No problem, Michelle. Friends do that."

"Oh, I wanted people to call me 'Shelley Jean.'"

"What?" Randi questioned.

"I want to feet in. Shelley is an American name for Michelle, no?"

Joelle shrugged. "I guess."

"Jean is my middle name."

"Shelley Jean it is," Randi replied. "You get more American every day, Shelley Jean."

"Do you really think so?" Michel replied.

"How did you learn about America in France?" Randi asked.

"From TV. Movies. Jerry Springer show."

Joelle laughed. "They have Jerry Springer in France?"

"Eez ver-ee popular. I love Jerry," Michel said. "Eet eez why I picked Oklahoma."

"Well, it's not all white trash here in Winstonville," Randi said.

"Yes it eez," Michel replied. "That's why I love Winstonville! I hope I never have to leave."



In her first period English class, Kelley Sue expected to see Michel arrive at any time. But he didn't. Then, in second period Home Development class, he didn't show. That was no big deal to her, as she figured Michel was probably faking his illness. He just didn't want to be there when she took credit for his sewing project.

"Kelley Sue?" The teacher asked. "Would you like to get changed to show your sewing project?"

"Certainly, ma'am!" Kelley Sue said as she bounced out of her seat. The students who had chosen to make clothes for Personal Development (a fancy term for housewife class), were afforded some time to change behind a folding wall before presenting their final project to the teacher and class.

Some minutes later, her name was called. "Now we have Kelley Sue Crawford and her evening gown. Come out and tell us about your sewing project, Kelley Sue!"

Kelley Sue strode out proudly, imagining she was walking the runway at a high-class fashion show in Paris or Milan. She hustled herself to the middle of the room and then twisted herself left and right, to show off the gown. "My project is a gown right from the cutting edge of high-fashion," she said, placing her hands on her hips. "It's an off-the-shoulder chiffon..." She then realized the off-the-shoulder part was a little *too* off the shoulder, and tugged on it. "...Gown for a an evening in the big city..." As she tugged further on the shoulder, it came right off in her hand.

Shocked, she then tried to cover, by turning away, but as she did so, the bottom half of the skirt started to tear, as she stepped on the fabric in her high heels. "...Perfect for dancing at a classy restaurant..."

Losing her balance, she then had to brace for a fall against the teachers' desk, and took the rest of the top of the gown with her hands.

She stood before the whole class in nothing more than her pink panties, bra and torn swaths of sequined red fabric.

"Oh lord Jesus!" She swore. She took one small step to escape, caught the spike of her heel in the mess of fabric at her feet, spun, and landed flat on her butt on the cold linoleum. "This can't be happening!" She shrieked.

But it was. Kelley Sue turned to see her teacher uncap the red pen and mark something down. She only used the red pen for "A" or "F" grades, and Kelley Sue was pretty sure she didn't get an "A."

The next class was her French class, in which the instructor literally pulled her out of the classroom by the arm, demanding to know “what on God’s green Earth” she was doing, submitting a final essay laced with the dirtiest insults of the French language. She was sent to see the principal with her paper, marked with a big, red, “F.”

She didn’t even know what was happening. It was coming at her so fast. She had to find Michel to ask what was going on.

Exasperated, she still couldn’t find Michel at lunch, and tried to stay well hidden to avoid people talking about her embarrassing day. She didn’t need to see anyone after had happened to her.

It was her very next class when she presented her final project for Wood Shop, a jewelry box. The instructor walked down the row of students presenting their projects, and when the shop teacher stopped at hers, he opened the lid. It came right off. In fact, the lid itself broke apart in three sections, and then stuck to the instructors hands.

“Did you use *rubber cement* as a wood glue, Kelley Sue?” He asked in a dry voice.

“I... I... I don’t think so, sir,” Kelley Sue replied, her already grief-weakened voice giving out in spots.

The instructor smelled the glue. “I take it back.” He then licked the glue. “This appears to be maple syrup.”



“Girls, I have some bad news,” Mrs. Bittles, the cheer/dance coordinator said to her squad. “I know y’all are wonderin’ where Kelley Sue is, and I’m afraid that she’s no longer on the team.”

“Did you hear what happened to her in Shop class?” One girl whispered to another.

“I heard she was naked in Mrs. Lomar’s class,” whispered another.

“Shush, now!” Mrs. Bittles said. “I’m not going into the reasons, but she is no longer academically eligible. And as such, we have an open spot and we will need to elect a new captain.”

The girls openly muttered and mumbled amongst each other.

“I don’t know where we can find someone who can do our routines without starting over, so if any of you girls have any suggestions...” Mrs. Bittle spied a hand raised. “A question?” She said.

From behind the group of girls in their workout outfits, stepped Michel. “I can help, please?”

“Michelle, I... I mean Shelley Jean, what are you suggesting?”

“I know the routines, yes? I have been watching you for ma-nee days,” Michel said, his hands humbly folded at his chest.

“Do you want to have a try-out, Shelley Jean?”

“Oh, yes! Please, yes,” he replied.

Mrs. Bittles shrugged. “Well, let’s get you something to wear...”

“I can use Kelley Sue’s theengs. I know her locker combination,” Michel said before dashing off.

“Are you sure, Mrs. Bittles?” a particularly blond member of the squad asked.

“She can at least try, there’s no harm in that.”

In a remarkably short amount of time, Michel had reappeared from the girls’ locker room, dressed in the typical outfit Kelley sue wore to these practices – an oversized t-shirt with the sleeves bound up at the shoulder, and bright red nylon shorts. Both sported the logo for the Winstonville High Screaming Warthogs on them. Michel even had no trouble slipping his feet into Kelley Sue’s white trainers.

Michel blushed, as this was the barest he had ever revealed himself. He rubbed his long hairless legs and bare arms nervously. He then found himself in the center of the room and looked around. He had forgotten the pom-poms. “Can.. Can I borrow...?” He said pointing to a girl’s set. The girl quickly gave them up.

He struggled with them for a second, trying to get a grip, and in the process stumbled back to his spot. He looked at Mrs. Bittles, smiled, and then leapt into a ready position with his legs apart and his hands on his hips.

“Let’s kick it!” He screamed.

The euro-beat music started up, thumping the room with life, and Michel started shaking and dancing to the tune. He shook his hips one way and then the other, and then after shimmying his butt, he skipped into a cartwheel, landed and pumped his arms. He was hitting every single detail of the routine spot on. From just two steps, he then vaulted into a round off back tuck tumble. It was a move that was supposed to be in the routine, but the girls had removed it because no one on the squad could do it. Then Michel did another one.

The girls, watching, started to whisper to each other.





"They made y'all a cheerleader?" Chandra said, skeptically. "Are you sure, sweetie?"

Michel nodded in the positive. He was setting the dinner table, helping out the family. "Yes," he said.

"Varsity? The varsity team? The Winstonville High varsity team?" She needed to clarify. Chandra popped her cigarette in her mouth for a quick inhale.

"Well, congratulations? I guess?" She checked the casserole dish in the oven and then walked back to the table.

"Do y'all want anything with the casserole? I got some corn dogs in the freezer."

Michel smiled. "I would love a corn dog. Thank you."

Chandra got the box from the freezer. "Have you seen Kelley Sue?"

"I thought she came home," Michel replied. "I didn't see her all day long."

"No, I haven't seen her," Chandra said. "That accent of your is almost gone, darlin'."

"I done been workin' on it, Momma."

"I'll say! Oh, by the way, a package came for you today. It's over by the front door."

"Oh!" Michel said, with a smile. He sprang over to the door-side table and grabbed the small padded envelope. He quickly tore into it and looked inside. He found a couple of bottles that he opened up, and dropped a series of pills into his palm. The one that looked like a purple football was huge, but Michel swallowed them all with a glass of water.

"What are those?" Chandra asked, disinterestedly.

"Vitamin C," Michel answered.

"Oh, a health nut. By the way, darlin', what did Kelley Sue think of you makin' the squad?"

"I do not theenk she knows," Michel said, going back to arranging the table. "She missed practice because..."

"She missed practice?" Chandra said with genuine alarm. "That that's her *life*! She'd never miss a practice!" Chandra grabbed her phone. She pressed a button. "Kelley Sue..." She started to say into the mouthpiece. She stopped herself because she had to start over and leave a message. "Kelley Sue this is your mother. I want you to call me right away. Everything is gonna be all right!" She then dialed another number, her husbands'. "Ron? Hello? Yes, dinner will be ready in twenty minutes, but I didn't call about that." While she was talking, she managed to grab a fresh cigarette from her purse, light it and start to suck the life out of it. "I can't get a hold of Kelley Sue and Shelley Jean tells

me that she didn't even go to practice. Have you seen or heard from her today?"

"All right. I know. Yes, I'm sure she's okay, but you know what they said on Dateline about all those stalkers and teenage suicides and sometimes I..." Chandra was getting worked up. "I know she's probably..." She listened as her husband tried to talk her down. "Will y'all just give her favorite places a quick look-see?"

"Thank you, darlin'. Call me if you find..." Then her attention shifted as a noise came from the driveway. Chandra dashed to the window and looked out. "Oh she just came home! Everything's fine!" She declared before clicking her phone off.

The front door swung open quickly, and Kelley Sue stormed through, headed straight for Michel. "You!" She shouted. Throwing her books aside, she wasted no time in approaching Michel. "You did this!" She pointed her finger right in Michel's face.

"Sweetie', where have you been?" Chandra asked.

"I was in detention!" She yelled at her mother. "I have two weeks of detention!"

"For what?"

"Him!" She pointed at Michel. "I mean *her*! She did this!" She stuck her whole face right into Michel's. "My dress project fell apart in class! My French report was given an F and my wood shop project melted!" She growled. "Any idea how that happened, li'l ol' innocent Michelle?"

"Oh, how could have Shelley Jean done that, Kelley Sue?" Chandra asked.

Kelley Sue returned that statement with a crooked eyebrow. "Shelley Jean?"

"She wants to be called Shelley Jean, sweetie," Chandra said. "How could she have..."

Kelley Sue turned to Michel with her finger pointed in between Michel's eyes, her mouth wide open ready to explain.

But she couldn't. She couldn't tell her mother that this wasn't really a girl, how she had made him do all her schoolwork and all the lies she had created to invent Michelle. Or 'Shelley Jean,' or whatever he was calling himself. It was a delicate house of cards she had built, and couldn't shake it without everything falling apart.

"Just you watch yourself!" She yelled in Michel's face. She then turned around and glared at her mother. "When's dinner?" She said, much louder than she ever should have. Her phone then rang. "What is it?" She yelled into the phone. She then calmed down when she realized it was one of the cheerleaders. "Hi, Dakota. Um, did the squad..." Then she got loud again. "What? Who?" Her face very nearly exploded when she heard whatever was said to



her. She held the phone out for Michel. “She wants to...” She growled. “Talk...” She growled even deeper. “To...” By this time, her voice was as gravely as strip mine. “You...”

Michel took the phone and answered it. “Uh huh...” He said. “Yes...” He tried not to look in Kelley Sue’s eyes. “Maybe we should pick another song, then? Or just put the vaults at the beginning?” He glanced at the mask of hatred that was Kelley Sue’s face and decided to cut it short. “I’ll call you back, okay?”

He handed the phone back to Kelley Sue and retracted his hand quickly. “Why was she calling you about our dance routines?” Kelley Sue asked with malice.

Chandra inserted herself into the conversation. “Kelley Sue, honey, Shelley Jean was made a member of the squad. Isn’t that good news?”

Kelley Sue wheeled her head around sharply to stare at her mother, as if the words she spoke would just go back into her mouth with the power of her

gaze. “I got kicked off the squad for bad grades, Momma! Michelle took *my* spot! And someone *else* is going to be captain!”

“Actually,” Michel said, “they made me captain.”

Kelley Sue’s head whipped back around to try the same take-back-reality trick with Michel. It still didn’t work. “Captain!” She howled.

“No one else really wanted it, so they made me...”

“Captain!” Kelley Sue wailed in a mixture of distress and anger. “*Captain!*”

“Oh,” Michel said, “the girls said I should ask you for you uniform and captains’ pin back.”

“Aiiiggghh!” Kelley Sue shrieked, threatening to shatter glass. She threw her tiny cellphone at Michel, missing by a country mile, then spun around and ran up the stairs, followed by a huge, thunderous slam of her door.



For two days, Kelley Sue locked herself in her room. Occasional knocks by her mother and father went unanswered – except for a yell or an anguished cry or two. She didn’t even have her phone to keep her company. Being cut off from her friends meant little, as she felt cut off from life itself.

She had been betrayed. Betrayed by that drag queen her family were giving food and shelter to. How dare Michel do this to her? She had given him everything he had now, and he had paid it back by being an ungrateful foreigner.

The girl had paced around her room so many times, she had worn a pattern in her pink carpet. She had cried into her pink sheets and thrown her stuffed animals this way and that in frustration. Her laptop in the corner had remained ignored, afraid that her friends would message her and ask questions. “Why did you lose your spot in cheerleading?” “Why did you get suspended?” “What happened to that dress?” “Did you really use maple syrup?”

Her flat screen TV had barely been turned on, and that was just to try and take her spinning mind off the situation. Even her music was no comfort. She tried to rearrange her closet to pass the time, but one glance at her cheerleading outfits and dance costumes stopped her cold. She attempted to remake her room by moving around the furniture, but her big cork board of photos, and all her memories with the squad, kept her from pursuing it.

Finally, she settled on practicing her routine for the talent show. She still had a way out of this. When she won Top Model USA, she’d be gone from Winstonville, Michel, and all these questioning questioners with their questions.

Hour after hour, she worked. It was a dance routine, but not something so simple as cheering. No. She was going to do interpretive dance. Like those Cirque du Soiled people. That was *sophisticated* dancing.

No, she really hadn't studied this type of dancing, but there didn't seem much to know, in her opinion. It was just a lot of free-form bending and swaying, using the arms and stretching out as you walked. That wasn't any big deal. By the time that contest began, she'd be a lock to win, even if she had come up snake eyes on that crazy French exchange student.

"You have just as much depth and complexity as any fashion model!" She told herself. "Who needs Michell!" Hour after hour, she poured all her anger and frustration into her improvised dance routine. Sweat poured down her face and soaked her clothes.

It felt good to stick up for herself. "I don't need to worry about what people think!" She said out loud. "I am Kelley Sue Crawford, God bless it! I am a fifth-generation American! My great, great, great grandfather settled this county!" With courage back in her veins, she was ready to grab life by the horns again. "I am the most beautiful, talented and special person in all Winstonville! In all the *history* of Winstonville!"

"I will win this competition!" She said, triumphantly. "I *deserve* to win!"

She marched out of her room and down stairs, where she saw her phone resting on a counter-top. The house seemed empty, and that was just as well. She dialed up Colt, and was ready to begin restoring her reputation. She would need him to spread the word.

"Oh, Kelley Sue, I'm afraid Colt isn't here," Colt's mother replied. "He went out to go shooting at the range."

Shooting at the range! That was the excuse he always gave his parents when he was going out to party. So he was at a party, then? But, why? Then it occurred to her, that this was Sunday night. Sunday night was the planned big party at the Kearney barn. It was the celebration of the end of the term and successful finals. She had been looking forward to it all month, and this Michel nonsense had completely side-tracked her.

"He went without me!" She yelled out, as soon as it occurred to her. She grabbed her car keys and headed for the door. "Well, I better go and let him apologize to me."

Just fifteen minutes later, she pulled her mustang into the fields outside the Kearney's property and headed in the dark towards the lights and loud music. The barn was isolated enough that no one would find them unless they knew what to look for.

Kelley Sue got some stares and some avoided glances as she walked through the barn doors, but she held her head high and plunged into the crowd. The students had gathered around the edges of the building, creating a center area

with dancing. A table on one side had a guy running the huge speakers off of an iPhone, and a well-attended table over the other side had a stack of cups with a keg of draft beer and a bunch of 2-liter soda bottles. Deciding that was a good place to be seen, she walked over to the table.

But before she got there, she saw the unmistakable figure of Colt, who was easy to recognize. He was at least four inches taller than any other guy in school. Knocking a few people aside, she finally got close enough to see him clearly – and the girl who was trying to take advantage of Kelley Sue’s absence by dancing with him.

She was trying to press her body against his as she danced, she was looking up at him with big, pleading eyes, she was laughing at his dumb jokes and she was...

“Shelley Jean?” Kelley Sue said.

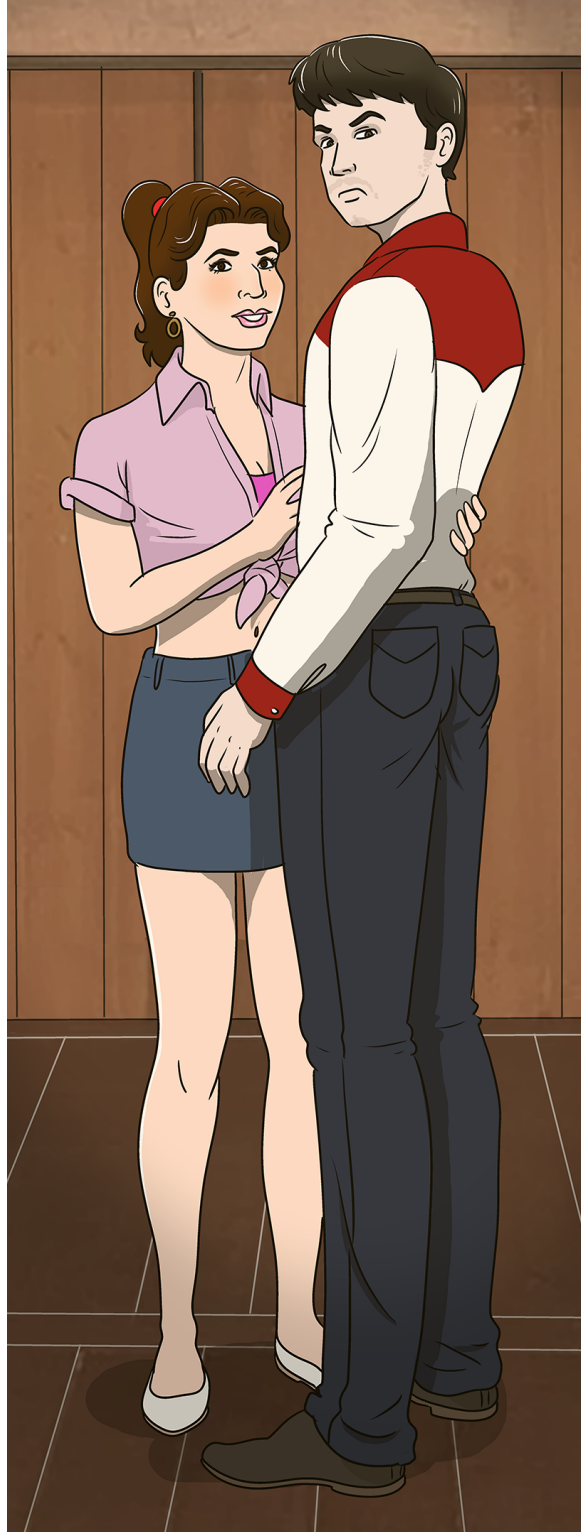
“Hey, Kelley Sue!” Colt said with a broad smile.

“Shoot, I almost gave up on you!”

Michel smiled and seemed genuinely happy to see her.

“Hi Kelley Sue! Are you feeling any better?”

The rush of blood to her head caused her to get a little dizzy, so Kelley Sue just



trued around without saying a word and walked away. "What the hell?" She said to herself. "That stupid tranny can't be coming on to *my* Colt!"

Kelley Sue walked up to her boyfriend. "What. Are. You. Doing" She demanded to know.

"Shelley Jean didn't have anyone to dance with," Colt explained. "She looked so lonely."

Without any further comment, Kelley Sue walked over to the drinks table, and filled a cup with 7-up. It was hard to try and concentrate on things with the loud music, and her mind was racing in fifty different directions. "I'm not letting Michel ruin my life!" She said. "I'm gonna stop this once and for all!" Kelley Sue whipped the cup into the wall and filled a new cup with beer. She got it down in three gulps. "I'm gonna need more than that!" She said, and filled another cup. Then, another.



It was seven AM when the patrol car pulled up in front of the Crawford home. Ron and Chandra Crawford were up and awake in their bathrobes that Monday morning. Dew was still on the grass and birds chirping at the sight of the sunrise. Mr. and Mrs. Crawford waited impatiently as the police officer got out of his car, walked around to the passenger door and opened it, letting its' sole occupant, Kelley Sue Crawford, dressed in an orange prison uniform, exit. She was slightly shivering, her mascara had washed out into a grey ring around her eyes, and her hair was strung out and matted to her head.

Her eyes were cast downward, but glancing off to the sides, she could see the neighbors several houses down also watching as they stood in their driveways.

"You are Mr. Ronald Crawford?" The officer asked Mr. Crawford in his plaid pajamas and maroon robe.

"Yes," Ron answered. His voice and eyes dead still.

"I think my sergeant has covered this, but your daughter was picked up last night for public drunkenness. We don't have anyone pressing charges, and she has no priors, so we're returning her to your custody. That is, pending any further developments."

"I appreciate it, officer," Ron said, obviously finding it hard to say words he wished he'd never have to say. "Thank you for bringing my daughter home from jail."

"She spent the night in drunk tank down at county holding, but I think she's still got a might bit of a buzz." He watched as Kelley Sue stumbled forward, in a daze, heading for the house very slowly. "She didn't have any clothes when

we found her down at Chikowa Creek, she was just kind of shoutin' things, drunk as a skunk. No possessions or ID, neither."

"I understand," Mr. Crawford replied, gravely.

"We had to notify the school, because we used their records to verify her identity. The principal said that she was facing suspension."

"Two months," Mr. Crawford replied. He saw his wife walk over and provide some balance for her daughter as she weaved up the walkway to the front door. "He called us last night."

"The police and the judge don't like to see this kind of behavior, Mr. Crawford. I can virtually guar-on-tee you that if this happens again, and your daughter for any reason runs afoul of the law, we ain't gonna be lenient no mores."

"I can assure you, officer. She's not stepping out of this house for quite a while," Mr. Crawford said, shaking the officer's hand. He had to sign a couple of forms before the car pulled out and down the road, with the neighbors still watching.

Ron slammed the door shut behind him as he walked in, which caused Kelley Sue to jump. She regretted turning around and looking at the expression on her father's face, which was as infused with anger as she had ever seen on a man.

"Where do I even *start* with you, Kelley Suellen Crawford!" her father bellowed. "We have had enough of this behavior!"

"It's not my fault, Daddy!" Kelley Sue replied.

"Who's fault is it, then?" Ron yelled.

Chandra rushed to Ron's side. "Please, Ron! Your blood pressure!" She begged.

"It's hi... *Her* fault!" Kelley Sue said. "This all happened when that hook-nosed Michelle came here!"

"How did Shelley Jean do this, Kelley Sue?" Ron pointedly asked. "Did Shelley Jean get you kicked off the cheerleading squad? Did Shelley Jean get you three F's for the term?" He was really building steam. "Did Shelley Jean make you drink yourself stupid last night and did Shelley Jean hit herself in the face?"

"She got hit? Who hit her? I didn't hit her!" Kelley Sue objected. She then noticed Michel, who emerged from the kitchen with a steak on his left eye and a big ace bandage wrapped around his face, covering his nose.

"I didn't do that!" She yelled.

Ron walked away from his wife to get some clearance for his wildly flailing arms. "You broke her nose in two places! We have to take her in to the city later for corrective surgery!"

“But Daddy!”

“But nothing! You are grounded in this house for six months!”

“Daddy!” Kelley Sue wailed.

“Ron!” Chandra exclaimed. “Be reasonable!”

“Six months!” He said, pointing at Kelley Sue. “You’ve ruined the reputation of the Crawford family in Winstonville!” He gripped the air with his hands. “Think! You probably just cost me customers! Who wants to come into my store and talk to the father of the girl who got in a drunken fight with a foreign exchange student?” He paced in a small semi-circle and then spun back around. “Think of your mother! She’s now got to explain why her underage daughter spent a night in a drunk tank! She’ll be lucky to keep her spot in the booster club!”

Kelley Sue looked to her mother again for her objection. She just looked back vacantly at Kelley Sue as if to say, “I can’t help you.”

“Come on!” Kelley Sue pleaded. “I know it looks bad Daddy, but... Six months?”

“Six months!” Ron repeated. “Unless you can give me one reason why I shouldn’t!

Kelley Sue wanted desperately to explain just how Shelley Jean really was behind all this, but... She couldn’t, for certain, prove it. She didn’t dare tell him who ‘Shelley Jean’ really was, because that was just going to make things worse. She could only come up with one thing.

“I love you Daddy,” she said as sweetly as she could. The problem was, it didn’t sound very convincing as the alcohol in her system caused her to slur her speech.

“That’s why I have to do this, sweetie. I have to do this for your own good. You are grounded for six months. No friends, no parties, just school and chores.” Ron tightened the belt on his robe. “That’s the final word.”

“What about the Top Model USA competition?”

“The what?” Ron barked back. “That stupid... What *about* it?”

Beaten, Kelley Sue headed for the stairs.

“Oh no! Not *your* room!” Ron said, halting Kelley Sue in her tracks. “Your room is too nice. It’s not punishment.” He thought for a moment. “You... Go to Shelley Jean’s room.”

“Daddy!” Kelley Sue objected.

“No arguments!” Ron declared. “You have a TV, your music, your computer... That’s not what you deserve right now.”

“That’s not fair!” Kelley Sue whined.

“Shelley Jean? You can use Kelley Sue’s room. Feel free to use anything in it. Make yourself at home.”

“No, Daddy!”



“In fact, here are the keys to her car.” He pulled the keys from the bowl next to the door and tossed them to Michel. “That’s yours to use, too.”

Kelley Sue was now in tears. She was sobbing like a child. “Daddy!” She screamed.

“You need to learn a lesson, young lady! Go!” Ron commanded, pointing up the stairs. “And don’t come down until you’re sober!”

Kelley Sue stomped off, but was only able to keep that up for a couple steps before the effects of the ten beers she drank last night caused her to slow down.

She struggled to the top of the stairs, and then she headed to her room, only to hear a stern “Kelley Sue!” as her father blocked her way. He pointed to the guest room as Michel headed inside her room. She then had to head for the tiny, sparse little guest suite, and stepped inside. There, she saw Michel’s meager assortment of books and possessions. She flicked the lights off so she didn’t have to be reminded of her new status.

Also, the lights were making her hangover a million times worse.



Five days later, as Michel returned from the city and his corrective surgery, Kelley Sue barely even noticed. She had spent her days in the tiny little guest room practicing, planning and sweating. Now, more than ever, she realized where her future was: Hollywood. Once she won at Top Model USA, then all this would just be an entertaining anecdote she’d tell on the Tonight Show.

Michel was tender upon his return, a large bandage covering the bridge of his nose, and he didn’t seem to be moving too briskly. He spent most of the next few days recuperating alone in Kelley Sue’s room, which would have been much to her chagrin if she wasn’t too busy practicing her catwalk skills.

It was a week off for the students before school started back up for the winter term, but Kelley Sue still had to do schoolwork, despite being suspended. She’d have to get her grades to a 3.0 for the term if she was to be allowed back on the squad. Though schoolwork was, at best, a second priority in her life.

Living out of the guest room was like living in the wilderness for Kelley Sue. If her father was intending for her to feel punished, it certainly seemed to be working. She didn’t have her own private bathroom anymore, she didn’t have a TV in the room, and she couldn’t jump on the computer to kill the time. She didn’t even have her cell phone anymore, as that was also given to Michel – when they fished it out of the rain gutter she had drunkenly tossed it into during the party.

Worst of all, she didn't have her clothes anymore. All those skirts, shoes, tops, dresses, undies and all the other things she had spent her life accumulating were off limits. She had worked so hard to create her signature "Kelley Sue Crawford" look, and she felt incomplete without it.

Knowing it was hurting her, her father had told Michel to wear her clothes. He was clearly trying to push Kelley Sue her want to kill herself, in her opinion. But she saw through his plan on making her envious. Not only was she suffering with only her half-dozen track suits and sneakers to dress in, but she had to watch that swishy little fag wear her things all over town. She kept a list, so she'd know what to burn when got them back.

About three weeks into her suspension, Kelley Sue was in her new room trying to entertain herself by playing Monopoly solo, when the mail came. She saw the truck outside pull up and drop off the usual stuff, but there was also a large brown envelope. With the rest of the family out, she decided to go get it herself. She walked out to the mailbox, which was the limit to which Kelley Sue was allowed outside under her grounding. Just to feel like a rebel, she quickly touched her toe to the road in front, knowing for a moment, she had stepped out of the boundary and defied her Daddy.

Carrying the mail back in, she growled bitterly when she saw it wasn't addressed to her, but to... Shelley Jean Bouvier. Curiosity overcame her instinct to throw it against the wall, and she checked the return address. It was from Canada, and from a business called "pharmaqueen.ca."

The envelope make a rattling noise, too. She decided to open it as carefully as she could. Inside, were a number of pill bottles. Kelley Sue's heart skipped a



beat as she hoped they were illegal narcotics or hallucinogens or something she could nail Michel on.

No, these dull, white bottles were labeled as “Provera,” “Spironolactone,” and small patches called “Estraderm.” Kelley Sue figured he was just one of those crazy vitamin supplement people. Still, it was awfully suspicious, so she wrote the names of the medicines down and then re-sealed the package. She’d look them up on the internet when she could.



It was a calm afternoon at the Winstonville Police Department. The phones were quiet, the scanner was silent and there was little more to do than surf the internet.

Sergeant Jake Poppers was the only man at the desk right now. His supervisor and the operator were out on lunch, leaving him to cover. The small, four-desk headquarters of the Winstonville Police Department wasn’t much to look at, but it kept the peace in this small town.

Suddenly his pleasant little bubble of web surfing was burst. The bell at the desk rang.

Sgt. Poppers stood and approached the desk. “Is there somethin’ I can help you with, Ma’am?”

“Hi,” the young lady said with a smile. “I’m Kelley Sue Crawford, and my Daddy tells me that I have to give you a new set of fingerprints.”

“Fingerprints?” The officer said. “You’re the girl we sent to the drunk tank at county last month, aren’t you?”

The girl frowned. “I suppose so,” she replied. “Anyways, I tried to pull a little trick on you folks and the fingerprints you have on file aren’t the right ones. So I was told I had to give them to you again.”

The Sgt. nodded. “Tryin’ to pull a fast one on us?”

“I wasn’t thinking very straight. My Daddy says I need to ask you to take them again so the right ones are on file, else I could go to prison.”

“He’s right. Let that be a lesson yo you, now.” He hiked up his pants, authoritatively. “Good thing, too. We’re going to send those into the national database in a couple of days.”

“I’m just in time, then.”

“I’ll get the kit.” The Sergeant brought out a tiny little box that was a digital finger scanner. A thick cable led to a desktop computer.

“Like this?” the girl placed her finger on the small scanner window.

“Hold on. Just a second. I have to delete the old ones.” He tapped some keys on a keyboard. “Okay. Thumb first.”

In just a few seconds, they had taken all ten fingers. The digital scanner made these things a breeze. “ID?” He asked.

She handed it over. “Here you go, Darlin’.”

The Sgt. checked. They license was for Kelley Sue Crawford, aged seventeen, legal to drink in four years, expired in three years. Eye color, hair color, height, weight all checked out. “Thank you, ma’am.” He handed back the ID. He then took the ID back and gave the girl a second look. He held it up to her face. “Just double-checkin’,” he explained.

“Of course.” She accepted the license back and put it in her purse. “Thank you Sergeant, and you have a nice day.”

“You too, ma’am,” Officer Poppers replied. In his few years on the force, he’d never seen someone so happy to give him their fingerprints. He checked out the window and watched her jump into her red Mustang and pull out.



When December came, it was time for the annual homecoming game. Kelley Sue had almost forgotten about it completely, or so she told herself, and tried hard not to care. The truth was, homecoming had been a part of her life since she was a little girl. It was the day the whole town, family by family, gathered at the stadium, and rooted on the screaming warthogs to victory.

Every homecoming she had worked hard to make herself the center of attention. When she was just in elementary school, she had pestered her parents into lobbying a “little miss homecoming princess” be created for an 8-12 year old girl to be featured in the festivities. Not surprisingly, Kelley Sue won when she was eight, all the way until she was twelve. Then, the position mysteriously disappeared.

Even as a junior high student, Kelley Sue sweet-talked her way into becoming a featured performer with the high school dance squad, and every year since then created a dance routine that always seemed to rely on her presence in the middle of the field and the nearest to the crowd.

This year was going to be different. She had no desire to be a part of the celebration or even be seen. She had been physically forced by her parents to get in the car the night of homecoming, and whined and moaned all the way there. “Shush, Kelley Sue!” Chandra admonished her. “This is very special for Shelley Jean. You don’t want to ruin it for her, do you?”

“I don’t care!” she replied. Her parents turned to scowl at her. “Fine. I hope she snaps an ankle,” she said, as she sat with her arms crossed in the stands.

She didn't know why she had to be here to support that horse-faced exchange student. It was a shame that the corrective surgery hadn't fixed his ugly face, Kelley Sue thought to herself, but then again, it would probably take a million dollars to fix Michel's nasty mug. When his bandages came off, he looked just like he always had, beak and all.

It was a first half of pure agony, reminding her how much she hated watching football. That's why she was into cheer. Cheerleading meant you didn't have to watch the game. But when the teams ran off the field, it was time for the half-time show to begin. The lights went dark.

The tinny PA system played some western theme music with a soaring orchestral background. "In the beginning," the announcer said in a deep and melodramatic voice, "our forefathers came to this land..."

From the open end of the stadium, a fleet of pickup trucks, dressed up to look like covered wagons with wooden spoke wheels came speeding in. "When they arrived they saw this land was good," continued the announcer, "and vowed to tame this wilderness in the name of God!"

These "covered wagons" then stopped, and a rush of identically-dressed people jumped out the back. They were dressed in long pioneer dresses and bonnets, and got into planned positions on the field. A big concussive explosive firework went off, causing the audience to shake, and as they did, the pioneer dresses were whipped off in one fluid motion, revealing the girls of the Winstonville high dance squad.

They wore white cowgirl gloves with a leather fringe, tiny cow-hide colored vests, big white cowboy boots, with a rawhide bikini top and fringed miniskirt. And it was topped off with a white 10-gallon hat and a pair of shiny chrome colt 45's on their hips.

You could hear the gasp in the audience.

The girls froze in place, except for the girl in the very center, who strode forward and grabbed a microphone from a stand on the fifty yard line. "We dedicate this halftime show to y'all who founded this land!" She shouted in a drawl.

Kelley Sue leaned forward, trying to get a better look. Who was speaking?

"Tonight, we celebrate the proud Oklahomans who can call themselves – *Sooners!*"

Then it became obvious. That was him. Michel. That was Michel in that outfit, leading the squad and cheering on the crowd.

In her place. He had taken her place. Her *rightful*, birthrighted place.

Kelley Sue lunged from her seat and tried to climb over the crowd. "You slimy cocksuckin' bastard!" she yelled. A swift and forceful grab by her father kept her from bolting for the field, and he threw her back in her seat. "You ass-



munchin' ...mmmrfff!" Ron Crawford had the good sense to cover his daughter's mouth.

More fireworks went off on the field, filling the black night with sparkling color. The marching band played the tune from "Oklahoma!" as it formed up in shapes that broke into other shapes. The dancing girls formed up in pyramids, leapt around in catapulting vaults, cartwheeled back and forth, and fired their pistols in the air to punctuate the music. Other students ran around the field in disturbingly cartoonish Indian costumes. When it was over, the crowd leapt to their feet and gave them a standing ovation.

Kelley Sue was beside herself. She knew it was Michel in that outfit, but... How could it be Michel? That person was dressed in little more than a bikini top and a skirt, but looked so convincing. He looked just like a real girl. He had the body, the breasts, the voice, the moves and the hair. That boy had been doing something to himself, because he no longer would pass for male.

As soon as halftime was over, Ron carried his daughter from the stands, stuffed her in the truck, told her not to speak a word, and drove her home. She lost her Monopoly game board for her outburst.



Two months finally passed, and Kelley Sue was expected back at school. They even had a meeting with the parents and the teachers to figure out how to handle it. But on Monday morning, Kelley Sue Crawford returned to Watsonville High, stepping off bus #14.

Still not allowed to drive herself for many months, it was the bus she had to use to get to school. On board, every eye of every student was stealing glimpses at Kelley Sue as she sat, her head slung low, arms tightly clutching her books.

No sooner had she gotten off the bus than Michel drove up in her Mustang. The timing was suspicious to Kelley Sue. Michel bounced out of the seat, and sauntered up to the curb, his white pumps clacking on the cement and asphalt.

"Welcome back, Kelley Sue! I'm sure y'all missed yer friends!" Michel said, in a country drawl.

"Since when do you talk like you were born here, Michel?" Kelley Sue grumbled. "Y'all ain't gots no right to talk like that."

"Ain't gots no rights?" Michel giggled. "Why, all I'm doin' is makin' myself at home! Mrs. Denis is teachin' me all abouts speakin' Oklahoma-style!"

"Mrs. Denis is the assistant PE teacher," Kelley Sue observed.

"Well, what fun is it learnin' to talk from an English teacher?"

“Disgustin’.” Kelley Sue said. By this time, they were at Kelley Sue’s locker.

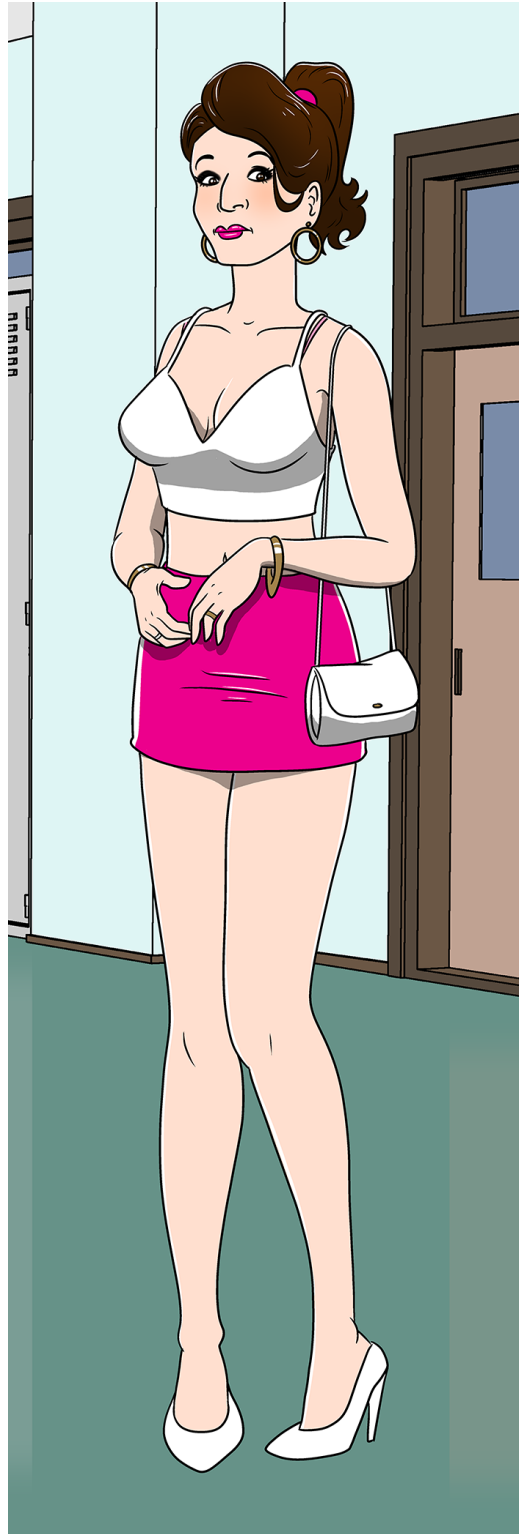
“Oh, darlin?” Michel said, demurely placing his hand on his chest. “I’m so sorry. I kinda... Took over the locker. It was just going unused, after all.”

Kelley Sue dialed in her combination, and when she opened it, found all of her things had been removed, and replaced with Michel’s books, decorations and personal stuff.

“There’s really no room. But I took all of your old things and moved them to *my* old locker! So everythin’s gonna be okey-dokey! Okay?” He said with a smile. He started to check his lipstick in the mirror affixed to the inside door. Kelley Sue just stood in her place, stunned. Michel grabbed a piece of notebook paper, wrote some numbers on it in lipstick, and handed it to her. “Here’s the combination. You know where it is? Great! I’ll see you in class!” He said, dismissing her and turning his back.

Kelley Sue took a few confused and shocked steps backwards, decided not to rip the veins out of Michel’s neck in plain sight of everyone, and went along to his old locker. She was on probation, after all. She couldn’t afford another incident.

Fortunately, at lunch, Kelley Sue was not shunned by her old friends, and sat with them. Yes, she was ignored, and treated as if



she didn't exist – but she wasn't shunned, per-se. She ate her little home-made sandwich, since without any allowance to buy something at the school it was all she was allowed to eat, and was having an out-of-body experience.

She had the strangest feeling she was watching herself as she sat and ate, but she wasn't watching herself, she was watching Michel.

He wore Kelley Sue's favorite cotton spaghetti top with a short pink miniskirt, along with her hoop earrings. The funny thing was, that even though he was dressed in her clothes, that wasn't what was reminding her of her.

"Joelle," Michel said, as he sipped on a bottle of water, "I say this as a friend, you understand, but I would *seriously* reconsider that nail color."

Joelle, flanking her on one side, glanced at her fingernails. "I liked it in the store."

"Oh, I have no doubt, but unless y'all are goin' to spend the rest of your life at the store, you should change it."

Randi, who flanked Michel on the other side, agreed. "I didn't want to say anythin' hun, but Shelley Jean is right."

"Do you think I can make it through the rest of the day?" Joelle asked with concern in her eyes.

"Honestly?" Michel said, "No." He shook his head like a disapproving mother. "But don't you worry yourself none. I have just the perfect shade for you." He dropped his purse on the table and pulled out a small bottle of pink nail polish.

"Isn't that your shade?" Joelle asked.

"Yes it is!" Michel replied. "And if it looks as half as good on you as it does on me, you'll just *adore* it."

Joelle scooped up the polish and some remover, and headed off to the ladies' room. "Thank you, Shelley Jean," she said reverently before going.

As Kelley Sue watched it all take place, she was still trying to understand the strange sense of *deja vu* she was having.

"Hey, 'Shell!" Colt Bradford said, coming in behind and nuzzling Michel's neck. He then looked up and saw Kelley Sue sitting across from them. He quickly backed out and stood bolt upright. "Oh, hey. Boy... The months just kinda fly by, don't they?"

"Hello, Colt," Kelley Sue said, coldly.

"Yeah... Uh... So how's it going?" He said.

"Just fine, thank you," was the curt response. It was the first time she had even heard from her so-called boyfriend in weeks.

"Well, you look good." Colt then reached even farther for something to say. "Nice track suit."

Kelley Sue stuck her nose in the air. "Don't let me distract you, Colt. I know you'd like to talk to your friends, there. I just think that..."

"Great!" Colt replied. "So, hey, 'Shel. I was gonna go down to the ravine and me and some of the guys were gonna bring their girls and..."

The conversation trailed off for Kelley Sue, as she went back to eating. She had been shut out totally. That was no big deal, though. She could always find new friends. Maybe she'd just wait until she was in Hollywood and make new friends there.

She watched as Michel seemed to be the center of attention for not only the table, but for the room, as people would say hello as they passed, or get into his field of view and smile. Michel would wave politely or nod an acknowledgement for every one of them.

There was something she really hadn't noticed about Michel before. The way his body was shaped was very, very familiar to her. It wasn't unlike hers, really. The eyes were very similar, too. His brows had been plucked in much the same way she liked to do it, as well. Even Michel's lips were very close to hers. There was little doubt he had been whitening his teeth, and his wholesome smile was bright and quick, just like hers.

Except for that beak of a nose, sharp male chin and cheeks, hair color and his brown eyes, Michel had a lot of things in common, appearance-wise, Kelley Sue concluded. No wonder her friends flocked to him. He was a substitute, though a poor one, for her presence. Her friends were so stupid that they just congregated around someone who just happened to bear a passing, vague resemblance to her. How sad for them, she thought. She was glad to be rid of those yellow-bellied cowards.



It was some days later at dinner, that Kelley Sue was ready to make a big announcement. She would just have to wait to get a word in edgewise at the table, however.

"...And that's what I told Darlene. You know, the one who handles the refreshments at the basketball games?" Michel was saying. He handed a bowl of green beans to Ron.

"Well you had every right, in my opinion," Chandra followed. "She can't be doing that to her friends!"

"Well, that's not all," continued Michel. "I heard, and don't you go tellin' this to anyones, that Sandra Podner is two months pregnant."

"Oh, my Lord!" Chandra reacted, as she spooned some more macaroni and cheese onto her plate. "Who's she been seein'?"

"Wouldn't we all like to know!" Michel answered, cattily. "Daddy, would you pass me the spuds?"

"There you go, Darlin'," Ron said, as he gave her a large bowl of mashed potatoes.

Kelley Sue cleared her throat. "I have an annou..."

"Hold on, I haven't finished my story! I have not finished speaking." Michel gave her a condescending smile. "Anyway, since Sandra is going to be showin' any day now, and since Darlene is bound to get herself in trouble, I figure..."

"I just want to make an announcement!" Kelley Sue yelled.

Ron put up his hand to put a halt to things. "Hold yer horses, Kelley sue, can't you see that Shelley Jean..."

"Will you stop using that name? I am so sick of it! That... *Person*... Is not named Shelley Jean!"

"Actually, I am," Michel said. He finished what he was chewing on and swallowed. "That is my real Christian name."

"Didn't we tell you?" Ron said. "She got baptized on Tuesday. In the eyes of God, she is Shelley Jean Bouvier. When St. Peter checks the book of souls who go in to the kingdom of heaven..."

"I thought you were Jewish!" Kelley Sue interrupted.

"I have seen the light," Michel replied, holding the hands of Ron and Chandra across the table. "I have committed my soul to the glory of Jesus Christ and almighty God!"

Kelley Sue just stared into the faces of her parents and guest. Not wanting to give the traitor one more second of attention, she said what she wanted to say. "My announcement is that the Top Model USA people sent me a letter, and the video audition I sent in has been approved." She smiled, her classic forced smile that was her trademark. "I report to the producers next Monday at 9:30 at the Stanton Valley Days Inn!"

No one at the table shared her enthusiasm.

"Have you forgotten that you're grounded?" Ron Crawford asked.

"Daddy!" Kelley Sue objected.

"You are still grounded, young lady, and that has not changed!"

"But this is everything I've been working for!"

"They'll come back next year, I'm sure," Ron said, drinking his beer.

Realizing this was getting nowhere, Kelley Sue frantically turned to her mother. "Momma!"

"I... I know it means a lot to you darlin', but..."

"No, Momma!"

"You didn't give us any choice, Kelley Sue!" Chandra defended herself. "We want to help you..."

"You made some bad choices, Kelley Sue," Ron said, picking up the discussion, where his wife was about to weaken. "You now have to live with them."

"Daddy!" Kelley Sue cried, tears coming to her eyes. She turned to Chandra. "Momma!" She was about to lose it. Not wanting to totally break down, she got up from the table and ran up the stairs to the guest room. Kelley Sue threw herself on the bed and cried herself to sleep that night. She only had one thing to live for, and they had taken it away from her.



It was five in the morning, and the streets were deserted. It was getting very cold this late into February, and the roadways were frosty. The Greyhound Bus that ran through the small city of Stanton Valley stopped off at the train tracks and the only passenger to get off was Kelley Sue Crawford. She had saved all the money she could possibly earn in chores, supplemented by stealing a couple of hundred from her Daddy's wallet, and bought a ticket. She had slipped out of the house after everyone had gone to sleep and brought just one bag with her, stuffed with cosmetics and clothes.

She checked her map, and it was two miles to get to the Days Inn, so she set off, hauling the heavy bag at her side. She probably shouldn't have worn the pumps for this trip, she decided, but that's all she packed.

Even though she was twenty minutes late and drenched in sweat, the producers of Top Model USA were happy to see her. They told her that a few girls had already dropped out, and they were desperately auditioning last-second replacements, so they were glad to have her participating.

As for the scheduling, they laid it out. They would do some preliminary competition at the motel to get everything started tonight, and then tomorrow morning they would be at the performance hall to do the staging, and that night they would film the show.

Kelley Sue spent her last few dollars to book a room for the night, sweet-talking the clerk out of needing a credit card and ID. She hadn't been able to find her ID for a month, and didn't have a credit card of her own. She unpacked in a bit of a frenzy, making sure she could get the wrinkles out of everything she had stuffed in the bag.

With everything laid out on the bed, she got a call from one of the Top Model USA crew, giving her a half hour to come around to the meeting room where all the contestants would be judged on poise, posture and presentation.

With a big sticker on the shoulder strap of her dress reading “Kelley Sue Crawford,” Kelley Sue walked into the meeting room where things were about to get started. Everyone had been assigned one of the stickers, and were seated in a semi-circle on folding chairs, surrounding a desk with two men and a woman. She presumed they were the judges of the show.

Scanning the competition, Kelley Sue noted that the girls were just as beautiful as she assumed they would be, all had glamorously large hair and classy fake eyelashes like she did. She looked for flaws right away: moles, fat necks, kankles, buck teeth, mustaches, that sort of thing.

The producers got up, introduced the judges and went over the workings of the show. Kelley Sue was only half paying attention as she continued to glance at the other girls. She stopped on one, who was wearing a dress almost exactly like one that she had in her closet. Only this one was so much better fitting, the hem showed off her legs, clung to the girls’ curves, and cradled the breasts. She wished she had been able to wear that outfit today. It would have... Then Kelley Sue took a second look. She nearly screamed.

It was Michel.

This had to be impossible. Yet, there he was. He was wearing *her* dress at *her* TV show stealing *her* spotlight. The anger boiled her blood, her face becoming fire-alarm red. She gripped the sides of her chair with white knuckles and began to breathe heavily, as if she were about to bellow steam and smoke.

It took every bit of composure and control she had, but she stood in front of the judges when she was called, did a little twirl, a little pose and kept her smile. She had practiced these moments enough that she could do it in her sleep, which was probably the only reason she could carry this off in the middle of her nightmare.

The girls were handed schedules, and given some last minute instructions before they broke up. Kelley Sue zipped across that room like a snapped rubber band and pointed her strained finger right into Michel’s face.

“What...” She said, pausing to try and think of words to say through her brain-paralyzing rage. “Do you think you’re doing!?”

“Oh, Kelley Sue! I thought we’d find you here!”

“Get out!” Kelley Sue commanded.

“When you went missin’ last night, Momma and Daddy were so worried!” Michel said. “But we all right figured that you’d come here for the competition, so I volunteered to come after you and see if you were okay. I drove in my car.”

"That's my car!" Kelley Sue yelled. Fortunately, no one was left around to hear them. "You're crazy!"

"Thank the Lord you're all right," Michel teased.

"You..." Kelley Sue pointed her finger again, but retracted it as she seemed to be thinking. "You're trying to take over my life!" She yelled. "That's what you're doing!"

"Moi?" Michel answered sarcastically. "Why, when came to ask those nice producers if you were here, they asked me to audition, and who am I to turn them down?"

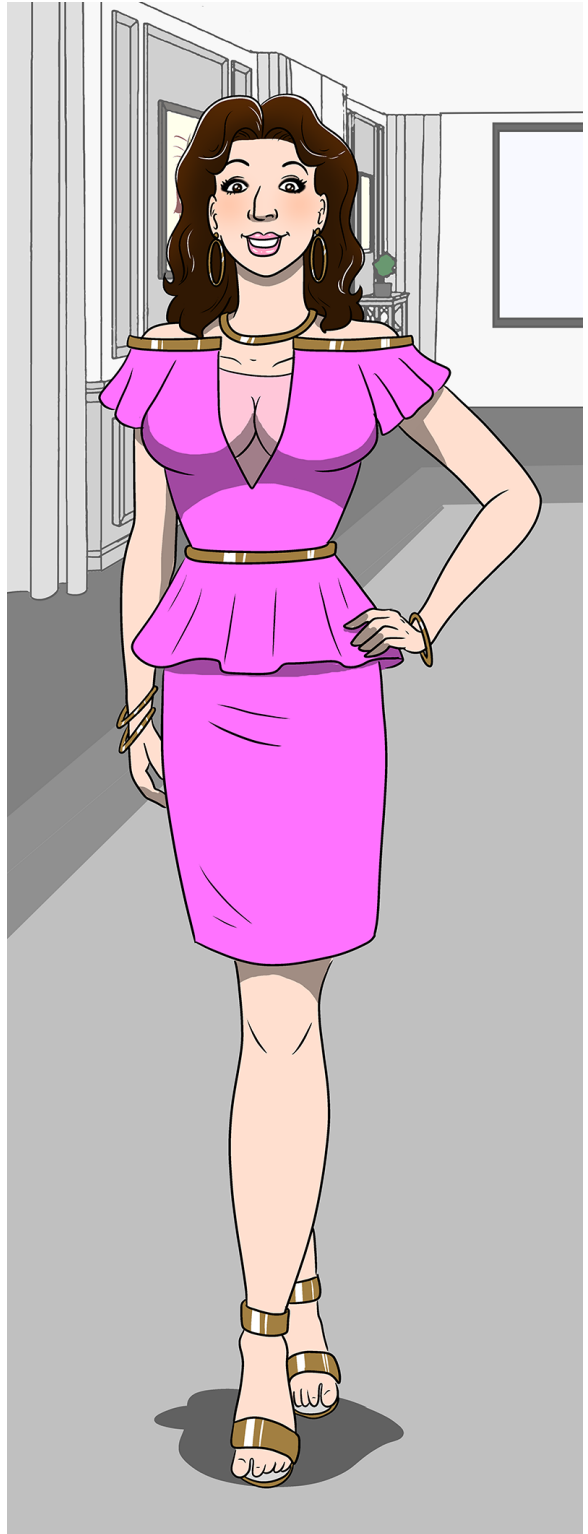
"You've planned all of this! You're plannin' to take everything I have!"

"Oh you poor thang, you're gettin' yourself all worked up! I was just helping the fine people out by auditioning..."

"You just *happened* to audition? You just *happened* to bring an evening gown with you?"

Michel's eyes shifted to the side. "I like to be prepared."

With every muscle in her body tensed to lunge at Michel and rip him to shreds, Kelley Sue froze herself. Big signs with bright red letters were flashing in her mind. *No! Don't ruin your*



chances! Not when you're this close! "You are not going to ruin this for me, Michel!" She growled. "I have worked too hard!"

"I would never think of it, darlin!"

"Well, *darlin*, if you try to upstage me, sabotage me or do anything that will get in my way, I will expose the truth about you! I have evidence of who you really are and I *will* use it!" Kelley Sue strode away, her heels clicking like a clock. She then stopped to turn and make one last point. "I am the original Kelley Sue Crawford, and you are nothing but a sad imitation!"



Kelley Sue didn't sleep that night. She may not have even blinked. It was obvious to her now that it had been a plot by Michel to sabotage everything in her life so he could step in and take over. How could she have not seen this before?

He was a sick, perverted psycho. A twisted foreigner jealous of her and her American freedom, who would do anything to steal it for his own. What was going to be his next step? Maybe he would have hypnotized her parents and friends with his mysterious gypsy powers and make them forget all about her. Maybe he would have disgraced her even further, or thrown in jail, to have the family and the school all to herself. Maybe he was a spy, and was going to report back on America to his French government. Michel was a truly evil person.

Well, she told herself, I can play your game, Michel. Because now there was nothing to lose. That fear of being revealed as a liar for making Michel into a girl was no longer her biggest concern. She had to win this competition, no matter what the cost.

No. It was time to expose the little french boy for who he really was.



Bright and early the next morning, Kelley Sue scribbled a little note. It read: "To the Producers of Top Model USA. I have discovered that there is a contestant who is not who she says she is. In fact, she is not even a "she" at all. The contestant participating as "Shelley Jean Bouvier" is a man. Signed, Un-
onamous."

She slipped it underneath the door of one of the producers' rooms.



“We’ve been alerted to a situation, ladies,” said one of the producers as they gathered at the theater that morning. “For... Uh, Insurance reasons... We will have to subject each contestant to a brief physical exam.”

Kelley Sue bounced in glee as the other girls moaned. They must have gotten her note. Michel was in for it now!

“It’s nothing serious. There’s just certain... Liabilities in this business, and we just need to make sure...” The man was clearly flying by the seat of his pants. “Absolutely certain... Everything is above board.”

The other producer spoke. “We are pretty tightly scheduled for the afternoon, so we’ll have to conduct the exams as we go. A production assistant will be around to each of you and conduct the exam. It shouldn’t take more than a minute.”

“Otherwise,” the producer said, “we’re going to have a lot of fun, and I wish everyone well.”

Kelley Sue glanced over at Michel. The blank expression on his face said it all.



The lights on stage were the brightest Kelley Sue could imagine. They flooded the stage with pure white. A cleansing light, Kelley Sue thought to herself, a light that exposed lies and burned the infidels.

As they had practiced that afternoon, the twenty-five girls who were competing walked out on stage in their evening gowns, and formed into three rows on each side of the stage.

A well-groomed and polished man, dressed in a casual but professional suit hopped on stage with a microphone. “I’m Brent Kager and these twenty five ladies are competing in... Top Model USA!” He proclaimed. The audience clapped enthusiastically. “Today we come to you from Oklahoma – The Sooner State! And *sooner* or later, one of these ladies will be fulfilling their dreams as they travel to Los Angeles to pick our finalist for a million dollar modeling contract!”

On the second row on the left, Kelley Sue wasn’t listening at all. Her mind was focused on the all-important task at hand: looking beautiful and happy. She had never held a smile this long, and it was starting to strain the muscles in her face. *Smile, Kelley Sue! Smile!* She repeated in her mind. *Smile! Smile! Smile!*

“But now, they’ve got to show our judges if they have what it takes,” continued the host. As the camera panned over the seemingly calm but actually terrified faces of the girls, he talked over the swirling music. “All their lives have come to this moment! All the preparation! All the practice! It all comes down to this: Who will be this year’s *Top Model USA!*”

With a flourish of music and a dramatic change in the lighting, the shot was over. The host walked away, the camera men lined up for another shot, and the audience stopped clapping. “Backstage ladies,” said a stagehand, who motioned for them to get moving. The girls then shuffled off for their dressing areas.

The next sequence was then shot, the evening gown competition. Each girl was to follow a path they had practiced earlier that day, coming from one side of the stage, walking to the center, turning left and right, and end by walking away from the camera to show off their backsides, and then exit on the other side of the stage. Scores would be flashed on screen, but they were kept secret from the competitors.

Kelley Sue was the twelfth to go on, and stumbled only once or twice before getting to the stage and beaming that incredible tension-filled smile she gave. About ten girls later it was Michel’s turn, who walked it like a catwalk, expertly swinging his hips and looking relaxed and poised as he bared his pearly whites to the crowd.

If the girls had seen the score, they would have know that Kelley Sue had score 71.3 out of a hundred, and Michel an 80.1. Both had a fair distance to go from the leaders, however.

As Kelley Sue waited for the next event, she was interrupted by a production assistant. An older woman with glasses and a clipboard. She checked the name tag on Kelley Sue’s dress. “Need to do your physical exam, sweetie,” she said.

“Now?” Kelley Sue replied. She was dressed in her interpretive dance outfit, a grey leotard & large black trash bag, and with a mangled coat hanger in her hair

“Let’s find a room,” the production assistant said.

They stepped into a dressing area, and the assistant made a quick visual examination of the face, almost quickly enough that it seemed like she didn’t care at all. “Lift the... Skirt. Bag. Whatever that is.”

“Are you loco?”

“C’mon, missy. It’ll just be for a second.”

“Ugh!” Kelley Sue grunted, and pulled up the hem above her waist.

The production assistant then made a quick check mark on her clipboard. “Thank you!” She said and left quickly.

Kelley Sue was just left there, confused. Why were they bothering every contestant with this exam? She already told them who was the boy here. Why didn't they just check Michel? Maybe they were trying to be fair or something. What was the point of that?

They assembled back in the dressing area to change for the next part, the talent competition. While they taped all of the contestants in this segment, only a few would actually make the broadcast. As such, Kelley Sue's interpretive dance would only be seen by the theaters' audience, which made it all the more special. Her inability to move to the music she chose (an instrumental piece from the movie *Twilight*) or even dance in any sort of a coherent way, was not impressing the judges. In her outfit of scraps and trash, Kelley Sue was showing the world her artistic side. Using a set of props that included a pepper grinder, a sneaker and a mask of Jimmy Carter was a bit baffling. One could not help watch without wondering if it was some sort of artistic statement, or a rummage through a bin at Goodwill. In the end, it was fortunate that the music was loud enough to cover the snickering and giggling from the crowd.

Kelley Sue felt great about her performance, she skipped off stage, knowing that she had just given the best performance of her life and it was a sophisticated and classy as anything that fruit from Paris could have ever taught her. She grabbed random contestants and stagehands and hugged them gleefully as she was already counting the competition as won.

Michel came out after a few more contestants and sang a surprisingly passable version of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," as did three other contestants that night.

It was when Kelley Sue was changing back into the evening gown for the night's final competition, the interview, that she had an unexpected visitor.

"Kelley Sue?" Michel asked, as he tentatively approached her.

Kelley Sue looked up at Michel, twisting her face into snarl. "What do you want, you *traitor*?"

Michel, dressed in just a white robe, handed over the red dress that Kelley Sue thought was rightfully hers. "Here. I feel wrong wearing it."

Kelley Sue's righteous indignation was put aside for a moment as she marveled at the dress. It was perfect. When she had told Michel to make it for her, this was what she imagined. Elegance, grace, style, and shiny things. "It's not gonna fall apart on me, is it?" She asked with a sneer.

"No," Michel replied with a sigh. "I didn't mean to do all of this. I guess... I guess I just envy you so much..."

"Understandable, I suppose," Kelley Sue said, as she stepped out of her dress and stepped into the red dress. "It fits perfectly."

"I'm so sorry, Kelley Sue. For everything." Michel wiped a tear away. "I wish you the best." He stepped forward and picked up the discarded dress Kelley Sue had been wearing. "It looks wonderful on you."

Kelley Sue had to agree. "It's amazing."

"May I use this to finish..." Michel asked about the dress in his hand.

Transfixed by her reflection in the mirror, she just waved Michel away. "Yeah, yeah."

"Good luck, Kelley Sue. I know you'll win," Michel said as he left.

Called as the seventh girl, Kelley Sue strode out on stage full of confidence wearing her special red dress. The dress was dynamite and she knew it.

"All right! our next contestant, please!" the host said as Kelley Sue approached. She kept up that smile with every bit of energy she had. She stopped in front of the cameras, where the lights were all focused and a large "X" in gaffer tape was marked on the floor. "Introduce yourself, won't you?"

"I'm Kelley Sue Crawford from Winstonville, Oklahoma," Kelley Sue said.

"How are you feeling tonight, Kelley?" Asked Brent Kager.

"I am having the time of my life, Brent," she responded. "Kelley Sue is my full first name, by the way."

"Fair enough," Brent said. "Kelley *Sue*, What are the best qualities a parent could share with their children and why?"

"I believe that the most important thing, the best qualities a parent can have and share with their children, being that children are important to their parents, and therefore it's very important as a parent to share with their children the most important things. To them." She said. "What was the second part of your question, Brent?"

"Why."

"Well, Brent, children are important because they are the next generation of parents and they will have kids just like their parents did, and they need to know what's important, too."

"Wonderful," Brent replied with a smile. "Miss Kelley Sue Crawford, folks!" He stepped aside, letting Kelley Sue exit. She gave a royal wave to the judges, just to let them know that she wasn't going to be a difficult person when she won.

She arrived backstage with a smug expression and a sassy step, almost feeling sorry for all the girls who had worked so hard, but were going to go home empty tonight. It almost didn't seem fair. Almost.

"Physical exam, sweetie," said the production assistant with the clipboard.

"What?" Kelley Sue replied. "We did this."

“Not yet, we haven’t.”

“We just did! just a couple of hours ago!”

“I don’t have you down on my list,” the haggard assistant said. “This isn’t that big a deal. C’mon, you’re my last one.”

“Fine!” Kelley Sue grumped. “But make sure you get it right this time!”

They walked into a small changing room, the assistant gave a glance at the face and then checked under the skirt. She then made a checkmark on the clipboard. “Thank you!” She said, and walked out of the room.

It occurred to Kelley Sue that the assistant had just said that this was the “last one,” and that meant she was about to report the results to the producers. She wanted to hear that. Picking up her dress so she could trot a little faster, she followed the assistant to the wings of the theater.

“Here’s the results,” the woman said, handing over the clipboard.

“Great,” one of the producers said, glancing at it. “Let’s see...”

“Everyone checked out,” the assistant said.

“Looks like it,” the producer replied. He put the clipboard aside. “I hate these things. Bunch of bitchy prima donnas trying to sabotage each other. Tell Terry and the rest of the crew that Shelley Jean Bouvier is clean. She can continue.”

“What!” Kelley Sue yelled. Emerging from behind the corner where she had been eavesdropping, she walked in between the two and looked at the clipboard herself. “What in the hell?” She said, seeing the checkmark for “Female” next to Shelley Jean Bouvier. She immediately turned on her heel and scrambled back to the dressing rooms. “This is impossible! I don’t believe this!” she screamed, “Shelley Jean!” She stomped off to go find Michel.

She found Michel at his makeup desk, his expression serene. “What can I do for you, Kelley Sue?” The room was empty, fortunately.

“How did you pass the inspection?” Kelley Sue yelled.

“Inspection?”

“The inspection!” Kelley Sue demurely demonstrated what she was talking about by grabbing her crotch.

Shelley Jean stood up. “Well, I personally didn’t pass the exam.” He turned to face Kelley Sue. He pointed to the name tag that was affixed to her dress. “You did, Shelley Jean Bouvier.”

Kelley Sue looked down at the name tag. Sure enough, it read “Shelley Jean Bouvier.” She ground her teeth as she made a frustrated squeaking noise from inside her throat. She had left the tag on from when Shelley Jean exchanged dresses with her. That’s why they examined her twice. The first time she had her own name tag on.



"Auuuugggghhhh!" She yelled. "You're trying to steal everything in my life!" Frustrated, she grabbed Michel by the hair and dragged him out of the room.

Michel was caught by surprise, but didn't fight it. In fact, he seemed to be trying desperately to keep pace with Kelley Sue rather than resisting her. "Stop!" he cried. "Stooooop!"

"I'm gonna take care of this right now!" Kelley Sue declared. She opened a door which led outside and took Michel with her as she left the theater. They were out in the cold, near the production truck, with huge cords and wires leading from the truck through to the theater. "I've had enough! You can't steal everything in my life and get away with it!"

She tossed Michel aside, by the hair, and was shocked when that very same brown hair came loose.

"Shlooork!" was the noise it made. Kelley Sue was horrified at first, but then bewildered. There wasn't any blood. There wasn't any scream of pain. Michel reached up and the hair came off of his head, and a fair bit of flesh-colored latex came with it.

Then it occurred to her what had happened. "You're wearing a wig?" She cried.

Silently, Michel stood up



straight, and shook his head, setting his long, blonde hair free. He tucked it behind one ear.

Kelley Sue recognized the style. "That's... That's my hair!" Kelley Sue yelped.

"No, it's *my* hair," Michel replied. "At least it is now."

"You dyed your hair and cut it like mine? Why?"

Michel smiled. Then he giggled. "Do you think it looks good on me?" He replied.

"You're insane! Crazy as a loon!"

"Here, I want to show you some other things I had done," Michel said. He gripped the shoulders of his dress and tugged them apart, revealing two round, pert female breasts. He pulled the dress back to cover.

"Oh my God!" Kelley Sue yelped. "No!"

"I've been taking hormones for the past several months. They finally started to grow in. I was pleasantly surprised at how big they got. No padding!"

Kelley Sue now knew what those pills he had been getting in the mail were for. She never had the chance to look them up before she lost her computer privileges. She had all the evidence she needed and had let it slip away. She felt like an idiot.

"That's not all," Michel said.

"You're a freak, you psycho," Kelley Sue said. "I'm going to make sure you rot in jail."

"I ain't gonna rot in no jail," Michel replied. "Your timing couldn't have been more perfect. Now I can finally make the switch."

He started to get a firm grip his bony cheeks, and slowly removed them. They were latex, just like the edges of the wig. A long stretchy gummy glue stretched as he lifted pieces of something off of his face. He tossed them aside.

"What do you think?" Michel asked. "Right perty, if I do say so myself." He picked a few stray wads of glue from his chin. "The surgery was hell. Good thing your parents didn't want to hang around for the operation. They probably would have realized I was faking all those injuries. I just needed the excuse to go see a doctor for the plastic surgery. I do have to apologize. You never really did hurt me when you got drunk at the barn. I just lied and covered my face with bandages."

"You... You had this done? I never punched you?"

"You passed out when I was driving you home. The rest I staged."

"I knew it!" Kelley Sue said. "I knew it all along! I'm too much of a lady to punch someone!"

"Sure you are," Michel said with a giggle. "I'm so glad I don't have to put these on every day anymore," he said, tossing the pieces of latex rubber away. "I won't have to pretend anymore."

"So, you don't deny it! Come with me, and just say it to the cameras so I have it on tape!"

"You take me for a darn fool, don't you?" Michel said. "I ain't gonna admit nothin' to no ones."

"I'll make you!" Kelley Sue insisted. "You'll admit everything or I..."

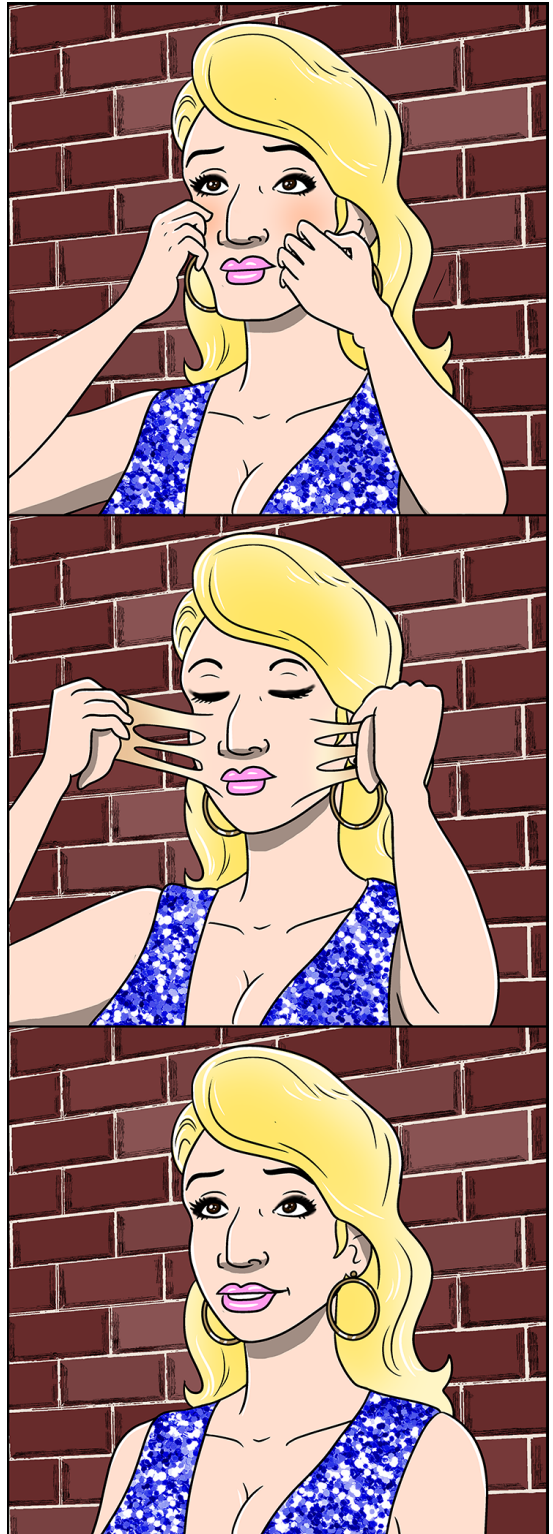
"Now why would I admit to anything? I, after all, am Kelley Sue Crawford."

"You're crazy!"

Then, slowly and deliberately, Michel gripped his big nose and popped it from its' spot, pulling it away, the same stretchy glue being left behind. He had easily plucked his beak right off, revealing a smaller, feminine nose underneath.

"What... What are you...?" Was all Kelley Sue could say.

He idly cleared off some of the flesh-colored latex residue from his skin. "Those five days in the city weren't for fixing my broken nose. It was to give me a new one. And a new face. Yours." He leaned casually against the wall of the building. "Oh, and wait until you see this!" He then dragged down



his lower eyelid on one eye, and then the other, removing two brown contacts. When he got his head upright again, he had blue eyes. "I didn't even know they could be permanently changed. Isn't that just wild?"

"What did you do...?"

"When you had me tellin' that story, the one about Michelle's sad life? I made a decision. I decided that my old life wasn't that interesting. I wanted a different one. I guess I could have been Michelle, but I liked your life *much* better." He stepped forward, his sparkling blue eyes level with Kelley Sue's sparkling blue eyes. "You made it easy to steal your life. I am going to be so happy as Kelley Suellen Crawford." He cleared his throat. "Don't y'all think do, darlin'?" He spoke in a voice exactly like Kelley Sue's. The twang, the inflection, the cadence and the haughty undercurrent were just like hers.

A passerby would have double-taked as he saw just two girls standing outside the theater door. Two twin girls. They were exactly alike in every respect. The same shape, height, hair and face.

"You're... This is... I can't..." The situation had overwhelmed Kelley Sue's little mind.

"You know, when you made me pretend to be a girl, I hated it," Michel said, still speaking in Kelley Sue's voice. "But I do



look good, don't I? I think I've become the prettiest girl in Winstonville." He examined his fingernails. "I have to admit, I do like being a girl now. I love Oklahoma. I love my friends, Joelle and Randi, I love my boyfriend Colt, and I love my Momma and my Daddy. And now I ain't never gotta leave."

"I'll stop you! No one's gonna believe you!" Kelley Sue protested. She tried the handle of the door, but it locked automatically when it shut.

"I suppose you're right – if there were two Kelley Sue Crawfords around."

Immediately understanding the threat, Kelley Sue took a defensive position, holding her hands in a vaguely karate-like stance, even though she had no idea what she was doing, "Don't you try it!" She yelled. "I'm not so easy to kill!"

Michel grinned and giggled. "That's what I've always liked about you, Kelley Sue. You're ridiculous." Michel reached inside his bra and brought out a small, folded piece of paper. He carefully unwrapped it, revealing a small mound of powder. He blew it into Kelley Sue's face.

"What was that?"

"Tetrodotoxin," Michel said. "Some people call it TTX or Zombie Powder."

"Zombie Powder?" Kelley Sue asked. "What is..." and then she lost her balance for a moment, and had to grab a rail for support.

"It's what they call a neural toxin," Michel explained. "It's attacking your nervous system right now. That's why you're so weak all of the sudden."

"No!" Kelley Sue said, her energy clearly flagging. "No..." Michel grabbed the jeweled cross that Kelley Sue wore around her neck and removed it. Kelley Sue could not provide any resistance.

"It takes about a half hour to take total effect, so as long as I can keep you here and keep you from taking the antidote, it'll be all over."

Kelley Sue looked almost ready to collapse. "Antidote?" She asked. "I need to take an antidote?"

"Pretty soon, yes. Something that can save you from the full effect of the toxin."

"What... What is it?"

"I'm not tellin' you!" Michel said.

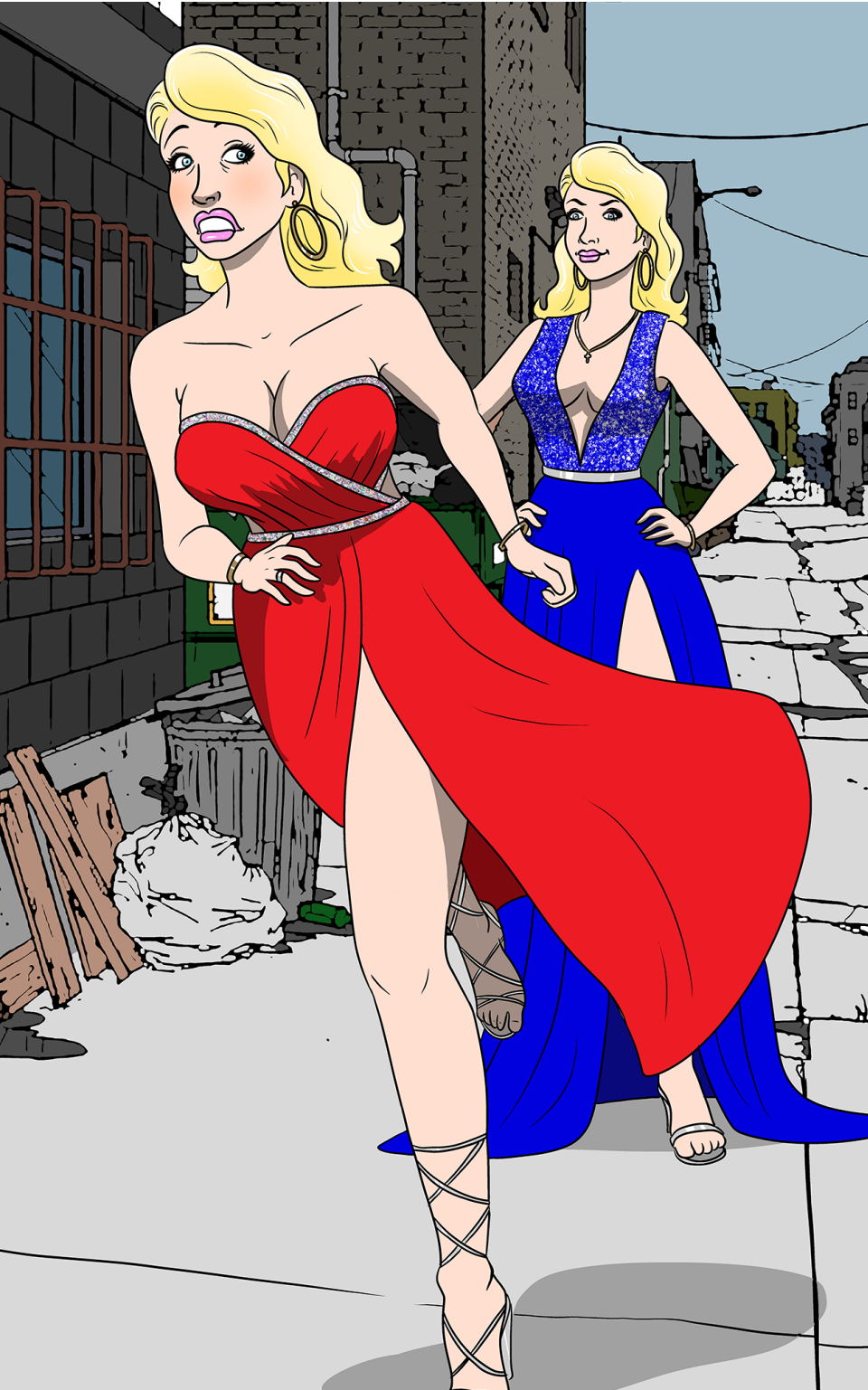
"Please!" Kelley Sue begged.

"Well..." Michel pondered.

"You have to!"

"Oh, what the hell, it's not like you can do anything about it anyway. Egg Nog." Michel explained. "You'd have to drink about six gallons to counteract the effects of..."

"That's all I needed to know!" Kelley Sue said, pushing Michel aside.



"You come back here!" He yelled as Kelley sped away in panic. Michel made a show of chasing Kelley Sue around the corner of the building. There, he saw Kelley Sue checking the handles of parked cars. That gave Michel the chance to catch up to her, which wasn't easy in the heels he was wearing.

Kelley Sue checked another car. It was locked. Then another. Locked.

Michel was just catching up, and lunged at Kelley Sue. Instead of stopping her though, he only snatched the name badge from her dress. Just as he did, the car door she was trying opened up. She closed the door behind her and then locked it. Miraculously, the keys were in the ignition, and Kelley Sue started it up and sped off. She needed to get to a market and drink as much Egg Nog as possible to save her life. Christmas was only a month ago. Maybe they still had some at a market. *She had to try!*

Michel watched as Kelley Sue drove off in a stolen car, desperate to find the "antidote." He affixed Kelley Sue's jeweled cross around his neck and turned away.

Sadly, there was no real antidote to the toxin he had just given Kelley Sue. He was lying about that, just to make sure that Kelley Sue would run off and try to save herself. The stolen car was just a nice bonus.

The toxin would not kill Kelley Sue. Michel wasn't a murderer. But there is a reason they call it "zombie powder." It would cause her to get weaker and weaker until her blood flow eventually got so slow that her mind would start to have trouble and go into a zombie-like state. That would be in about twenty-five minutes.

It wasn't permanent, either. With medical treatment, and good doctors, she would probably make a nearly full recovery. In about six or eight months, she'd be conscious, and in a year or two she'd be able to talk again. But for a while, at least, Kelley Sue was going to be unresponsive to the world.

Too bad they couldn't identify her. Michel had made sure it was his fingerprints now on file as belonging to "Kelley Sue." She'd be a Jane Doe until she was able to speak. Plus, the tiny amount of botox he'd put in the powder would paralyze the muscles in her face. When she woke up, she wouldn't look much like Kelley Sue anymore. Then, when she claimed to be the daughter of the Crawfords, she would never be able to prove it.

She imagined that in just a few minutes, a crazed Kelley Sue would be in a convenience store collapsing in a pool of Egg Nog, screaming for help. It made him giggle. Egg Nog as an antidote! As if. The new Kelley Sue Crawford took a deep breath and then ran through a door in the theater, ready to breathlessly tell her harrowing story of survival, barely able to save herself from the clutches of that devious foreigner, Michel Bouvier.



The sun lit up the gauzy white curtains in Kelley Sue Crawford's room, setting the room aglow. It was still in the early morning, but that was only because Kelley Sue hadn't gotten up yet. She was wide awake, watching her alarm clock tick over to when the alarm went off. After all, how could she sleep on a day as wonderful as today?

Tapping the alarm off, she sprang out of bed, her bare feet landing in the plush pink carpet of her room. Kelley Sue flew to her closet, flinging the doors open. So many dresses, so many tops, so many skirts, so many shoes – all hers. Hers to choose from. She flicked through them, playfully imagining herself in each: the sparkly ones, the bright ones, the revealing ones, the fashionable ones. She was just teasing herself, though. She already knew what outfit she was going to wear today.

It was the very same outfit Michel had first met Kelley Sue in. It seemed appropriate, as this was her first day “back” at school, and wanted to start her new life where all this had begun.

After a shower behind a very tightly locked bathroom door, and a meticulous recreating of Kelley Sue's makeup and hair routine, she was ready to dress. She was atingle, imagining herself doing this same routine every day for the rest of her life. Kelley Sue was trembling at the sheer pleasure of putting cute and stylish outfits on her pretty body for the many, many days that awaited her.

She looked at herself, fully dressed in the mirror, and almost wanted to reach out and touch the image, but she didn't have to. She was the image. No more pretending, no more envy. This was her now.

After answering detective's questions about the fugitive Michel Bouvier, and a few days of “recuperating” from the stress of it all, she was going “back” to school. He school. To her friends. To take her classes.

“Good morning, Momma,” Kelley Sue said as she came down to the kitchen. Her mother had gone a little extra in making eggs, bacon and pancakes for Kelley Sue's return, and she wanted to let her know she appreciated it, but that wasn't Kelley Sue's way. “I can't eat all this, Momma! I'm gonna gain weight!” She took a small nutrition bar from the pantry instead.

“I know, darlin, I... Just want you to be fully prepared. You've been so weak.”

“I'm fine, Momma!” Kelley Sue insisted. “I'm a Crawford. I'm tough.”

“Darn right,” Ron said as he came to the breakfast table and sat himself down. “More for me, though.” He began to pile food high on his plate.

“Oh, Daddy,” Kelley Sue said with a giggle, bending over to kiss him on the cheek.

"You be good, you hear?" The head of the Crawford family said. "You don't let anyone give you any trouble today."

"They wouldn't dare," Kelley Sue said as she turned to leave. "I'll be home after cheer practice!" She announced as she left.

She didn't have to wait very long in the driveway before Colt pulled up in his pickup. "Sorry," he said.

"I swear, Colt. You'll be late to your own funeral," Kelley Sue said as she hoisted herself up into the enormous cab of the truck.

"How are you feelin'?" Colt asked.

"I'm fine!" She insisted. "Will everyone stop asking me that?"

Colt turned around to watch himself as he backed the truck out. "I'm just concerned, okay? We wuz all worried about you. You might have been killed or even worse!"

"But I'm alive," Kelley Sue said, checking her immaculate reflection in the passenger mirror, and feeding her hair behind her ear. "And I don't want to be late for my first day back. Git a move on! Go!"

Colt knew better than to argue or defy his girlfriend, and got headed to school. It was a brief trip, and Kelley Sue didn't have too much time to reflect on what lied ahead for her. She knew that she'd have to wait for the summer break, three months away, before she could have the sexual reassignment surgery she so desperately wanted and needed. Until then, she was going to have to make her excuses for Colt. He would wait, though. She knew he was already hers for as long as she wanted him to be.

It was going to be a busy 18 months for her. First, she'd need to re-establish her alpha status within the school. There would be elections for school president coming up, as well as Junior Prom Queen. If she worked fast enough to become the most popular girl in school again, she was going to win those in a landslide.

Then, next year, she'd win cheer captain again, win Senior Prom and Homecoming Queen, and all the while, she'd need to practice for Top Model USA for next year. Oh yes, she was going to compete again. That was Kelley Sue Crawford's dream, after all, and she was Kelley Sue Crawford.

The truck pulled into his assigned parking spot and Colt pulled the hand-brake. "I hope you understand and all. I... I didn't know that... He wuz... That Michelle was really a dude and..."

Kelley Sue crossed her arms. "And I suppose I'm expected to forgive you for letting that foreigner trick you?"

Colt was taken aback. "I... I..."

Kelley Sue giggled. "Of course I will!" She fed her slender fingers into the seam of Colt's fly. She was going to have to get used to sucking her boyfriend's cock, after all. Now just that, but she was going to have to learn to love it. There was no better time than now to get started.

"I don't believe it! Shelley Jean was a *boy*?" Joelle said, her mouth understandably agape.

Kelley Sue nodded. "Yes!" Kelley Sue and her friends Joelle and Randi had met in the school garden.

"When did you know?"

"Well, he revealed his whole plan to me a couple of weeks after he came here," Kelley Sue said. "He threatened to kill my family and shoot up the school if I told anyone."

"Sweet baby Jesus!" Randi said covering her mouth in horror.

"Then I found these pills he was taking to become a woman."

"Pills?"

"Tons of 'em!" Kelley Sue replied. "Michel – and don't you know, it's a man's name in France? These pills can make a man into a lady. Isn't that bizarre? Anyway, well, Michel's plan was to take over my identity and then commit terrorist acts. He figured no one would suspect a teenage girl from Oklahoma of being a terrorist!"

"That boy was evil!" Randi said. "Pure evil!"

"I can't believe I ever liked him!" Joelle said.

Randi smiled. "Well, I didn't. I was faking it."

"How did you convince the police, Kelley Sue?" Joelle asked.

"Well, I had all the evidence. I had been collectin' it."

"Wow!" Randi said.

"I had this pad of paper he was usin' to imitate my handwritin', and I had the pill bottles. I had the emails for buyin the pills, too. The police found empty boxes of hair colorin' and records of these operations he had in the city. Turns out he was rich! He had like a hundred thousand dollars he was spendin'."

"What about that Top Model USA thing?" Joelle asked.

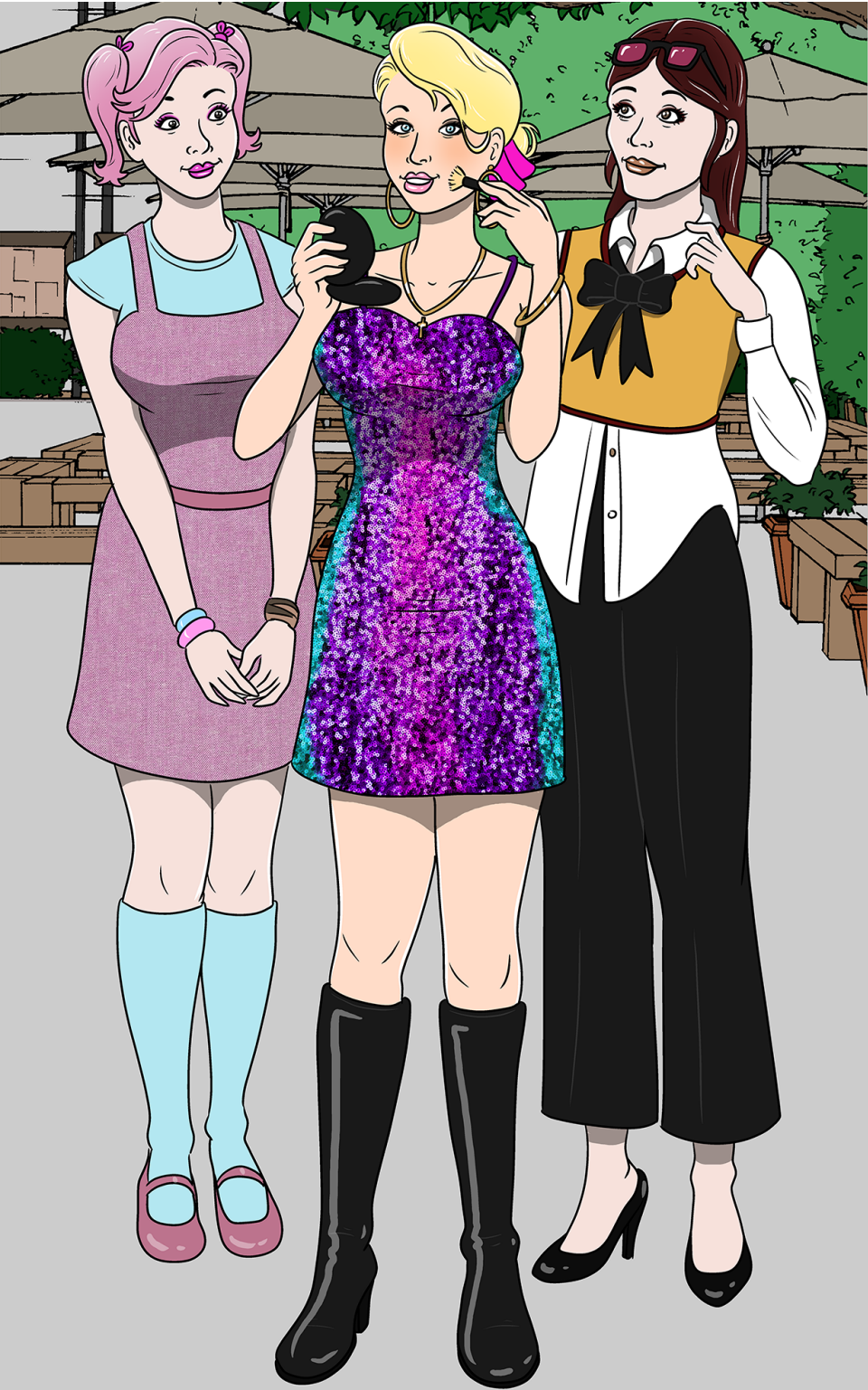
"They edited both me and Michel outta the show. Some girl from Charleston won it."

"You worked so hard for that!"

"There's always next year," Kelley Sue said with a grin.

"I never suspected her," Randi said. "I mean... Him."

"Just thinkin' about it makes me want to throw up."



"He's long gone now, girls," Kelley Sue said. "He'll never show his face around here if he knows what's good for him!"

"I'm so glad you're okay!" Joelle said, hugging Kelley Sue.

"You forgive us?" Randi asked.

"Shoot, how was you to know that this was happenin'?" She hugged her friends back. "Thank you for bein' so understandin'."

"So! Did I miss any juicy gossip while I was gone?"

"How can you act like nothing happened?" Joelle asked.

"I just want my life... Back." Kelley Sue replied. "All the teachers are givin' me do-overs, I'm off probation, may folks aren't groundin' me no mores, an I just wanna get back to bein' plain ol' Kelley Sue Crawford."

"It's just a lot to process..." Randi began to say.

"Treat me *normal*!" Kelley Sue demanded with a growl. "Or do you wanna eat lunch with the computer geeks?"

"No!" Randi said. "Please!"



"That's right, Jerry," Kelley Sue wistfully sobbed on the TV screen. "My husband left me for my mother!"

The audience gasped as one, on cue.

"Is my mother my grandmother or sister in law? I'm so confused!"

"It's a sad tale, ladies and gentlemen," Jerry Springer said to his audience. "But there's more to the story, isn't there?"

"Yes, Jerry," Kelley Sue continued through the heaving and sobbing. "My Daddy lives with the both of them!"

The audience gasped again, only louder. They made mumbling noises as they all began to speak.

"Ladies and gentlemen, please. So, Kelley Sue, it's a polyamorous relationship?"

"I'm so sorry, y'all. I don't know what that means, Jerry. I only know they share a bed every night! What do I tell my kids? I got me two children to raise on my own!"

"Certainly a sensitive situation," Jerry said. "Let's bring out her husband and her parents!"

Kelley Sue was laid back on the couch watching her appearance on the Jerry Springer Show from three years ago. It was the best day of her life. Growing

up as a boy in Paris, he had always wanted to see the show. Now, he had been *on* it. It was beyond his wildest dreams. It had cost Kelley Sue a lot, but it was so worth it. She had to manipulate Colt, her husband of six years into falling in love with her own mother, and then trick her father into staying in the marriage. All without being discovered as the one behind it all.

She had spent years on this plan, but when she had done it, she had what she was looking for: material for the Jerry Springer Show. The producers flew them all in for the taping, putting them up at a fancy hotel and everything.

Kelley Sue turned off the video, as she had watched it maybe five hundred times now. She knew it all by heart. Tearful admission, Colt saying true love can't be stopped, angry yelling, throwing chairs, more crying, and Jerry's closing thoughts.

She was watching it today because it was a special occasion. Kelley Sue Crawford finally got around to burning what was left of Michel Bouvier's identification. She was now sure she'd never need it again. She walked outside to the small bonfire she had built in the back yard and tossed the passport for Michel in. She enjoyed watching it curl and fade, turning black and disintegrating into ash.

The single mother stepped through the patio doors into the house. "Colt Jr! Stop harassing your sister!" She yelled. The two children then ran away into a different room. Children? Yes. She had held Colt to the promise he had made to the original Kelley Sue, that they wouldn't have sex until they were married, which they were after their senior year.

That was plenty of time for her pills to do their work and complete the process of becoming a woman. She shed no tears when the final surgery was done during her summer trip to Mexico. When she walked down the aisle on her Daddy's arm, she was truly ready to do her wifely duties.

Just a year later, when she decided she was going to become pregnant, Colt never saw her naked during that nine months, which allowed her to use some padding. She added more and more over time, up to the point she was ready to "give birth." A college student carried the baby for her and when she returned from the hospital with Colt Jr., her husband was overjoyed. She did it again a year later to give him Holly Anne.

All her friends were so jealous that she never seemed to gain weight after pregnancy. She always explained it as "good family genes."

Having children wasn't exactly what Kelley Sue wanted out of life, but she had gown to love them. Helping them grow up was trying, but rewarding. She liked being called a mother now, which was a surprise she wasn't expecting.

What she *was* expecting was that she would live out her life just as Michel had imagined Americans did. A cycle of divorces, lawsuits, squabbling and vanity. As such, she now collected three thousand a month in alimony from

Colt, who had married her mother after all. Whenever she crossed paths with her former parents and husband, she always made a scene in public, because she felt like that was what a petty, entitled girl like Kelley Sue would do. It was fun, too.

She spent a good portion of the money on her kids, but was also saving for some plastic surgery to tighten up some loose skin on her face. She had recently turned 30, and was already examining her face for wrinkles every day. She had a reputation, after all. A former homecoming queen needed to look her best, even if she had put on quite a bit of weight in the last two years. In the back of her mind, she was thinking of letting herself bloat up to morbid obesity, but maybe in a few years after she had snagged a new husband. It would be so fun to be mega-fat, like most of the women she knew.

Just as Michel imagined, her day-to-day existence was living a carnival freak show of fat Americans whining about petty problems, cousins marrying cousins, spouses cheating on spouses, fighting beauty queens, pregnant teens and family betrayal. All of it was served up with a healthy dose of kinky sex, religion and guns.

Why, Joelle and Randi had already been married five times between them. Joelle even slept with her step-Uncle once. Randi weighed 300 pounds now. She drove around Wal-Mart in a tiny scooter.

Michel never heard from the original Kelley Sue again. The last she was able to track things down, that woman had been shipped off to some hospital – in Paris, of all places – that specialized in trying to rehabilitate people suffering from neurotoxins. Who knows what happened after that. Kelley Sue didn't worry. There was nothing to threaten her now.

"Put that down!" Kelley Sue yelled. She grabbed one of her cheerleading trophies from her son's hands and put it back on the shelf. "You are not to touch those! Those are Momma's!" She watched both her children run upstairs, still making noise. "I told you, Colt Jr.! Be nice to Holly Anne!" She yelled. Grabbing a cigarette from her purse, she lit up and took slow drag.

She should probably start dinner, she concluded. Hamburger Helper or Frito Pie were the choices tonight. She walked to the fridge and grabbed a can of beer, popping its' top and gulping it down. She decided Hamburger Helper was easier. Besides, she had Double Cheeseburger flavor. Her favorite. Well, Kelley Sue's favorite.

Walking back outside to the bonfire, she turned the hose on it and extinguished the flame. A thrill washed over her, a feeling she loved. It was the feeling that she was in somebody else's place, living inside someone else's life. She never quite understood why, but Kelley Sue felt a tingle whenever she thought about this ruse she perpetrated. She was an actor in her own play, controlling Kelley Sue as if she were working a marionette, high above. Michel



enjoyed every moment of every day, in control of the walking monument to ridiculous American values, Kelley Sue Crawford.

She came inside and played her video again, from the top.

The End

Titles from Sick Puppy Press

Sick Puppy Comics

Making Friends

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

The Pet Sitter

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

A Curious Curse

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

Boys Will Be Girls

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

The Step-Witch

Story by Joe Six-Pack. Dillon has a new step-mother. Problem is that she and Dillon don't get along. More of a problem for Dillon is that she's a witch — and wants a daughter. Full Color Comic Book / 17 pages

Double-Crossed

Story & Art by Joe-Six Pack. Jesse is on the run from justice. When he finds an old friend who can help him, that old friend seems more interested in helping Jesse become a woman. Comic / 24 pages

Candlewick Court Series

Welcome to Candlewick

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack. Book 1 in a series. Candlewick Court is looking for new residents. Residents who will find new lives and new genders in a suburban paradise with a mysterious purpose. Book / 149 pages / 30 illustrations

Surrender to Candlewick

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack. Book 2 in a series. Candlewick Court has found it's first homeowners, and the kids need a school to attend. What kind of bizarre transformations await them? Book / 152 pages / 38 illustrations

Brides of Candlewick

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack. Book 3 in a series. The story of Colin and Elliot concludes as we welcome Candlewick Court's next homeowners. Book / 159 pages / 39 illustrations

Teens Transformed

She Made Me Into My Sister

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

Gone Girly for Good

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

One Year in Tokyo

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

Students, Exchanged

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

He's a Valley Girl, Fer Sure

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

From Boys to Bridesmaids

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

Little Mis-ter Popular

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

Bride to Be

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

Winning is Everything

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

Creating Samantha

Story by Cheryl Lynn, illustrations by The Might Fenek. Samuel was under the tutelage of his legal guardian, only his guardian had no intentions of letting him grow up male. Book / 70 pages / 16 illustrations

Convicts to Co-Eds

Story by By Courtney Captisa & Claire Bear, illustrations by Joe Six-Pack. Three teen boys are sent to a reform school. What they can't know is that they are about to be "reformed" all the way into skirts... And beyond. Book / 154 pages / 31 illustrations

Mall Makeover Madness

"A Day at the Mall" by KK, illustrations by Fraylim. Four boys are going to have one weird day at the mall. By the time the day is over, it's four girls who leave the mall to begin their new lives. Book / 109 pages / 25 illustrations

Tales of Transformation

He's the Wrong Girl

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

City Boy, Country Girl

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

Thames Greene

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

Hiding in High Heels

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

A Blessing in Disguise

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

I'm Your Dolly

"Barbie-in-a-Box" By Joe Six-Pack. Tyler wasn't much of a boyfriend anymore. Jessica wanted to throw him out, but then a better idea came to her, in the form of the Barbie-in-a-Box service. Tyler better get used to pink. Book / 103 pages / 20 illustrations

His Life as a Trophy Wife

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

Male Monday, Girl Friday

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

The Happiest Place on Earth

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

Hello, Nurse

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

My Boss, The Bimbo

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

He's the Girl They Want

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

Demoted and Degraded

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

I, Candy

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

Boyz II Girlz

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

His Strangest Desire

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

Hard Time or High Heels

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

Seriously Skirted

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

From Mister to Sister

Story by Melissa N., illustrations by Joe Six-Pack. Dan just wanted to help guide his girlfriend's sister out of her depression. Instead, he's being guided out of his manhood. Book / 84 pages / 24 illustrations

Stories of the Supernatural

A Change for the Better

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

Changed and Rearranged

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

From Pals to Gals

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

thanks to some magic. Book / 45 pages / 16 illustrations

Crossed Fiction

If the Shoes Fit

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

Sisters for the Summer

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

They're the Girls for the Job

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

Blondie's Lost Summer

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

Blondie's Lost Year

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

Blondie He's Not

Story by KK, illustrations by Fraylim. Mark got a job at a salon, and fell in love with one of the customers. Problem was that customer was Candi "Blondie" Wethers, and what happened to Candi was about to happen to Mark. Book / 151 pages / 40 illustrations

I Never Wanted to be a Woman

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

The Boy's Guide to Girlhood

Story by KK, illustrations by Fraylim. Dweeb Kenny and cool Rex find themselves trapped in a Principal's twisted scheme, and only one of them is going to get out intact. Book / 109 pages / 32 illustrations

Fashion Victims

Story by Lauren Bliss, illustrations by Fraylim. Teenage boy Jamie just needed clothes for school. Oh, he's going to get clothes for school. Just not male ones. Will he ever need male clothes again? Book / 67 pages / 26 illustrations

Seriously Sissified

A Family Femmed

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

Forever Femmed

Story by James J. Craft & Cheryl Lynn, illustrations by Sortimid. "A Family Femmed's" Deborah is still hard at work, flipping men into sissies and selling them to the highest bidder. But this time, there's a new wrinkle. Book / 108 pages / 28 illustrations

Auntie's Girl Time

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

Revenge of the Cheerleaders

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

He's Got His Mind Made Up

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

Fated for Femininity

Story by KK, illustrations by RocketXpert. When a web page shows Evan having sex with another boy, the poor kid is chased out of town — right into the arms of a gender therapist who has her own agenda. Book / 70 pages / 15 illustrations

Web Classics Revisited

Two Forms of ID

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



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