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FROM BROTHERS TO BRIDESMAIDS

THE STEPMOTHER SERIES: BOOK 1

"Always a Bridesmaid, Never a Groom" by James J. Craft
Illustrations by Kwon Lee Tran



J A M E S J C R A F T

FROM BOYS TO BRIDESMAIDS

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**“Always a Bridesmaid, Never a Groom”
by James J. Craft**

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ALWAYS A BRIDESMAID, NEVER A GROOM

Meeting a Lady

Caleb and Van were *perfectly normal* teenaged boys.

They both had thousand square-foot bedrooms that overlooked the Hollywood Hills outside of Los Angeles. Both had attended the finest schools that money could buy ... and been expelled from half. They partied with rock-stars

and slept with models, and spent more on clothes and shoes and hair-care products than most teenaged girls.

They were both, perfectly normal, spoiled, filthy-rotten, bratty, entitled, whiny rich teenaged boys.

Their father, Derrick, a self-made man who spent most of his time on the road, had married early – too early – and once the strain of parenthood set in, his first wife bailed on him and his two sons. That was years ago. The boys had practically never known a real mother.

Wives two-through-five didn't have any interest or experience in parenting his boys, and some even viewed the boys as a barrier to cashing in on Derrick's money. They were weary of what women could do to their family, and had developed quite a negative view of the fairer sex. This outlook on women would very likely lead them to be womanizers in their later lives, but in the short-term, it led them to not fully trust anyone but each other.

Derrick tried his best to raise his then-six-month-old and two year old sons, and by some measure, was a success. After all, they had never been arrested, which couldn't be said of all of Derricks' wealthy Hollywood neighbors.

Derrick's line of work had him criss-crossing the globe. He lived out of a suitcase most of the time, always looking to close the big deals he thrived on. A man like Derrick who lived for these big deals, and taking big risks needed big rewards for his troubles. That led to his many, many relationships with women. There wasn't a major city in the western world he didn't have a number to call for a quick and dirty liaison. One night, no questions, no remorse.

That sort of behavior can only go on for so long before a man has to make good on his promises, which led to wives two, three, four and five.

Then came wife-to-be number six. Lucy, or Lady Lucinda Anita LaCoeur as she often preferred to be referred to, was a staggeringly beautiful socialite from outside of New Orleans, whom Derrick had met in the 'Big Easy' one summer. He found Lady Lucinda Anita LaCoeur a fascinating woman, not only for her impressive physical beauty, but for her resourcefulness. It wasn't unusual for her to 'bump into' him around the country at different events, something that he took particularly keen notice of. Derrick couldn't be sure, but he had a feeling the woman was following him around.

And one day, he decided to see if she was as interested as he thought she was. And she was *definitely* interested in Derrick. She was "all in" as he quickly found out. He had very little chance, really, as Lady Lucinda Anita LaCoeur was a woman who *always* got what she wanted. Within months, they were engaged to be married.

It was then, just shortly before the wedding, that Derrick decided it was a good time to introduce his fiancé to his two sons. He invited Lucinda to move into his California home as they prepared for the wedding.

Caleb and Van were playing basketball in the courtyard when their father called for them. “Boys!” he yelled out the door, “Come inside for a moment please, there’s someone I’d like you to meet”

The two brothers rolled their eyes and kept playing. They knew that their Dad had gotten engaged again, and figured it was another gold-digging bubble-headed blonde, barely older than they were. So instead of honoring their father’s request, they ignored it. They’d been down this road before.

Derrick stood in the doorway, sighing. This kind of disrespect was common with them nowadays. He blamed himself, then called to them again, “Seriously guys! I want you to meet Lucinda ... It’ll only take a minute ... Please come inside”

Van sighed as he tossed the ball into the net, then looked over at his brother as he trudged in the direction of his father’s voice. Caleb sighed too, as he grabbed the ball out of the air, “Fine” he muttered as he followed his brother towards the house.

The two brothers found their father in the front hall surrounded with suitcases and trunks, in the shadow of an imposing feminine figure.

The boys stood silent for a moment as they watched the figure instructing their Dad on which piece of luggage was to go where. Her voice was deep and husky, but unmistakably feminine as she ordered Derrick around, “Derrick,” she said, “How many times must I tell you ... Please be careful ... that case contains priceless family heirlooms.”

She must have been six feet tall, maybe more, and with her hair pulled back and up into massive pony tail, she easily appeared to be more than seven feet in height. She was wearing a skin-tight dress that ended in ruffles just above the knee and heels that looked nearly impossible to walk in. Her body was muscular but very rounded, with massive globe-like breasts, and a matching globe-like ass, accentuated by a ridiculously small waist.

Her ebony skin was made up with layers of cosmetics, including long feathery lashes set onto eyes that were carefully drawn out at the edges. Her lips looked twice the size of normal that pursed and pouted as she watched Derrick fumbling with her priceless artifacts.

“Dude” Van leaned over to Caleb with a hush tone, “She’s black...”

Caleb nudged his brother, knowing that his near-whisper would likely be overheard.

And sure enough, it was.

“Oh ... Boys!” Derrick beamed as he placed the suitcase gently down, “You’re here...”

The woman turned to see who was there, glancing over them with a curious expression.

“Lucy,” Derrick smiled, “these are my boys... Van...” he pointed at his eldest son, “And Caleb” he continued as he pointed to his youngest.

Lucy smiled, “Well?” she said in expectant tone.

The two brothers looked at each with baffled expressions.

“Boys,” their Father commanded as he turned back towards the suit cases, “come over and say hello to your future step-mom”



They moved forward under her deep gaze. She extended a gloved hand to Caleb, who, not knowing what to do, took it in his own and leaned forward to kiss the top. Lucy's expression remained one of curious wonder ... as if she was somehow fascinated by Derrick's two sons.

Van, still holding onto the basketball, rolled his eyes at the silly display. Until, that is, Lucy extended her hand to him.

Not wanting to make a scene, he repeated his brother's act, with far less grace, and quickly planted a peck on the surface of her smooth, sweet smelling hand.

"My name is Lady Lucinda Anita LaCoeur of St. Bernard Parish," she said with a slight smile, "and it's a great privilege to meet you both. I look forward to getting to know you both quite well in the days ahead. And, I'm sure, you me."

"LaCoeur..." Derrick called from behind them, "Is a French word meaning 'heart' ... and ... lets just say that Lucy's stolen mine"

She smiled at Derrick, "Oh Derrick, you say the loveliest things," then turned back to the boys with a devilish glint in her eye. "And I do hope I'll be able to capture y'all's heart too," she let her near perfect English slip into a Louisiana drawl for a moment and winked at the brothers before continuing, "Perhaps you'd like to help your father with my lovely luggage and then you'll show me around your little place here."

Not knowing how to respond, Van and Caleb looked at each other again, before going over to their father to assist with 'Lady Lucinda's lovely luggage'.

Caleb grabbed two suitcases, while Van pushed the trolley, from which dozens of shrink-wrapped outfits hung. Van scrunched up his face as he pondered the situation. Instead of some bubble headed blonde bimbo, his Father had fallen for an Amazonian debutant.

He wasn't sure it was an improvement.

As they entered Derrick's palatial master suite, Lucinda began to order the boys on how to unpack her belongings and where. "Now Van dear," she began, "Carefully remove the shrink-wrap and hang those in the closet will you?"

Van just stared blankly at her, then turned his gaze to his Dad.

"And Caleb," she turned to Van's seventeen-and-a half year old brother, "If you would kindly unpack that suitcase. I'm hoping that your father made room in his closet as I requested..."

She turned to gaze to Derrick who had headed to the door of the walk-in closet in his room with an obedient smile, "Yep," he grinned as he through open the door, "All empty – just like you asked for"

Van and Caleb gasped. Their Dad was a notorious clothes horse, and prided himself on having an extensive wardrobe. To see his custom built closet devoid of all clothing was an absolute shock that neither boy could have foreseen.

“Excellent Derrick!” Lady Lucinda beamed, “Now Boys ... if you’d be so kind as to help me unpack...”

Each of the brothers sent their father a disapproving glance.

“Dad ... isn’t this something that the maid can do?” Van finally vocalized what his expression was trying to say.

“Nonsense!” Lucy interrupted before Derrick could respond, “There’s no reason why the two of you can’t help out ... from what I’ve been told ... you two don’t do *nearly* enough around here to begin with. Its high time that you started to earn your keep, if only just a little”

Van, and Caleb, ignored their Step-mom-to-be, and continued to plead with their Dad, “Dad ... seriously?”

“Come on now boys,” Derrick nervously forced a smile, “Let’s all just help Lucy get her stuff unpacked. There’s no harm in working together as a family ... right?”

Van and Caleb looked at each other in disbelief. *Their* dad – who had been absent for most of their growing up years – *now* wanted to ‘play’ family?

“Forget this,” Van scoffed as he threw a ball of used shrink-wrap to the floor and headed out of the room.

He glared at his father as he made his way past Derrick’s fiancé, and averted his eyes from her disapproving gaze. However, the sharp pain in his shoulder that followed made him stop in his tracks immediately. He turned to see that Lucinda had grabbed his left collar bone with her long slender fingers, and applied just the right amount of pressure to just the right place – like that old-dude from that star-trek show used to do – and paralyzed him where he stood.

“Apparently I haven’t made myself clear,” Lucinda spoke in a deep, powerful and unwavering voice, “You *will* help unload my things, and you *will* be more helpful around this house. You aren’t the first young men that I’ve been in charge of, and in time you *will* learn to appreciate me more, though I am certain now you must be wishing me away. But let me be clear...” she narrowed her deep brown eyes as she glared at Van, “I am *not* going *anywhere*. So you...” she turned quickly to Caleb, “*and* you ... had *better* get used to it.”

Van tried to reply, but all he could do was whimper in pain, “ah-ah-ah” he cried.

Lucinda relaxed her tone, and her grip on the nineteen-year-old’s shoulder and smiled, “There ... now wasn’t that easy?” She looked at Caleb, who was practically cowering in fear after watching his big brother be manhandled by his Dad’s gigantic girlfriend, then at Derrick, who hung his head, partly in shame ... partly in obedience to his lady.

The rest of that afternoon was spent unpacking Lucinda’s massive wardrobe. By the time the three Rogers boys were done, the walk-in closet was full and

they were exhausted. Van and Caleb had never seen so many frilly, girly things as they had seen in the past three hours, and were quite happy to finish their task and leave it all behind them.

Lucinda had taken them on a self-guided tour of the expansive house and remained unnervingly quiet as the boys showed them their rooms, followed by the pool, den, lounge, and home theatre.

When the tour was completed, she smiled and said, “Well ... I can see that I’ve got my work cut out for me here.”

No one – not Van, not Caleb, nor Derrick – had ‘balls’ to ask what she meant. But they would find out soon enough.

The First Changes

In the week that followed the arrival of Lady Lucinda, she took it upon herself to make a few changes around the McBride home.

First, Lucinda ordered Derrick to release the maid. She rationed that Van and Caleb should be doing more to earn their keep around the house, since they didn't have jobs and weren't really doing anything else that was useful.

Second, she locked the keys to their sports cars up until they cleaned their rooms to her satisfaction, which of course was impossible.

Van tried pleading with his Dad, but Derrick was not about to contradict his new wife-to-be. "Listen, just clean your room up and then you'll get your keys back. It's not that hard. Lucy's right, you guys have had it too easy for too long."

"Dad, this is f'ing ridiculous," Van whined, "There was never a problem before, and now you're totally throwing us under the bus. We're your blood, she's just after your money – and when she's gone, it'll just be us again."

Derrick sighed, "Van," he put his hand on his eldest son's shoulder, "There isn't much money left to get. In fact, Lucy has *far* more money than we have. So if anyone will benefit from our being together, it's you and Caleb."

Van looked dumbfounded. Was his father serious? Were they broke? Was *he* just marrying for money after having been taken advantage of himself so many times in the same way?

"It's not *that* bad," Derrick tried to reassure his son after reading his expression, "I'm just trying to tell you that it's not what you think it might be. I *adore* Lucinda – and she me – and I am certain that you will adore her too." He paused for a moment to collect his thoughts, "She just might take some ... getting used to."

"Getting used to?" Van spat, "She's a fucking Nazi, Dad! Look what she's done to you already. Taken over your closet, your room, your house – she's fucking taking over your life! Don't you see?"

His father's face turned very stern. It was an angry expression that he had not seen since he was a child.

"Lucy warned me that this might happen," he growled, "But you leave me no choice Van. This is still *my* house, and while you live in it you will live by *my* rules. And *my* rules are that you will treat Lucinda with the respect and do as she asks you to do or you will have to find yourself another place to *live*"

He turned to walk away, as if to make his point that his word was the final word.



“Fine,” Van called back to him, “You want to choose her over me, your *son*,” Van spat the words as angrily as he could, “then *fine*. You can *have* her – ‘cuz I’m fucking done!”

Derrick stopped in his tracks and turned back around, “You watch you language in *my* house young man,” he said.

“You can shove your house up your ass!” Van retorted, then, like his father had done seconds previously, Van turned and stormed away, leaving a flabbergasted Derrick standing in the hall.

Caleb came out of the adjacent room moments later, after hearing the commotion in the hall. He watched as his older brother, hastily packed duffle bag in hand, marched past.

“What are you doing?” he asked.

“I’m outta here man,” Van replied, “I can’t take this shit.”

“But where are you going to go?” Caleb asked in a worried tone. He always looked to his brother to lead the way. And for him to lead the way by leaving, worried him.

“I don’t know,” Van said as he headed for the front door, “But its not going to be here!”

With that, he opened the door and walked out, leaving a befuddled Caleb standing by himself.

“What happened?” he would ask his father a few minutes later in the kitchen.

Derrick sighed, “He’s just having a hard time adjusting, that’s all. I’m sure he’ll be back soon.”

Van flipped his cell phone out of his pocket and called up his girlfriend. Or, more accurately, the girl he had banged the most recently. “Hey, Tiff,” he said. “I need a place to crash. I’m comin’ over.” He walked on down the long driveway and through the automatic gates and down the road.

Caleb watched from the window, like a lost puppy. He felt like he should follow. But he didn’t want to cause any more trouble. The house was at least quiet for the moment, so Caleb decided it best to venture back to his room. Without Van there, Caleb felt a little lost. So to pass the time, he decided to tidy up a little. Not because he wanted to make Lucinda happy ... but because it was a little bit messy.

Just a little.

He was so busy cleaning that he didn’t see nor hear his step-mom to be enter his room, “You’re making great progress dear,” Caleb jumped with surprise as hearing her voice in his room.

“Oh ... ah ... sure,” he stammered as he tried to regain his composure and not look foolish.

“I have a sense that you and I will get along just fine you know,” she smiled at him.

Caleb couldn’t help but blush a little. Lucinda was absolutely gorgeous, with a smile that could melt ice. It made him wonder if all of his brothers shouting and stomping had really been necessary. Maybe she wasn’t so bad after all.

“Thanks,” he finally said, “I’d...” he paused for moment, contemplating the words he was about to use, “I’d like that.”

Lucinda’s smile grew even more radiant, “I’d like that too Callie.”

Caleb scratched his head, *what had she just called him?* It was hard to tell, from the way she pronounced the word. She might just be dropping the “B” from the end of his name. A lot of people did. But her English was usually so perfect.

He shrugged it off and continued to clean. A little while later, Lucinda added to his list of chores. Not only had Lucinda instructed him to clean his own room up, but to also clean his brother's room. Something that Caleb wasn't happy to have to have do, but did regardless.

He felt like he was selling out on Van by tidying up his things and picking up his dirty clothes, but on the other hand – there was something about the woman that would soon be his step-mom, something authoritative, that made him automatically say, “Okay – I'll do it.”

Maybe it was the foot or so of height she had on him.

As the sun started to set that night, it only then occurred to Caleb that Van was nowhere to be seen. This was not the first time he'd marched out on him and his dad, but this was certainly the longest he'd been away. Both Caleb and Derrick assumed that Van would return by the end of the day, but much to their disappointment, he didn't.

He didn't reply to their phone calls, text messages or emails either.

And by the passing of the third day, both father and younger brother were growing quite concerned.

“Don't fret dear,” Lucinda reassured them, “He'll return when he's good and ready. He knows that his will be a major change for him to deal with, and he shouldn't be rushed in preparing for it. As we all know, the older we get, the harder it is to change us.”

She smiled at Derrick lovingly, then glanced at Caleb, “and when we're young and wonderful like you dear Callie,” she smiled, “We adapt to the changes much more readily, don't we?”

Caleb nodded, still unsure of his new Step-Mother-in-training's way of pronouncing his name, and even more unsure of what a wimp he'd become since his big-brother had bailed on him. He felt conflicted about the whole thing. It was clear to him that his brother had a lot of influence over how he acted, and that without him around, he was far more comfortable being himself. Being himself, though, seemed to mean being the kind of person who was weak around strong people, and a little obedient, and that didn't exactly appeal to him.

He wasn't particularly proud that he had become such a wimp in his brother's absence, but it was true. Without Van there, Caleb was a bit of jellyfish.

There was no clearer example of this, than the next morning that he came downstairs for breakfast – a chore he had to actually do himself now that the help had been let go – to find that the eggs and bacon had been removed from the fridge.

“Where's the fucking bacon?” he shouted out loud in frustration.

“Young man!” a voice rang out behind him, startling him. He turned to see Lucinda glaring at him, “First off, that’s no way for a proper young man to speak!” she growled, “And secondly, I’ve disposed of your vile fatty meats and artery clogging eggs in the trash. There’ll be no more of those kinds of foods in this house. From now on, its only things that will aid in your good health that I will allow.”

Caleb gasped. No more bacon and eggs? It was his all-time favorite. He had been eating bacon and eggs since he was old enough to consume solid food. This was an outrage!

“Dad!” he called, but there would be no answer.

“Your father is at a business meeting this morning,” she continued in her authoritative tone, “but I can assure you that when he returns, the answer he will give will be *quite* the same as the one I’m giving you now. No more fatty foods, understood?”

Caleb looked blankly at her. He could see the serious tone in her body language. Arguing was obviously pointless.

“Fine” he sighed, “then what *can* I have?”

“Some yogurt, fresh fruit and granola makes a *delightful* start to the day,” she turned her scowl into a smile, “and don’t forget your vitamin supplement for good health,” she pointed at an unmarked jar. Caleb unscrewed the lid and looked inside.

“Take two,” she smiled, “Twice a day, to start off with.”

He picked up the two large pink pills, and with a half glass of water, swallowed them down.

“Excellent,” Lucinda smiled, “Now while you’re making some breakfast for yourself, perhaps you’d be considerate enough to make some for me.”

Caleb could tell by the tone of her voice that she wasn’t asking him – she was *telling* him.

So went the rest of the day, with Lucinda’s seemingly never-ending ‘suggestions’. *Perhaps* Caleb would vacuum the carpets, *perhaps* he could cut the grass, *perhaps* he should do his laundry. All the while, the young man kept hoping for the return of either his father, or his brother, to bail him out of this hopeless situation.

But nether came.

It wasn’t until the next day that Caleb saw his father again. It was in the kitchen, after he had prepared himself a wholesome breakfast of yogurt and granola, and some for Lucinda as well – another of her ‘suggestions.’

"I've got some news" Derrick beamed, "I've got a big business deal in the middle east that could be worth millions – but it requires that I leave immediately."

"Oh my," Lucinda exclaimed, her wide painted eyes growing even wider, "But Derrick darling, you were just working on a big deal at your office for the past two days..."

"Preliminary work my dear," he soothed, "preliminary work. It was all laying the foundation for this trip. And now that I've been selected as one of the top three contenders, it's off to Dubai I go."

"But Dad," Caleb looked worried, he knew the reality of his Dad leaving him alone with his Step-Mom-to-be wasn't going to be a rosy time, he grasped at straws to get his Dad to stay, "they, uh, um ... the Middle East isn't safe. They *kill* American's for *no reason* over there."

"Ah," Derrick smiled, "That's my boy, concerned about your old man's well-being." He patted Caleb on the back, "That's why I was so late last night. I had my lawyer draw up a temporary custody order, giving my lovely bride-to-be here guardianship over you and your brother while I'm gone. And in the event that something *did* happen, she would oversee the execution of my will and make sure that you boys were looked after."

Caleb's eyes grew as wide as his bowl of yogurt and grain, "What?"

Lucinda just smiled.

"I know it's a bit of a shock to you," Derrick continued, "But we really think it's for the best."

"But Dad..." Caleb whined, "I'm almost eighteen years old! I don't need anyone to be my frickin' guardian! And Van is nineteen!"

Lucinda interrupted the conversation, "Yes, he is – and in the real world both he and you would be fine to look after yourselves. But after what I have witnessed here in the last few days, I convinced your father that there is no way that *either* of you two are even remotely close to being able to care for yourselves."

Caleb shot his father a betrayed expression, but the worst was yet to come.

"I know you might be upset now Caleb," Derrick began, "and I'm pretty sure your brother will be furious, but one day I am certain that you both will thank me and Lucy."

"Thank you for *what* Dad?" Caleb scoffed, "For being a prick?"

Caleb didn't hear Lucinda move – nor did he see her open hand – but when it struck his chin, slapping him across his face, he certainly *felt* it.

"Ahhh!" he recoiled, holding his face.

“That is *no way* to address your father, young man,” Lucinda growled in her low voice, “I am appalled at your attitude ... and it just further validates that fact you are not equipped to live independently until you are twenty.”

“Twenty?” Tears from the pain of being slapped, from the pain of his father’s betrayal and of his own disoriented confusion of what had actually been done, were welling up in his eyes.

“I called in a favor with a judge that I know,” Derrick tried to take a reassuring tone, “and had custodial rights extended on both and your brother.”

“Until I’m twenty?” Caleb flashed the angriest, most hurtful look that he could muster at his Dad, then stormed away to his room.

He flopped onto his bed, unable to stop himself from becoming a little emotional. His hard resolve, a carefully developed trait he had built up for years was crumbling without the threat of his brother around to make fun of him. Caleb planted his thickest pillow in his face to muffle his uncontrollable sobbing. He was able to keep it quiet enough to overhear the loud voices of his Father and Lucinda, obviously disagreeing, until he heard a door slam. Then, only silence echoed through the house.

Figuring that the evil step-monster had been banished, he slowly opened his door, and made his way back to the kitchen, in hopes of seeking some kind of change of heart from his father.

But his Dad wasn’t there.

“Your father had a plane to catch,” he heard Lucinda’s sinister voice behind him, “If you hadn’t behaved like such a child, you would have had the opportunity to wish him well. But now, instead, you’ll have to wait to see him for a *very* long time.”

Caleb turned to face her. She was still in heels, forcing him to look up at her imposing stature. In her right hand, a port glass, half filled with red liquid he assumed was wine. He gazed at her as she slowly drew a long sip. As much as he wanted to despise her, there was something truly mesmerizing about her. She even smelled intoxicating. He breathed in her sweet sent, then sighed.

“What do you want?” he said, finally.

“Moi?” Lucinda replied.

“What’s your game?” he changed the question.

Lucinda chuckled softly. “Tsk, tsks Callie. There *is* no game. As I said before, darling, I do hope that we will we grow very close. I think I have a lot that I can offer you – and, provided that you can be an obedient soul, you can become someone that *I* would be very proud to call my own. She paused for a moment and sipped from her glass, “*That is all that I want dear boy*”

Caleb sighed. Perhaps he had overreacted. Perhaps Lucinda wasn't quite as bad as he, or Van, had perceived. That afternoon, Caleb decided that he would have to give her a chance.

And Lucinda knew it.

Caleb Crumbles

Without his brother to bolster him, or his father there to offer some kind of false hope, Caleb quickly fell under Lucinda's bewitching spell.

It started out with minor suggestions. Not even suggestions really, they were more like hints. Lucinda raved about a new shampoo she had bought downtown, one that she said was better than anything she had ever used before. "Everyone should try it," she said. "Let me know how it worked for you," she said to Caleb, pressing a bottle into his hands. How was he supposed to refuse it?

After using it just one time, and finding it smelled like six pounds of ripe cherries rubbed into his scalp, he put it aside. Until, that is, Lucinda noted the absence of cherry fragrance the next day. From then on, it was the only shampoo he used. His old bottles of dandruff-control blue stuff fell to the side, ultimately disappearing without notice.

The days passed slowly. Caleb spent most of his time thinking of things to do, then rejecting the idea because he needed his brother to do it with. Basketball? No. Go drive up and down Rodeo in the car? No car, no brother. Maybe he could go watch a movie. Alone? No. Caleb just kept running into the same problem. He was totally dependent on Van for everything.

Fortunately, Lucinda was there to help fill the time. She had dozens of ideas for him. She had a whole list of things that needed attention. He could mow the lawn, wash the car, trim the hedges, clean the basement, redecorate his room, or scrub the toilets. It was no surprise that Caleb leapt at doing the one thing that didn't involve heavy labor. He thought he was pretty clever, choosing to redecorate his room.

Lucinda had declared the boys rooms "disaster areas" and was adamant that they be decorated "for normal people" and not like "an insane asylum run by Arnold Schwarzenegger." Caleb did admit to himself that the stuff he kept in his room did look a bit over-done and intensely macho. Movie posters from action films, a life-size cardboard cut out of a bikini girl from some movie that ran years ago. There were basketballs, footballs, helmets, bats, skateboards and everything a young boy could want.

"Don't you think it's time to grow up?" Lucinda asked finally.

Caleb didn't agree with her out loud, because he wasn't about to give this woman the pleasure. But inside, he was already way ahead of her. It was well beyond time to get rid of all these kids' things. He was becoming an adult, anyway. Maybe if he cleaned things up, and proved his maturity, he could even convince his father to take back that custody order.

He spent days trying to figure out what he wanted to do. After looking through the dozens of print and online catalogues, Caleb's head was spinning. He couldn't make decision. Beds, lamps, chairs, windows, drapes, duvets, pillows, carpeting. There was no end to it. Finally, he just gave it over to Lucinda, who never seemed to be without suggestions. She ordered him new furniture and carpet, and hired decorators to redo his room. And even though lace-edged pillows and pastel satin sheets confounded him, he merely grinned and accepted her insight that pinks and purples were 'modern' colors that most young men his age were eagerly embracing.

Of course, after the decorators had destroyed any trace of his old room, did he discover that most of his clothes had left in the process. His dressers had been tossed in the back of a truck and driven away. His closets emptied and the location of their contents unknown.

"A true oversight," Lucinda admitted when a very unhappy Caleb inquired about the whereabouts of his clothing, "Rest assured," she smiled, "I shall admonish those who were responsible on your behalf. But what's done is done. So I suggest that we move on."

Move on? Caleb wondered to himself, *What was that supposed to mean?* His answer came swiftly, for as to make up for this grievous injustice, Lucinda immediately set about ordering fresh, new replacements for Caleb's wardrobe. She soon presented him with new 'updated' sets of clothes, including some pants, tops, shoes and underwear. All of it was quite different than what he was used to. The shirts were *similar* to what he wore before, but with a slightly different, slimmer cut. "It seems I should have asked your size," Lucinda explained with a peculiar chuckle. Many of them had cute screened printings and graphics on them, like kittens and flowers – not exactly something that a guy like Caleb would have selected for himself. "Some of my best friends are the top designers in fashion. They sent these *just* for you Callie. I do hope that such expensive and fine items will not go to waste," Lucinda mentioned, off-handedly after reading Caleb's facial expressions. He paused for a moment, and was about to object, when Lucinda insisted that he try them on. "I don't have a single dress in my closet that costs as much as one of the designer shirts," she said. "I simply *must* see them on you." She looked at him with a disarmingly expectant expression. The steely glare he was used to shifted effortlessly into a feminine vulnerability that he was not prepared for.

He swallowed his objections and wore them.

The pants, like the shirts, were also very close to his old clothes, but cut differently to hug closely to Caleb's body. In some cases, *very* closely. With many of the so-called pants cut just below the knee, he wasn't sure if they were meant to be shorts or pants – or both.

Lucinda called them ‘capri’ pants, whatever that meant. He figured they were just like the board shorts he had been wearing for years. Just, tighter. Much, much, tighter.

Upon wearing the new pants and shirts that she had procured for him, with some strange new “European” T-strap sandals that Lucinda had recently introduced, The tall, imposing woman laid on the praise, and laid it on thick. She extolled the virtues of him being a trend-setter, instead of a trend-follower, like most people were. As she did, she found out something she had suspected about Caleb. He was a little needy. Just like he needed his brother for guidance, he was now looking to her for the same. All she needed to do was praise him and his new, sophisticated, mature and evolved sense of style.

And Caleb loved being praised. All he needed was a little approval.

She had also praised him for piercing his ears, like his brother had already done a few years ago. It was something that Caleb had wanted to do ever since, but for one reason or another, hadn’t. But now, as he examined the freshly pierced studs in each ear, the effect wasn’t exactly what Caleb had thought it would be. Whereas Van’s pierced ears with looked manly and cool, with tribal designs etched into gunmetal grey rings, Caleb thought that *his* ears looked somehow softer, with sparkly diamonds and yellow 14K gold.

“Oh don’t be silly,” Lucinda dismissed his concerns the next morning as they sat in the kitchen for their now-ritual yogurt and green tea breakfast. The two of them had settled into a fairly friendly routine, of breakfast, chores (well, at least Caleb was doing the chores) followed by a light lunch, some lounging by the pool, then an evening spent watching cable network shows about women choosing their brides dresses, debutant celebrities, extravagant wedding planners, celebrity news, and more wedding shows.

Lucinda would occasionally brag about knowing *this* celebrity or *that* one, and how wonderful it was going to be to plan her dream wedding with Caleb’s father.

“And the best thing of all, Callie darling,” she smiled one night, “is that you’re going to be standing right up there beside me.” Caleb wanted to tell her that if he was going to be roped into the ceremony, he would be with his dad. But as Lucinda looked longingly at the extravagant weddings on the TV, for a moment, it appeared as if a tiny tear was forming in her eye, which led Caleb to refrain from trying to correct her.

Standing beside us, he said inside his head, referring to his assumption that he would be standing to Lucinda’s right during the ceremony, behind his Dad, as a groomsman.

Suddenly she clapped her hands together, causing Caleb to jump with fright.

“I know!” she exclaimed with gleeful eagerness, “Let’s have a spa day tomorrow, just you and I. It’ll be exactly what we need!”

Caleb looked unsure, “Oh ... I ... I don’t...”

“Oh, nonsense dear,” she dismissed his apprehensive look, “it’ll be a to-do, you’ll see.”

“A to-do?”

“What do you Californians say? It’s will be a *blast*. A blast we will have!”

And a blast it was. Caleb had never experienced anything so relaxing as he experienced. He and Lucinda were massaged, waxed (perhaps not so relaxing, but his skin *did* feel very smooth afterwards), manicured, pedicured, facial peeled, hot tubbed and enjoyed a tasty light lunch. All the while, Lucinda remained nice and easy going, almost friendly and warm – though still very much in charge.

It was very much the kind of Mother and Son bonding time that he expected that all sons and mothers’ experienced.

All sons and mothers, that is, except him and Van. They had been robbed of that their birth mother, something he realized that he and his brother had resented in all the other women that their father had brought home. Maybe until now.

He looked over as his future Step-Mom and smiled. Lucinda, though a little rough around the edges, was different. Lucinda smiled back, with a warm motherly expression. Lucinda, might, maybe, possibly, could finally be the Mother that he never had.

The thought bounced around in his head on the drive all the way home. The idea was appealing, and filled him with a sense of belonging he’d never really had before. That faint, but definite sense of belonging kept his mind buzzing – that is, until he and Lucinda returned home to meet a very tired looking Van, waiting by the gate to the house.

Caleb’s back stood straight when he saw his brother. He looked down at his hairless body, manicured nails and new clothes and realized that he had let Lucinda influence him in ways that Van would not understand. He kept his window up as the gate opened knowing that the tinted glass would hide him.

“Your father removed his passcode from the security system,” Lucinda said in a hushed tone to Caleb, “You never can tell with men like him Callie. A young angry man like him is capable of doing a lot of violent harm...” she glanced over at a fearful looking Caleb, “to himself ... and to the ones he loves, my dear.”

Van took the shortcut through the front courtyard, and headed straight for the house, bypassing any drama with Lucinda. He was inside by the time the car turned into the cul-de-sac that lead to the main entrance.

The driver opened the door and helped Lady Lucinda from the car and into the house. Caleb followed Lucinda sheepishly, as they set aside their spa-bought bags of lotion and perfume on the coffee table in the living room. It was



quiet for only a minute, then he heard his brother's voice, "*What the fuck?*"

Van came storming from his bedroom, "Where did all my fucking stuff go?" he yelled down the hall as he approached his younger brother and step-mom to be. As he caught up to them, he was about to repeat himself, when he suddenly got a good look at his sibling.

"Wha..." he coughed, then smiled, then laughed, "*What the fuck* is going on here?"

Caleb was wearing a pair of tight-fitting capri pants with an oversized three-quarter length tee on top. His hair had been shaped to 'fluff out' over his ears, and his bangs had been cut drastically short. His skin all looked smooth, and appeared, from what Van could see, to be devoid of any body hair. He tried to hide his hands, so as not to allow his brother to see his French manicure, complete with quarter-inch nail extensions, something he felt that Lucinda had tricked him into.

"What the fuck happened to you?" he asked his brother. He sniffed the air. "And what smells like fucking cherries?"

Van's expression turned to anger as he moved towards his brother, but

Lucinda moved forward, crowding his

space and acting to defend Caleb. "You will *not* use that kind of language while this house young man – is that understood?"

"Fuck you!" he cussed at her, "Where the fuck's my Da..."

The slap from Lucinda's delicately manicured but large hand cut him off in mid-sentence, "I said," she growled, stepping closer to him, narrowing her eyes as she glared down at him, "You will *not* use that kind of language in this house – Is. That. Understood?"

Van looked stunned. He didn't know how to react to her assault, "Where's my..."

"*Is dat understood?*" she yelled into his face, once again letting her New Orleans dialect show. Caleb thought he saw Van's hair rustle from the force of her voice. No-one had ever talked to them like that. Not their Dad, not a teacher, not even a cop.

"Is it?" she boomed again.

"Ye ... yeah," Van tried to act cool, but was visibly shaken by Lucinda's pre-emptive violent outburst. "Yeah, sure okay, whatever."

She stomped one high-heeled foot to continue to command his attention, "Yeah? Sure?" she repeated back to him in a mocking tone.

"Yes. Yes, okay, I won't swear."

"Yes, okay I won't swear ... *what?*" she growled.

Van sighed, "Uh ... Yes I won't swear again ... Lucinda."

"That's *Lady* Lucinda ... or Ma'am to you, you insolent little worm!"

Van was clearly unable to fight back, "Yes, okay ... *Lady* Lucinda ... Ma'am ... I get it ... no swearing ... okay I'm sorry." He slumped down, defeated, and then shot a glance over at his younger brother, as if to say "what?"

"I hear the words my dear," Lucinda lowered her tone to a more moderate pitch, "But I doubt the sincerity of them."

Van sighed again, still at a loss for words.

"But I am certain that you will learn to be more sincere..." she snarled, "Now go bathe! You smell like you haven't washed in weeks."

He hung his head and turned back towards his room, "I just wanted to know where my stuff went ... Where my Dad is..." He muttered as he trudged down the corridor.

"Your *stuff* has been packed away," she called after him, "As you forfeited your rights of ownership, when you left!"

Van paused mid-stride. Caleb knew that he was fighting the urge to yell and scream at his Father's fiancé, and was thankful for it.

"And your father," she continued, "Is on an important business trip to the Middle East. So I am afraid that it is just you me and your darling brother Caleb for a few weeks."

Van mouthed the words 'weeks?' but remained silent, then proceeded to continue to his room.

Things had gotten very strange ... very fast. And Van wasn't certain how he was going to handle it. Five minutes back in the house and he had already lost his first argument. He was determined not to let it happen again.

Van's Vanity Vanquished

In the weeks that followed, Van and Lucinda would have several more confrontations, and each time, the Amazon-like woman would stand her ground and grind the arrogant young McBride boy down into a fine powder with her words, tone and presence.

The first blow up happened the next day, when he learned that his belongings were very truly *gone*. This included his furniture and prized possessions, including his clothes. Even the ones that he had been wearing the day before had been removed from the house.

"If you had indicated that you had any intention of returning," Lucinda scolded him, "Than perhaps we would have considered saving your things. But you made it quite clear that was not going to be the case!"

"But what the hell am I going to wear?" he pleaded.

"You'll have to share your brother's wardrobe until alternate arrangements can be made" she simply smiled.

Much to Van's chagrin, the wardrobe that had been there when he left was vastly different from the wardrobe that was there now. Gone were the boxers and baggy jeans, replaced instead by capri pants and dainty briefs.

Van's face turned red with rage, but he wasn't about to make a scene – again – as it was one that he would likely lose. Instead he rummaged through his brother's clothes to find the least outlandish underwear and tight fitting flared jeans that he could.

A second altercation with Lucinda occurred when he discovered, as his younger brother had done weeks prior, that bacon, beef and other fatty foods, were banned substances in the house now, and that he was required to take a strange multivitamin or two, twice daily with his meals.

Again, in his mind, it was something that he could live with until his dad got back.

But the third such confrontation that occurred was very big. It happened some days later, when it came up that Van and Caleb's father (in consultation with Lucinda) had petitioned the court to obtain power of attorney over him, and extending their guardianship over Caleb, after having them deemed 'unfit' to look after themselves. Further, he learned that this power of attorney had subsequently been passed to Lucinda in his Father's absence. Van was absolutely livid – and in fact walked out the front door to leave again. But as he approached the gate, he was reminded of the fact that he had not fared very well the last time he left. His so-called friends had bailed on him, and his money had run out quickly. He sighed and turned back towards the house, and re-

solved that he could make it through a couple of weeks, until his father returned, then reason with him to get rid of the domineering bitch that he wanted to marry.

But Lucinda wasn't sure that she wanted him back, and stood in the doorway, blocking his return as he made his way back towards the front stairs.

"What?" he growled.

"Are you absolutely certain that you *want* to stay here?" she asked, "I do not think your poor dear brother can handle the stress of another one of your 'outbursts.'"

"My brother and I are *just fine*," he recoiled, "And once we get rid of *you* we'll go back to being ourselves and..." he paused, realizing his anger was building up again ... but he didn't care, "and you won't be able to keep turning us into a couple of fags!"

"*That kind of language will not be tolerated!*" she erupted, grabbing Van by the ear she lead him into the house, down the hall and into his bathroom, while he whined the whole way. She tossed him into the shower stall and marched away, returning a minute later with a can of foam in her hand.

"You will soon learn what it means to be ridiculed by others," she snarled, "once you've rinsed, lather this over your entire body, wait a few moments until the substance starts to burn, then rinse it off. Call me when you're done."

She shut the shower door and stomped away.

A battered Van begrudgingly complied, and emerged a few minutes later having denuded all of the body hair from his person, with the exception of that which was on his head.

She then tossed him a pair of skimpy bikini briefs, capri pants and wide neck top to put on. "No way," he said initially, "there's no way that I'm wearing this."

But moments later he was sliding his feet into a pair of wedge heeled sandals as he waited for his brother in the hall, fully dressed exactly as she had directed him.

Caleb, was wearing a pair of leggings with a wide belt over his hips. The white leggings ended in ballet slippers. A cropped wide-neck-tee was clearly visible under a short sleeved jacket, that was purely ornamental.

"Are we ready to go?" Lucinda asked as she turned to the door. Caleb and Van hung their heads in shame as she followed her passed the chauffeur and into the waiting car.

It was going to be a long ride.

Upon arrival, Lucinda quietly gave very specific and very private directions to the salon staff as to what they were to do. The salon beauticians smiled and nodded as they turned to look at the boys.

“Follow me please,” one of them said to Van. “This way,” the other smiled at Caleb. Van wasn’t crazy about the idea of letting his little brother out of his sight, but knew that he had little choice, as Caleb disappeared behind a curtain.

The beauticians primped and polish, trimmed, coifed and colored for what felt like several hours. All-the-while, both brothers were faced intentionally *away* from any mirror. The ‘not-knowing’ what was happening to them was making both boys feel very powerless, and subdued.

Especially Caleb. He was already wrestling the voices in his head that were accepting of the changes that Lucinda had made – while quieter voices protested that that it was *wrong wrong wrong!*

The McBride brothers would be reunited in the salon lobby, where they were placed before a large mirror and told to open their eyes.

Van and Caleb gasped as they stared at their modified reflections for the first time.

Caleb’s hair had been straightened, and lengthened to fall just shy of his chin, while his bangs were kept super short. His skin had been powdered to pale matte beige, with a trace of color on his lips and cheeks, and thin liner around his eyes.

Van’s already scruffy cut had been tussled, teased and styled into marginally androgynous hairdo. His face was also dusted and his features lightly highlighted, including a very shiny clear gloss on his lips, but it was not nearly to the degree of what they had done to his little brother.

Both brothers’ fingernails had been lengthened with acrylic tips, shaped and filed to delicate ovals and painted with pink polish.

Lucinda watched quietly from behind the double-sided mirror at the boy’s reactions, smiling widely.

While Caleb was surprised, he spent more time worried about his brother than what was being done to him, while Van seemed to be in a state of total awe, as if unable to comprehend what Lucinda had done to him. But what followed next was even more unbelievable.

She marched them out of the salon, where both boys noticed that their car was *not* parked. “Follow me boys,” she commanded, “We’re going for a little walk.”

She paraded the effeminate boys through the busy sidewalks around Rodeo Drive. People would stop and stare, point and whisper or even laugh out loud at the two brothers, who kept their eyes low to the ground as their faces burned with humiliation.

Caleb was still watching his brother intently. He knew that there had to be some sort of eruption of swearing and anger about to blow. He could see the veins on Van’s temples throb and the muscles in his jaw so tight he could chew



through a chain link fence. Caleb could see the stares and glances of everyone they were walking past. Yes, it was Beverly Hills, and a flamboyant man was not worth batting an eyelash at. But no matter where you go, a freak is a freak, and they looked like a couple of true freaks.

Van tried to look away as people walked past, but Lucinda would take her hand and turn his head back forward, so he could see the shocked and amused expressions of the people looking at him. He could also hear the vague mumblings and giggles of people who weren't quite out of earshot. His face radiated an intense, red-hot heat of shame.

The torturous journey finally ended at an exclusive bridal wear store, which Lucinda hurried the boys into.

Inside, she was greeted by store attendants, who seemed to already have known who she was, and what she was looking for. Not to mention who would be accompanying her. Two of the attendants whisked her away to a back room, while two more escorted the confused boys to the side, where they were measured and recorded. For what? Neither knew. Neither wanted to open their mouths and ask.

What seemed like an eternity passed, with the McBride boys, effeminately dressed, trying to avoid making eye contact with the various staff members and clients that came and went in the busy store.

That is, until Lucinda returned, guided by two her two helpers.

“Well boys?” Lucinda beamed as she walked slowly down the staircase.

Both of the McBride Brothers were dumbfounded. Since meeting Lucinda they had only seen her in tight fitting pencil skirts and form-fitting tops. The bridal gown that she had been carefully dressed in was neither.

It was a mass of lace and ruffled, with diamond-jeweled hearts, her trademark symbol, sewn here and there as accent pieces. The gown’s lacy train was carefully guided by the two store attendants, who must have stood almost five feet behind her.

“Wow!” Caleb said finally. He was worried about the fact that he was in total agreement that the gown was lovely, and that his father would absolutely love it!

These probably aren’t the thoughts that a nineteen year old boy should be having, he warned himself.

Van just stared.

“I knew I could count on my darling Callie to be supportive of me,” Lucinda smiled, “But I can see from your expression Van, dear, that you too are impressed by what you see. Which makes me hopeful that we might one day have the same special bond that your darling little brother has with me.”

She smiled once more then turned to motion to the attendants to assist her back upstairs.

Van turned to Caleb with an angry gaze. Caleb blushed and looked away, not wanting the confrontation with his older brother.

“Callie?” Van spat, “Special Bond? What the fu ... er, what the heck Caleb?”

“She’s a very nice person, Van. Give her a chance.”

“Are you shi...” he censored himself, not wanting to get the backside of Lucinda’s hand again, “...Kidding me?” Van spat back, in a hushed but angry

tone. “She’s got you and dad eating out of her hand! Grow a pair and stand up to her!”

Caleb pursed his lips for a moment, building up inside. “You hate women!” he spat at Van.

“What?” Van replied.

“You hate women and you certainly can’t handle a strong woman!”

“Aw, for Christ’s sake,” Van rolled his eyes.

“Lucinda been very thoughtful, very warm, very nice to me.”

“Look, you and I both know that she’ll be out of here as soon as she gets a settlement in a few months. She’s just like all the rest. You just let me tell you what to do, you got it, Bro? She’s not worth it.”

“She’s ... She’s...” Caleb was searching for the words. “She’s not like all the rest! She’s special!”

“*Special?*” Van mocked. He chuckled. “She just marched us down the street dressed like sissies!”

“That was your fault!”

“Whatever. Listen, it’s easy. You can listen to me or her, okay? Who’s your friend, here?”

Caleb remained silent, which forced Van to do the same as they awaited Lucinda’s return. The silence killed him. It was almost like he had lost Caleb. Every moment he didn’t speak to him was worrying him more and more. This was crazy. Van’s head was racing, but all he had to do was hang in until his Dad was back home, then all of this would go away.

Wouldn’t it?

The car ride home was a quiet one, for Van. He glared over at his brother, sitting next to Lucinda. The two were recounting the experience at the salon, and Caleb, though Van was certain he was faking ... appeared to be enjoying it.

Surely he’s faking it, he told himself, no self-respecting guy would actually be interested in all this.

Would he?

From Bad to Worse

Over the next few days, Van was less and less sure. Whilst doing their respective chores, Caleb typically wore clothes more closely related to what Van was wearing – though nowhere near what they *used* to wear – and talked and acted somewhat close to what one would expect brothers to.

But whenever Lucinda was around, Caleb was an entirely different person. He would giggle and preen and act like a very effeminate boy, bubbling over fabrics or gushing over colors as Lucinda shared her suggestions for the wedding with him. Even his dress was different, with Caleb opting for pastels – pink in particular – and white. He was also wearing some styles of pants that were as far from manly as you could get. Van wasn't sure, but they looked like leggings or tights, really. But even Caleb wouldn't go that far, Van assured himself.

All the while, Van would look on disapprovingly. Every so often, Lucinda would return his glare with one that was disapproving-times-three. Van would then shrink away, with the sounds of Caleb giggling with Lucinda ringing in his ears.

That was just the first day, too. The second day afterwards, Caleb didn't talk to him at all. Not a word. He kept his attention focused on his chores and didn't even make eye contact with his brother. By the third day, Van didn't even see his brother. Oh, he could hear the sounds of giggling and chatting from other rooms, but Caleb kept a distance. Caleb was avoiding him, and he knew it.

Lucinda and Caleb grew closer and closer while Van and Caleb grew more distant. It was never more clear than when Van looked at his bother – or what was left of him. It was bad enough that his little brother was wearing thick soled sandals, leggings or tights, with long fitting tops. These long tops created the illusion of him wearing a skirt or dress. Didn't Caleb understand what was happening to him? Van vowed to somehow stop Lucinda, and stop whatever he was doing to his brother.

Van had made a huge mistake. He had given his brother an ultimatum and made him choose between him and Lucinda. Now, he was almost sure he was losing that bet. It made Van start to feel very alone, left out, and sad. He tried to convince himself otherwise, but whenever he started to think about the situation, he wiped a tear from his eye. As he realized he was showing weakness, Van straightened himself up, took a deep breath and shook the emotions from his head. He realized his feelings weren't normal for a guy – guys didn't get jealous like that – so he vowed to keep it all to himself.

One afternoon, the icing was put on the proverbial cake as Lucinda and Caleb prepared to go for some kind of luncheon with an old associate of hers. Van

noted they didn't even invite him out. Not that he'd want to go, of course. What was worrying him most, though, was the way Caleb looked for this day out. If he was humiliated by being taken out in effeminate clothes, why would he go out looking like he did now? Because the outfit that he wore that day was just all-out *wrong*!

He appeared in pale pink 'tights' with ramped white three-inch wedge heeled platform sandals, denim vest, and body hugging quarter sleeved magenta colored top with a scooped neck. And this top was belted at the waist, flaring out over his hips. It appeared as if he was wearing a dress. Can couldn't see any sign of shorts or anything else.

It didn't take Van long to realize that his little brother was starting to look very much like ... a little sister!

"Call!" he exclaimed, "What the ... heck, man?"

Caleb looked uncertain, and then broke into a smile as Lucinda entered the room, "Now Van," she began to scold, "Your brother has been very nervous about today. He's joining me for lunch at my favorite bistro with an old friend and his son, and words like that are *not* very encouraging. I would think that you would want to be more supportive of dear Callie."

Caleb smiled up at his imposing mother-in-law to be, with a 'thank you for loving me' look.

"Ffff," Van started to swear, but corrected himself mid-word, "Phooey" he sighed, "I *want* to support him Miss Lucinda, but my go ... gosh, it's such a ... tricky ... thing. He's just acting so ... differently."

"Yes," she smiled approvingly, "I've certainly noticed the difference, and I couldn't be more proud!"

She leaned down to air-kiss either side of Caleb's face. Van was disgusted to watch as his brother air-kissed her back. But what happened next disgusted him even more.

Lucinda scrunched up her face with concern, as if something wasn't just 'quite right', "Hmmm," she said concentrating on Caleb's face, "Something just isn't quite right." Caleb's face was paler than usual and his cheeks and eyes seemed to be more prominent than usual. But Van knew that Caleb wouldn't go so far as to wear make-up.

She reached into her purse and produced two cylinders, along with a compact.

Caleb watched his step-mother-to-be open the first of the two cylinders. He recognized it as mascara, but the end of the eyelash brush was tipped like pen. Lucinda used it to line his eyes and eyebrows, then commanded the boy to look up as she coated his lashes in thick black.

Caleb watched as she put the mascara away, then opened the compact. It contained a palate of grey eye-shadows, which she proceeded to brush onto the

lids and creases of his eyes. He breathed deeply and slowly, knowing that his masculinity was quickly fading.

As Lucinda opened the second cylinder, Caleb knew it was all but gone.

The second tube was lipstick. Pink to be specific. She held his face still with one hand as she carefully applied it to his mouth with the other.

“There,” she smiled, “Much more presentable.”

Caleb was in a trance. He was mortified that Lucinda was taking him out in public appearing as he was, but also thankful, as he knew he barely looked like himself.

Van just stared, mouth agape in disbelief.

“While we’re gone Vaness, be a doll and vacuum the pool, and the pool house...” she paused for a moment, “In fact, vacuum this house too.”

Van continued to stare, dumbfounded, at his brother.

“Don’t just stand there darling,” she shooed him away, “that pool isn’t going to vacuum itself.” She turned to Caleb and winked teasingly, “Shall we go?”

Van shook his head as his little brother nodded, then stumbled and wobbled in the ramped heels as he left with Lucinda. Van noticed how thin his brother’s waist was looking and realized that damned no-fat diet of hers was starting to take its toll. He turned his back on them and looked at the pool though the patio doors. Maybe if he worked hard enough, he wouldn’t think about what he had just seen. As he trudged out to the back yard, and listened to his brother and future step-mother leave, he thought that he now knew how Cinderella felt.

Minutes later, at the bistro where they were meeting Lucinda’s friend, the step-mom-to be immediately took charge. Her ‘friend’ was a dashing African-American and his son, who were equally handsome, and each as big as a refrigerator. Lucinda introduced Caleb to them as her ‘Stepchild Callie’, and during any conversation what involved him, substituted his newly adopted pet-name and gender-neutral terms for words like he and his.

“It’s Callie’s first time here. I know Callie is so excited to join us. We’ve been preparing to meet you two all week,” she turned to Caleb, “isn’t that right, Darling?”

He nodded his head quietly in agreement. He couldn’t recall having spent the week preparing for the lunch he had just found out about that morning, but he was feeling as though he was a visitor in someone else’s body at the moment, so anything was possible. He knew he was there, but he wasn’t certain of the context.

Carl apparently knew Lucinda from New Orleans, and his son Carl Jr., had tagged along for the ride. It was very clear that Carl Jr. was glad he came. He couldn’t take his eyes off Lucinda’s newly adopted offspring, and Caleb took

note of the fact almost immediately. He looked away, his face burning with embarrassment.

“So,” Carl Jr. spoke finally, “Are you excited about the wedding?”

Caleb froze, not knowing what to say.

“Oh Callie is *super* excited,” Lucinda spoke for the excessively shy boy, “In fact we’re planning to stop in at the bridal boutique on the way home to see how Callie’s measurements are doing. We’ve been very carefully watching our figures, eating like rabbits...” Lucinda broke into a small fit of laughter, turning to Caleb warmly, “Isn’t that right dear?”

Caleb nodded shyly.

“She’s short on words,” Carl Senior chuckled, “That’s our kind of girl.”

Lucinda grinned, “I think my darling Callie is just starting to find a voice...” she watched Caleb nervously blush for the third or fourth ... *dozen* time, “I suspect soon enough we’ll wishing for silence.”

The group burst into laughter, but Callie – Caleb – remained silent.

The four of them ate, with Carl and Carl enjoying prime rib, and Lucinda and Caleb having salad. The meal was lively, and the four and chatted about the all manner of things, until it was time to go. Carl Sr., stood up and kissed Lucinda on each cheek, like is done in Europe, and thanked ‘Lucy’ and Callie for a lovely lunch. Carl Junior offered the same ‘European farewell’ to his ‘Aunt Lucy’, but when he turned to Caleb, his farewell was vastly different. He leaned forward, took Caleb’s dainty hand in his own, and gently kissed the top.

“I hope I might see *you* again soon,” he smiled.

Caleb looked stunned, an expression that remained on his face for the remainder of the afternoon.

As they left the restaurant, and headed to the boutique Lucinda had mentioned, his expression was still in shock.

“You know,” Lucinda finally said after a few minutes in the car, “I think that Carl Junior was quite impressed by you.”

Caleb nodded, not knowing how to respond.

“You could reply to people every-so-often you know Callie dear,” Lucinda looked annoyed, “I know you’re having trouble finding your voice, but not engaging people when they are trying to engage you is considered by some to be down-right rude. And you’re not rude ... are you Callie dear?”

“Well ... no...” Caleb sighed, “It’s just that...”

“No no no,” Lucinda raised her hand, “Stop right there. You need to use a softer tone when you speak dear, you sound so gruff and angry in that tone. Try speaking higher ... like as if you were an ... animated cartoon or something of that nature.”



Caleb paused for a moment. *Is that what all this business about him finding his own voice was about?*

“You mean like this?” he spoke a half octave higher in a sweet and airy tone.

“Close darling,” Lucinda replied, “But I think you can go higher.”

Caleb sighed, cleared his throat, and then tried again, “You mean like this?”

The voice that came out now longer sounded like the Caleb that Lucinda had first met all those weeks ago. The new voice ... the soft and sweet tones that were escaping his mouth, were the perfect match to Caleb’s new soft and sweet appearance.

In short, Caleb no longer sounded like Caleb ... he sounded like Callie.

And Lucinda couldn't be happier.

"Perfect Darling!" she cooed, "That's the perfect tone for you."

She clapped her hands in celebration, "That's the only tone I want to hear escape you darling mouth from now on, is that understood."

Caleb nodded shyly.

"Pardon?"

Caleb sighed, "Yes, Miss Lucinda" he tweeted in his new falsetto.

"Excellent!" she smiled excitedly, "I couldn't be more pleased!"

But it was short lived.

Upon arriving at the bridal boutique, both Caleb and Lucinda were measured, and while Lucinda had maintained her perfect physique, Caleb had not measured up as Lucinda had hoped.

"Oh dear," she frowned as the boutique attendant showed her Caleb's measurements, "Oh dear me, this will never do."

Caleb just looked confused.

"You'll never *fit* into your wedding clothes at this rate," she grimaced.

She turned to the attendant and spoke in a hushed tone, so that Caleb could not hear. The attendant nodded, smirked, then nodded again, before scurrying off with Lucinda following.

"Wait here, Callie," she commanded.

Several long minutes later the attendant returned, and guided Caleb to the rear of the store, to the private dressing rooms.

"In there," the girl pointed.

Caleb took a deep breath, feeling very anxious about what might be in store for him, and entered the large chamber. Inside, his Step-mom to be, stood holding what appeared to be some kind of strange white medieval bathing suit. She motioned for the uncertain boy to come forward, then ordered him to remove his clothes.

Caleb stripped down to his skimpy girly briefs, then looked up at Lucinda as if to say, 'what next?'

"*All* of your clothes, boy," the commanding woman instructed.

Caleb paused for a moment ... did she *really* just ask him to get naked?

"Now!" Lucinda boomed.

Caleb scurried to remove his panties then stood before her, hands covering his penis and testicles. He was extremely embarrassed by the fact that they had gotten so small in the past few weeks, and without his father, or the confidence of his brother ... he had no one to tell.

Lucinda, thankfully, said nothing.

Instead she helped the boy into the clothing, then began to lace him up. Caleb winced as he felt the corset begin to constrict his body, but remained silent. He was certain that any complaining would lead her to become angry, as he had witnessed with his older brother.

But soon the pain was more than he could bear.

"I ... can't breathe!" he gasped finally.

Lucinda chuckled, "I was waiting for you to say that," she smiled, "You've got a much higher tolerance for pain than I would have expected. And this cincher is much tighter than I thought I would be able to get, be it that this is your first time being corseted..."

"Corseted?" Caleb whispered.

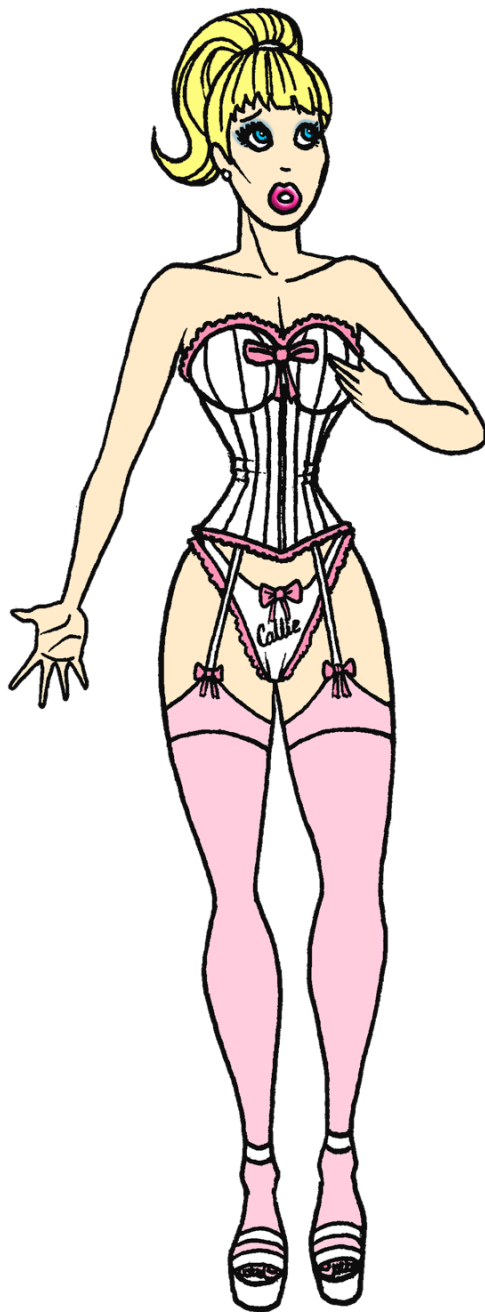
"Well yes dear," Lucinda affirmed, "How else do you expect to fit into your gown by the wedding date?"

"Gown?" Caleb coughed.

"Well of course darling, what else would you think you would wear?"

Caleb looked blankly at her, hoping that he misunderstood what was being said.

There, there now darling," she patted his shoulder, "One thing at a time. Let's not get too many ideas into that pretty little head of yours."



Caleb, still breathing shallowly, nodded and allowed Lucinda to continue to dress him.

She placed small rubbery pads into the top of his corset, then began to roll a pair of pale pink stockings up over his legs, clipping them into the garters that hung from the bottom of the corset. Matching white panties followed, a skimpy high-cut pair ornately edged in a lace similar to the corset. The panties required Lucinda to ‘adjust’ Caleb’s genitalia, something that made him blush, wince then gasp – in that order, but gave him the illusion of a smooth flat front.

A front that looked like that of a teenaged girl.

The top, vest, and shoes were then put back on – and soon Stepmother and Stepson were on their way back home.

The looks that Caleb got on the sidewalk on the return trip to the car, were *very* different from the looks that he had gotten on the way in. The women looked at him almost jealously, and the men ... the men had the same hungry primal glint in their eyes that he had seen in Carl Junior’s earlier in the day.

Hungry, primal, urgent ... the looks made Caleb’s stomach do flip-flops inside its cinched confines.

What the hell is wrong with me? He wondered.

Upon returning to the manor, Caleb dashed in through a side door, to avoid having to answer questions from his brother. Lucinda confidently called Van out to the car to unload the rather large assortment of boxes that she had purchased while at the boutique. Van was instructed to put some, marked with a cursive “V” into his bedroom. Having just barely finished his chores but a moment before she and Caleb returned, the very tired elder McBride boy begrudgingly obliged her command and helped her to unpack.

Inside the various boxes were a variety of feminine foundation garments, including corsets, stockings, panties and other such lacy, satiny items. “Who are all these for?” Van finally voiced his concerns.

“Why ... they’re for you, and your brother Callie dear,” Lucinda smiled.

Van glared at her, “There’s *no* way ... *no freakin’* way ... and stop calling him Callie! Just because you’ve got my little brother convinced that he’s a fag doesn’t mean I’m going to cave in, too.” With that, he grabbed his keys and headed for the door, but an undignified scream, moments later, signified that he had just made discovery of another of Lucinda’s little changes to his life.

“You bitch!” Van spat upon his return to his room, “What did you do to my car?”

“Your car was an aging death-trap, and an environmental nightmare to boot,” Lucinda spoke sternly, “You should be *thanking* me instead of berating me.”

Van’s jaw hung open. He didn’t know what to say. He felt his rage building up as his face turned red and blood pressure doubled.

His car ... his prized BMW ... was gone. In its place, was parked a cute Mazda convertible painted in a shiny mauve. He felt as if his manhood had been completely removed.

“You had *no* right ... that was *my* car...” He grabbed the sides of his head to try and stabilize his mind. He was as angry as he had been since this woman had inserted herself into his life. His knuckles went white with strain and his face went from red to purple. “I’m calling the police!” he shouted and left the room.

“You do what you feel is necessary darling,” Lucinda called after him, “But since I am still your legal guardian for the foreseeable future, I’m afraid that there is really very little that the Police will be able to do.”

Van’s face turned even more purple.

Lucinda remained quiet as she left the room for a moment, returning moments later with a cup of pills and glass of water, “Here darling,” she smiled as she handed the cup to Van, “This will help...”

Van recognized two of the pills as the vitamins that he had been taking for a few weeks now, but the other pills eluded him. His first thought was to knock the pills out of her hand, but knowing how she had knocked *him* around before; he took a deep breath. Against his better judgement, he swallowed the pills and accepted his treatment. He would have done anything to try and calm down at that moment. He felt like he might have a coronary...and he was *way* too young to die today.

Within a few minutes, Van’s entire disposition had changed. He felt his anger subside, replaced instead by a strange and overwhelming feeling of acceptance.

Acceptance of his macho car being replaced with a girly toy, acceptance of the changes that Lucinda had been making in his and his brother’s life, and of course of her dominating power over them. All of his doubts and reservations seemed to just drift away into nothingness. He even accepted that he no longer longed for his father’s return to ‘set things right.’

He turned and smiled at Lucinda in a pharmaceutical haze ... perhaps things were already ‘right.’ He never noticed before, but Lucinda really had the most beautiful eyes. Eyes he could stare at for hours ... Days, even...

Lucinda would continue to dose Derrick’s elder child for several days. With the wedding date ever-fast approaching, she could ill afford the distraction of Van’s discontent.

Once drugged, he became quite compliant and even cheerful. Happily allowing Lucinda to install him in the corset each morning, and spending the day cleaning and dusting with an infectiously pleasant demeanor.

Even Caleb noted the change, commenting to his Step-Mom-to-be that Van was *much* nicer to be around as of late.

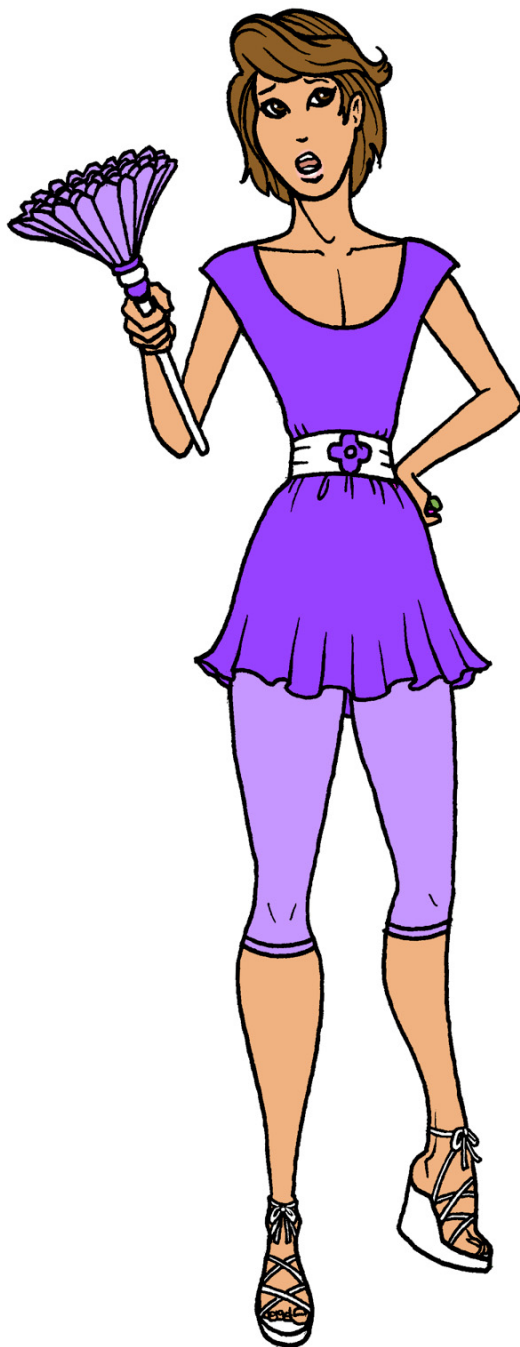
He would often find his older brother seated at the vanity in his bedroom, repeatedly applying his eye makeup. Van had the mixed expression of both a defeated and determined man as he attempted yet again to perfect his tracing and coloring of his eyes. He didn't look up at his brother at all, but instead, steadied his hand and began to apply mascara to his lengthened lashes or liner around his oval eyeballs until he was finished. The results, though predictably similar, always seemed to surprise him.

"How can *I* possibly look like *that*?" he would wonder to himself. With the added use of foundation and lip-color, the difference in his appearance was indeed, becoming *quite* drastic.

He realized, that like his brother ... he was beginning to look quite girly. And like his brother, he was both horrified and strangely acceptant of the fact. He didn't seem to be able to stop himself.

One night, while Van practiced his cosmetic application, his younger brother had settled on the sofa with Lucinda for marathon night of *Real Housewives* on TV, when suddenly, and most unexpectedly, there was a knock at the door.

Lucinda's eyes lit up, "I wonder who *that* could be?" she smiled sardonically, "Why don't you go to the



window and see, Callie darling?”

Caleb clip-clopped across the tiled mezzanine in his three-inch platforms. After wearing them all-day, he had developed a very cute wiggly saunter that made Lucinda grin. He pulled back the curtain of the front window with a manicured hand, then gasped.

It was Carl Jr.

“Omigosh!” he gushed, “Its Carl ... he’s *here!*” He exclaimed. “*Why is he here?*”

Lucinda smiled, knowingly. She had invited Carl over soon after witnessing how well he and Caleb had interacted days ago.

“He’s likely here to ask you on a date,” Lucinda smiled, “Isn’t that why most boys come knocking on the doors of pretty young...”

The doorbell rang ... interrupting Lucinda’s words. Caleb jumped then started to head towards the door.

“Wait-wait-wait,” Lucinda called to him, “Have you checked yourself to make sure you’re presentable?”

Caleb paused, “Presentable?” He turned to look at the mirror in the front hall, seeing ‘his’ reflection. Was he ‘presentable’?

Caleb looked at his reflection of a flippy pink miniskirt with white tights, pink shoes, and a pale-pink top with a white vest ... his face fully made up with pinks on a pale foundation ... he no longer resembled Caleb, the mouthy McBride boy.

He resembled a girl.

He resembled Callie.

The doorbell rang a again.

“Well don’t just stand there, darling,” Lucinda barked, “never keep a man waiting!”

Caleb turned and skipped to the door. He paused for a moment before opening it.

“Hey there,” Carl smiled.

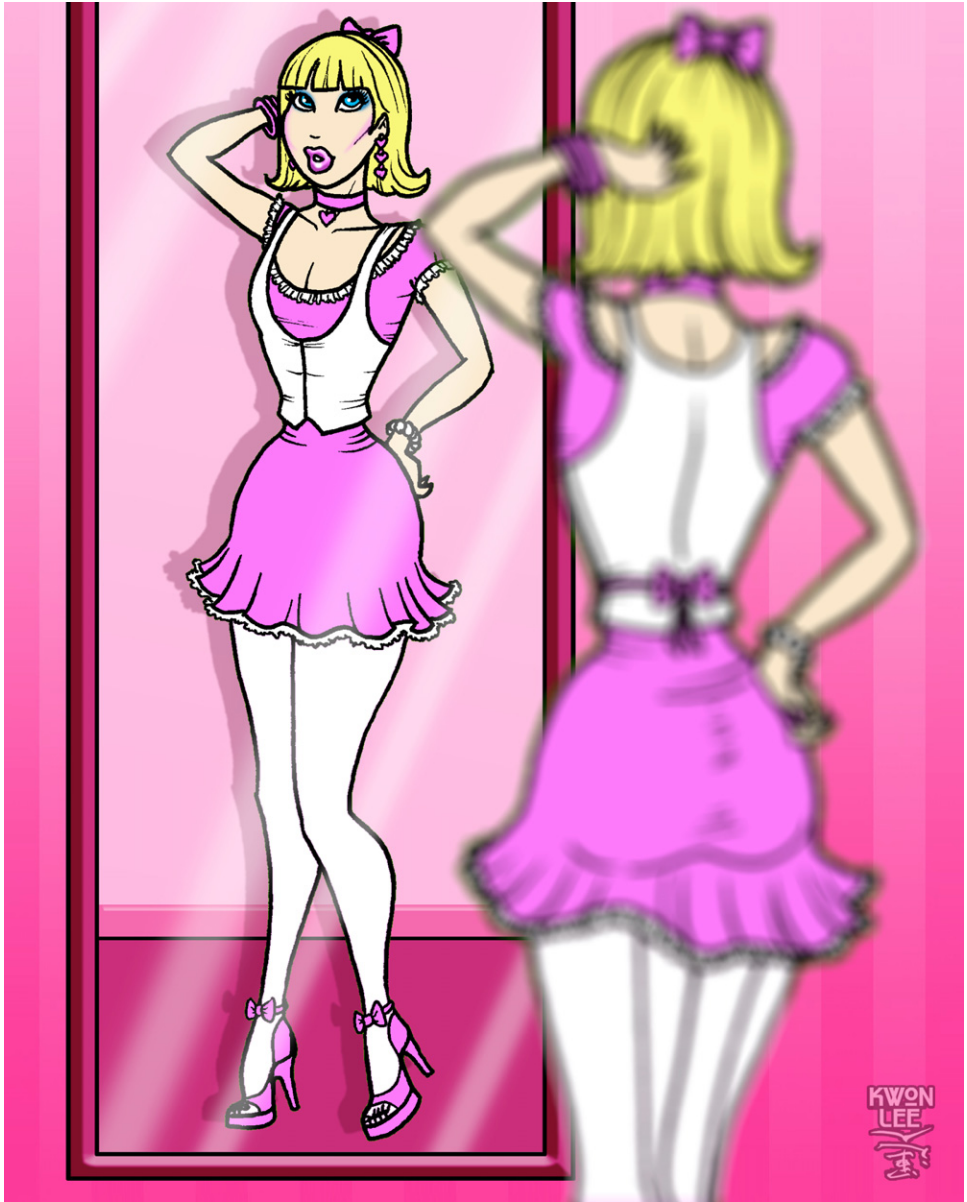
Caleb blushed and looked down shyly.

Carl stood back to take in the sight of Caleb.

“Damn!” he said finally, “You so fine ... mmm-mmm-mmm”

Then he reached forward with both hands and grabbed Caleb’s hand, lifting it towards him. He bent forward slightly, his eyes still locked on Caleb’s, and kissed the top of the feminized boy’s dainty manicured hand as he had done at the bistro days before.

Caleb again looked shocked, but the look of concern soon began to subside.



“I was wondering,” Carl finally spoke after kissing Caleb’s hand several more times; “If you want to go for a drive?” he took a step back and to the side to allow Caleb to see the beautiful Mercedes Benz roadster that was parked in the courtyard.

Caleb, before he met Lucinda anyway, had been a bit of a car nut, and so the tiny part of him that still was, automatically said “Yes,” before the part of him that worried about being alone in a car with Carl Jr. and his advances could object.

“As long as it’s okay with Lucy,” Carl grinned.

Caleb turned around to see Lucinda towering over him, “Oh yes, of course darlings. You two love birds go off and have a delightful time!”

Caleb looked worried that she had used the term ‘lovebirds’ and further what kind of ‘fun’ Carl might have in mind. But Jr. was already grabbing his hand and pulling him towards the exotic automobile, so there wasn’t any time to object.

He could only accept.

Minutes later Carl peeled the car down the driveway and out onto the street. Van, hearing the sound of the car’s revs came running to the door, heels clicking on the terrazzo. He was still holding his eyeliner pencil in one hand.

“What the heck was that?” he asked.

“Oh nothing dear,” Lucinda smirked, “Your brother’s just gone on his first date with a boy.”

Van’s eyes grew wide with confusion, “He’s doing *what?*”

Lucinda ignored his question, inspecting his face, “Now ... you need to thicken the line on your upper lid darling ... it helps make your eyes ‘pop’” she said as she took the pencil from his hand, “Here, let me show you.”

She began to line his eyes as she had instructed, giving them a sultry, retro-look that made him look far more feminine than he could have imagined.

“There,” she turned him towards the mirror, “Now let’s go try on a few new things to go with your new look. I did some shopping for you today, and I simply cannot wait to see you try them on.”

He sighed and looked down at the ground, defeated “Yes Ma’am” he said.

No End in Sight

That same night, Carl Jr., drive Caleb throughout the streets of L.A., touring around from bar to bar, club to club, but not staying anywhere in particular for very long. They finally ended up on quiet sidewalk walking in the warm night air. Carl had his around Caleb's shoulder and was holding him possessively tight. Caleb was terrified to try and resist, knowing that Carl was much larger, and stronger than him, and also not knowing if Carl knew ... that he was in fact a *he*.

It had occurred to Caleb that it was very possible that Carl had mistaken him for girl, as Lucinda's choice of clothing and hair and even the fact that he was wearing makeup, might have given *some* people the wrong idea.

People like Carl Junior.

And just about *every other guy* that they passed on their way.

Carl smiled, "Wow Callie," he began, "you are one hot chick. You see how them otha brothas been looking at me, like they was goin' try to get a piece'a you."

Caleb smiled nervously and nodded. It *did* make him feel better to know that Carl would protect him in the event of a stranger making advances. But *who* would protect him from Carl?

He felt Carl's hand slide down to rest on his now-corset-narrowed waist. The young man grunted like an animal, approving Caleb's new-found curves, "Damn!" he smiled, "You so fine girl!"

He let his hand slip down over Caleb's ass, cupping a butt-cheek in his hand, "Mmm-mmm-mmm" he cooed as the two of them continued to walk back the Benz, "You're *my* girl now baby. You're all mine."

Carl led Caleb back to the car, but instead of fastening his seatbelt and starting the engine, the young man leaned over and planted a kiss on Caleb's lips.

Caleb, part in shock, part in terror, and part in arousal at the sensation, moaned softly and kissed him back. Carl interpreted Caleb's reaction to be one of acceptance and immediately pulled the effeminate boy closer, sliding his thick tongue between Caleb's slick glossed lips, causing him to moan sweetly again.

Moments later, passers-by would see the fogged windows of the Mercedes and grin.

"Well?" Lucinda asked excitedly when Caleb returned from his evening with Carl, "How was my darling Callie's first date?"

"It was um..." Caleb began, "It was okay..."

“Just okay?” Lucinda balked, “If Carl Junior is *anything* like his father I *know* for a fact that it was more than just ‘okay’. What did you two kids do all night?” Her facial expression changed from curious to teasing, “Or do we want to know?”

“It was nothing like *that*,” Caleb lied, “We just hung out. He showed me a lot of, um ... things.”

He thought back to Carl’s gigantic cock ‘hanging out’ and how the smiling Carl had ‘showed him’ how to gently stroke it.

Lucinda could read the story on Caleb’s pretty painted eyes.

“I hope that you thanked him like a proper lady Callie dear,” she grinned.

Caleb blushed. He had thanked him in a way he never thought he would thank another boy, did that count?

“I think my poor darling girl is *exhausted*,” Lucinda smiled reassuringly, “Why don’t you go get some rest so you can tell me all about it in the morning.”

Caleb nodded. It *had* been exhausting.

As he made his way to his room he thought back to Carl thinking that he was a girl, and treating him as such. Watching Carl moan and writhe as he was brought to climax gave Caleb a rush of emotion. He realized that *he* had been the one responsible for bringing him to orgasm. It made Caleb feel ... ever-so-slightly ... powerful. And it was the first time since Lucinda moved in that he actually felt like he had any power over *anything*. And having power over a handsome, muscular six-foot-tall man, was something that made Caleb smile.

Just before he stepped into his room for the night, he checked in on his brother, Van. He was still at the vanity, still applying his makeup. He was still wearing a padded corset – plus stockings, panties and high-heeled shoes. Caleb gasped. Van’s made-up face, dangling earrings, coiffed hair, sexy corset with stuffed cups, stockings and heels were certainly *not* something Van would have ever allowed to have done to him. The old Van, at least. A new one was quickly coming to the surface.



The New McBrides

The weeks that followed would be a chore for both of the young McBride boys.

Each day started with a bath, followed by brushing and styling their ever-growing hair. Then they would have to dust their faces and gloss their lips ... or at least ... Van would. Caleb, was required to do much more than that, and was prohibited from being outside of his room without his face properly made-up. After their makeup was on, they would lace each other into their corsets.

The convoluted garments were steadily crushing their waists down to ridiculous proportions, while at the top of their bodies an odd swelling had occurred. While it was much worse in Caleb than it was in Van, something was very definitely happening in the eldest brother too.

Both boys' chests were feeling very 'puffy', and their nipples were very tender and sensitive. But only Caleb could now fill out the top of his corset without the help of the forms that his stepmother had originally given him when he was first laced into the device.

In short, Caleb was growing boobs, and he wasn't sure what to do about it.

"I think we need to see a Doctor," Van finally said one day, "This is just too weird."

"What's 'too weird,' darlings?" Lucinda asked. She had been within earshot and overheard the tail-end of the conversation. Caleb had been lamenting to his brother about his swelling chest, while the older brother also expressed concern about what to do about his own growing pectorals.

"Our chests are getting all..." Caleb's voice ... which was sounding much softer and sweeter than before ... gently trailed off as the boy stared into space.

Van sighed and rolled his eyes. Ever since his little brother's 'date' with that gigantic line-backer shaped Carl, he had been acting like such bubble head. He couldn't even finish a sentence.

"It looks like we're growing tits..." he grumbled, "I think we need to see a Doctor."

Lucinda took a step back to look the boys over and shrugged, "Well you both look fine to me dear," she said nonchalantly, "But if you really think it's an issue I can make an appointment with a Doctor friend of mine."

"Lucinda..." Van cried out angrily, "We're boys! We're not supposed to have bodies like this!" he motioned with his hands up and down the sides of his body.

“Now Vanessa dear,” Lucinda chided, “Let’s not forget our manners. I’ll make an appointment for tomorrow and we’ll get this all figured out, alright?”

Caleb nodded, while Van sighed. *What choice did he have?*



The next day, the three of them headed off to Lucinda’s doctor friend, first thing in the morning.

It wasn’t until they reached the clinic that Van began to worry. He read the sign on the door. “*A plastic surgeon?*” he exclaimed, “I thought you were taking us to real Doctor!”

“Not just *any* plastic surgeon,” Lucinda corrected, “Doctor Rudgard Manning of the Beverly Hills Plastic Surgery Clinic is the *finest* cosmetic surgeon on the West Coast. And if anyone will be able to help you with your concerns on the size of your breasts ... *he* can.”

“But there’s nothing wrong with the *size* of our breasts” Van complained, “It’s the fact that we *have* them that’s the problem...”

“Let’s let the Doctor decide, now shall we?” Lucinda disagreed, “He really *is* the professional, isn’t he?”

Van sighed; knowing that Lucinda did not back down once her mind was made up. He would just let her put on this little show for them. Van had no doubt this was something to scare them into being more compliant.

“And if all goes well,” she smiled, “we’ll have a little party to celebrate afterwards!”

Caleb couldn’t help but smile a little at the idea of a party, though he wasn’t sure why the thought excited him.

Van just rolled his eyes. He had a feeling this wasn’t going to go well for either of them. He knew he was in for a real knock-down drag-out argument with Lucinda.

The boys were greeted inside the clinic by a very well-endowed secretary, who separated them, sending them each with equally well-endowed nurses to different rooms where they were told to disrobe and cover themselves with gowns, then lay down on the exam table to wait for what was next.

Not realizing that they were being anesthetized, the two of them soon drifted off into a restful sleep, never able to even ask a question or object.

Hours later, the brothers awoke feeling sore from the waist up to the top of their scalps. They were bandaged up tight and groggy from being put under. They were taken back home, to their respective beds, and told to rest. Which they did, drugged into a stupor.

What seemed like a few days later, they were permitted to get up, but quickly noted that it seemed like every mirror in the house had gone missing.

Lucinda told them that she was having them all properly cleaned and repaired in preparation of the party.

“What kind of party?” Van asked, from his half-drugged state.

Lucinda explained it was a party that she was holding in the boys’ honor the following week.

Of course this meant that boys had double the amount of chores to do in the days ahead, so they didn’t have time to dwell on their sore faces and chests, or the suspicious inability to check on what had happened to them.

In fact, they wouldn’t get a proper look at themselves until the day of the actual party.

That day, Lucinda brought in the staff of her favorite salon to work on the boys in one of the unused bedrooms upstairs. She also employed attendants from her favorite boutique who would assist with the boy’s wardrobe.

Getting the boys out of their bandages and into their party-clothes was left almost entirely to the hired help, as Lucinda was required downstairs to supervise the party preparations.

When the beauticians and clothiers had finished, Lucinda returned to the room to get the first look at the finished product.

She gasped, “Oh my!” she exclaimed, “I cannot *wait* to show you off to all my friends darlings. Some of them flew all the way in from Louisiana just to see you two.”

She smiled at the team that had been working on the boys all afternoon, “Very-well-done!” She raised the martini glass that she held in her hand in a mock toast, and then escorted the two bewildered boys out of the room, and to the top of the staircase.

“I’m so happy with both of you,” Lucinda smiled, “That’s why I want you both to have these...” she handed them both dainty little purses, Van’s in mauve, Caleb’s in pink. The boys just stared at her, not even realizing that they could have easily stolen a glance of the other.

But they had agreed earlier that they wouldn’t look at the other until they had seen their own reflection first.

“Now,” Lucinda smiled, “We’re ready to go...”

Both Van and Caleb felt odd and unstable but they followed anyway. Their centers of gravity were ‘off’ due to their heavy chests and new footwear, but they were forced to quickly learn to balance, and stepped carefully down the stairs.



When they got to the bottom, they saw that a new, gigantic mirror had been installed, freestanding, at the bottom, and that a small crowd of party guests had assembled behind it.

“Ladies and Gentlemen,” Lucinda spoke in her loud commanding voice, causing the crowd to turn and look at her and her two young charges, “I am proud to introduce my two beautiful bridesmaids, Ms Callie, and Ms Vanessa McBride...”

The two brothers stopped on the bottom step to soak in their new reflections, their mouths hanging slightly agape, as their reflections were completely unfamiliar to them. Both soon realized that the so-called ‘doctor’ Lucinda had taken them to, hadn’t done anything to make their swelling chests go away ... but in fact, had done quite the opposite ... and made them much, much *worse!*

That, combined with the collective efforts of the beauticians and clothiers that Lucinda had brought to the house, had completely transformed the two brothers into something very different than what they expected.

Callie, or Caleb as he still *occasionally* thought of himself as, wore nearly all-pink, with the exception of his crisp white stockings, the tops of which were clearly visible under his ridiculously short skirt. The top of the dress had puffed shoulders with white piping around the arms. A white choker collar served to cover the scar left by his having his adam’s apple removed – something that also served to increase the pitch of his voice by an octave or two. A pink heart locket, Lucinda’s namesake shape, dangled on his bare neck, above his bare chest bone, giving ample view of his now C-Cup breasts, though the cut of the dress, combined with the tiny appearance of his waist, made them look much bigger. His shiny blonde hair, already extended once in the past month, had been extended again, and was now hanging well below his shoulder blades.

Caleb’s stockinged feet ended in pink platform pumps with four-and-a-half inch heels and half-inch platform sole and tall ankle strap. Dangling pink heart earrings hung from each ear, made to match the bracelets on his left wrist and the anklet on his left leg. Fine pink gloves covered his hands, covering up his long pink acrylic nails.

His face was nearly white with foundation, giving him a pale, matte complexion. His lips, massively enhanced with collagen, were heavily painted with pink color and gloss. Bold strokes of pink blush lined his cheekbones and were blended up into his eye makeup, which was pink around the outside, but darkly lined around the inside.

His fake eyelashes tickled his face with every movement his eyes made, and his high arching brows make him look even more surprised than he already was.

He glanced over at his brother’s reflection, which was almost as shocking as his own.

Van, was trying to pull his micro-short lavender-colored skirt down over the tops of his patterned purple and mauve-colored stocking tops, to no avail. His body-hugging mauve mini-dress would not cover any more than it already did.

The dress was decidedly more ‘adult’ looking than the juvenile look of his little brother, with a wide scooped neck, and flared short sleeves. The lacy edge of his magenta bra offered nice contrast and framed his B-Cup breasts perfectly.

A mauve choker with locket adorned his slender neck, while cute bow shaped earrings hung from his ears.

The bow theme was continued in his hair, made three-times as long with carefully applied extensions, and at the center of his dress. Another set on the vamp of his platform t-strap high-heeled sandals finished the grouping and over the elbow gloves covered his arms completing his look.

His face had not been painted quite as garishly as his brothers, but it was still quite heavily made-up, with pale base, bold magenta cheekbones, dark eyes rimmed with mauve shadow, and over-inflated mauve colored lips that looked like they might have been originally designed for a latex fuck-toy.

Van's expression continued to be disbelief until he caught a glimpse of Caleb, but there weren't words to describe what had been done to them, so he remained silent.

"Girls," Lucinda chirped, "I know you just *love* to gaze at your lovely reflections ... but we have many people to meet – so let's be on with it."

Van wanted to scream. He wanted to run away, but knowing that he had been modified to look as he now did, he realized that he had nowhere that he could go. There was no distance he could run to escape what he had become. All he could do was stay ... and wait.

Wait for his father to return and see what his hideous bride-to-be had done to his sons.

Wait for him to send her packing.

Wait for things to go back to the way that they were.

"Lucinda!" voice rang out from behind them, "*What* is going on here?"

Van and Caleb, with Lucinda, turned around to see Derrick McBride standing before them.

Caleb felt immediately embarrassed, while Van was elated. His Dad was back earlier than planned, and Lucinda was about to be sent on her way.

"What have you done?" he asked ... looking his sons over, worriedly.

"Derrick darling!" Lucinda bubbled, then ran over to her man and embraced him, "Oh darling. It's so good to see you ... I've missed you so much!"

Derrick's tone softened some, "Oh Lucy, I've missed you so much too ... But what have you done to my boys?"

Van smiled in anticipation. It was finally over.

"You never said anything about a party," he continued, "this is an awful lot of public exposure dear ... what if this gets out?"

"Oh pish-posh darling," Lucinda chided, "I've had my friend Carl and his son at the door, checking credentials. There isn't anyone here that isn't supposed to

be. Besides, look how lovely they turned out ... don't you think they deserve a party to celebrate their debut?"

Derrick looked concerned again, "Well ... I..."

"Oh dear," Lucinda said, "You're having second thoughts ... aren't you?"

"No, no," Mr. McBride shook his head, "Not at all ... I know how badly behaved they were, and I know that your methods will help them, later in life once this ... treatment ... is finished. But it's just a little..." his voice trailed off, "much."

Van's jaw hit the floor. *His Dad was in on it?* "Dad?" he gasped in the new sweet and soft voice that the Doctor had provided him, "You knew?"

Derrick averted his son's eyes, "Well Van," he stammered, "I um ... that is to say..."

"As a boy ... you were a very bad-mannered individual, Vanessa," Lucinda cut in, "And if there is one thing I simply cannot stand, its bad mannered, spoiled rich little brats. So I told your father, that things would have to change if he truly wanted me as his wife ... and he lovingly agreed." She turned and smiled at Derrick who instantly smiled back, taking her hand in his and kissing it gently, "And I'm certain that we all agree, that as a girl ... you're so very much nicer."

She turned to Caleb, "You *and* your lovely sister."

Van's pouty lips were frozen open. He didn't know what to say. He didn't know what to think. This was all beyond his comprehension. Surely there were other ways this could have been dealt with ...

As if she were reading his mind, Lucinda continued, "Surely if there were any other ways that we could have dealt with this, we would have ... but you were really beyond any other option," she paused and grinned, "And this kind of 'treatment' has been successfully used to tame out-of-control young men for over a hundred years.

"Want to make a bad boy turn good in a hurry?" she asked rhetorically, "Make him into a girl!"

She burst into laughter, with Derrick chuckling uncomfortably next to her. The guests, too laughed. Van was shocked. He felt his body going numb. His own father had not only allowed this horrible thing to take place, he practically condoned it.

"And besides," Derrick said suddenly after a minute of chuckles, "My Lucy has always wanted to have a pair of lovely daughters..." His smile melted some, as he glanced back at Lucinda, "Though we'll have to have a talk about just how far you've gone and how hard it will be to get the boys back..."

"After the wedding darling," Lucinda smiled, "After the wedding."

Derrick's smile returned, "Oh ... of course ... after the wedding ... you've got bridesmaid dresses already ordered ... of course it'll be afterwards..."

"But Dad!" Van whined.

"But Dad' nothing Van," Derrick scolded, "Lucinda told me all about your behavior while I was gone ... you deserve every bit of what you're getting ... or worse! Now let's put all of this aside for the night and enjoy the wonderful party that Lucy has organized for you two boys ... er, girls."

With that, he took Lucinda's arm in his own and began to escort her around the room, to meet the guests.

Van and Caleb sighed, and slowly followed their Dad, knowing that they were – for the time being – stuck as girls.

Getting Ready for the Big Day

The days that followed were all spent in preparation of the big day ahead.

Every inch of the house and the grounds around it needed to be scrubbed and cleaned and prepped for the wedding. Every room prepared for guests, and that even included Van's room. Lucinda declared that the brothers would have to move in to one room together until the wedding was over.

Neither boy was pleased with her decree, but they were left without any other option. Since Caleb's room was the slightly larger of the two, it soon contained two twin-sized bed and mattress sets, along with two matching vanities. Lucinda then went through their drawers and closets to consolidate their wardrobes down to the bare necessities – panties, dresses and skirts, stockings and tights, corsets, tops and heels. Anything else ... like pants ... was to be tossed or donated to a thrift store.

This left the two very unhappy McBride boys with little choice but to embrace, if only half-heartedly, their new personas ... at least until after the wedding day was complete.

There were days, however, when they weren't sure if that day would actually come.

Lucinda's all-out feminization of Derrick's sons, was more of an issue than first thought, and caused many a heated fight. Their voices would raise, doors would slam and feet would stomp around. Caleb and Van, who had been ordered to remain in their room, waited excitedly for their Dad to through open the door and tell them that the wedding was off.

But he never came.

Instead, Derrick would always end up apologizing to Lucinda and promising that he would be on her side, much to the disappointment of his sons.

Lucinda would then return the boys to their chores of cleaning, dusting and prepping for the big day. When they weren't doing such domestic duties, she would have the brothers practice walking in their towering heels, and speaking in soft sweet tones. She would give them phrases like, "Why thank you Sir," and shown how to wink and flirt. She would make them practice walking down the isle, joking that one day they would need to know how it was done.

The brothers didn't see the humor.

One time, Van refused to practice ... only to have his step mother to be narrow her eyes sternly at him. He caved easily. There was barely any fight left in the one-time trouble maker.

“And remember darlings,” she grinned, “every man wants to think that they are attractive and special ... that’s where you come in ... remember to smile at every male guest as you walk the isle, and make him feel like he’s the most attractive man in the room...”

“What?” Van sputtered, “You want us to come on to everyone like a couple of sluts?”

“When you were a man,” Lucinda scoffed, “didn’t you like to have a pretty girl make you feel handsome?”

The choice of words stung Van particularly hard ... as he still thought he *was* a man. Technically, he still was ... with a beautiful face, long sexy legs and perfect set of breasts.

That was still okay though, right? As long as his manly ‘pack’ was intact ... he was still man, right?

These were questions he would ask himself, and his brother, as both boys were noticing a considerable amount of ‘shrinking’ was going on ‘down there’.

But that wasn’t what Lucinda had asked him, was it?

“Pardon Ma’am?” Van finally said.

“Oh never mind!” Lucinda threw up her hand in frustration, “Just go off and practice your makeup again,” she said as she turned on one heel and left the room.

Van sighed and looked at his brother. He knew that they didn’t really need the practice. They were both getting *exceedingly* good at looking girly.

Especially Caleb.

Some days later, this would be made ever-so-apparent.

The day had started at the salon, getting their hair lengthened, their nails done, and their bodies waxed smooth. Of course their makeup would be applied to perfection at the end of their appointment, and the salon always went a little overboard, which left the two boys looking very over-the-top.

Once freshly painted and polished, the two of them followed Lucinda down the sidewalks of Rodeo Drive to the bridal boutique. She wanted to check their sizing one more time, to ensure that their corsets and diets will allow them to fit into the tiny gowns she had ordered for them.

The sound of their collective heels clicking on the concrete walkway served as a constant reminder of their feminized state. That, and the wiggle in Van’s little brother’s step as he walked before him. Caleb’s mincing steps were *so* good at it in fact that he was beginning to be almost unrecognizable as ‘Caleb,’ as he embraced his new self ... Callie.

Callie wore the same flippy pink micro mini that she wore for her date with Carl, the first of what would eventually become many dates. The abbreviated

garment barely covered her pert bubble butt, which was thankfully covered in the opaque white material of her smooth tights. Her footwear, ankle-high pink platform booties with five-inch heels, forced her to keep her corseted torso straight, and thrust out her buttocks and breasts ever-so slightly. A loose, transparent top gave hint to the treasures below her pink satin corset. Her blonde hair was perfect and straight, and her pale face made up with the typical pink-tones and luscious black lashes that she had become accustomed to.

She was also becoming accustomed to the many smiles, winks, nods and friendly greeting she was getting from the many men she would pass ... and even some of the women!

Caleb ... Callie, was actually *worried* about whether or not she would fit into the dress ... unlike her brother ... who frankly couldn't care.

Dressed in his tiny purple miniskirt, with crisp white stockings and a matching pale lavender-colored top, Van had not quite perfected the art of walking in his four-inch heeled sandals, occasionally mis-stepping or stumbling.

During one such stumbling episode, Van heard giggling from a nearby cluster of girls who were gabbing on the sidewalk. As Van looked over at them, he immediately averted his eyes, blushing heavily under the somewhat thicker dusting of foundation than he was usually made up with. He nervously fiddled with his hair, now long enough to be pulled back into pony tail using a magenta-colored ribbon.

He was glad that Lucinda had made him wear extra makeup that day, as he knew the group of girls that had seen him stumble. He prayed that they wouldn't recognize him in his new get-up, as one of them had been his girlfriend just before this whole ordeal had started.

Lucinda, sensing Van had fallen behind, turned to see what the issue was, "Vanessa darling," she said sweetly when she realized that Van had stumbled again, "you really need more practice in those shoes dear. I'll make note of that for when we get back to the house."

Van blushed again, now knowing that all of the girls were now looking at him. He kept his eyes low and continued to walk as his Step-Mother-in-the waiting and brother-turned-sister waited.

He held his breath, hoping that he would be out of sight before they recognized him.

"Come on, Van!" Caleb giggled playfully, "We haven't gotten all day you know..."

Van's eyes grew wide at the speaking of his name. He could almost hear the girls next to him putting two and two together.

His biggest fear would be realized only a second later as his ex-girlfriend, Tiffany, realized who he was.

“Van?” She gasped as he walked on by.

“Oh my God!” one of Tiff’s friends exclaimed as she pointed at the feminized boy, “That’s Van?”

“Van McBride?” yet another girl cried with a combination of disbelief and laughter.

Van didn’t answer, didn’t look their way, but instead marched past his sibling and legal guardian on his way



to the supposed safety of the boutique, which was mercifully close.

“Oh my God! Oh my gaaaawd!” the girlfriend said again, “You said things were complicated ... but I never knew it was this bad!”

“No wonder you guys never had sex,” another girl snarled as the group looked him over with a disgusted expression, “He’s a fucking drag queen!”

Van charged forward, his heels clicking with determination now. He needed to escape before they could snap any pictures of his new self.

But he was too late.

The girls had already taken their phones from their purses and clicked as many images as they could before an angry looking Lucinda stepped in front of them.

"You leave my daughters alone or your parents will be looking for a good lawyer," she scolded them before turning to corral a very wide-eyed Caleb away. He-too knew nearly everyone in the crowd, but a single one of them had recognized him – yet.

"Come along Callie. You and Vanessa have places to go." Lucinda said authoritatively.

The group burst into laughter as the McBrides' left the scene and headed towards the boutique. "Vanessa?" One of them cried out in laughter, "What ... did she say? *Callie*?" another asked out loud, "As in *Caleb*?"

Suddenly there was fit of giggles as the sudden realization hit them, "Oh my gaaaaawd! That other girl was his br..."

The door closing behind the trio ended the statement before it was completed, but the boys both knew what was being said. They also knew that their pictures and names were going to be buzzing around the internet soon as their former friends busily typed on their smartphones.

It would be nearly impossible, once this was all over, to go back to their old lives.

"Just kill me now," Van muttered.

Lucinda looked surprised, "What, Vanessa dear?"

"Stop calling me that!" Van whined.

"But darling, that's your name. Have you looked in the mirror lately?" Lucinda replied, "You can hardly pass for a 'Van' any more"

"My friends still recognized me!"

"They also laughed at you and taunted you. You don't need friends like that." Lucinda said, curtly. "Besides, you seem to have burned every bridge as 'Van.' I don't know why you'd want to go back to any of that old life."

"But ... that's who I *am*" he whimpered, tears welling up into his eyes.

"Oh my dear sweet child," Lucy said, "I'm afraid once your paperwork is finished that won't be true at all!" She handed Van some tissues from her purse and reminded him to gently 'dab' to avoid smearing, "There-there, dry those tears or you'll ruin your eye makeup!"

Van dutifully dabbed the tissues, and checked his makeup in the mirror to make sure he wasn't streaking. As the two boys entered the boutique for their fitting, Caleb and Van undressed themselves and carefully hung their clothes to avoid wrinkles. The store attendants promptly measured the shaken boys, and the boys patiently turned this way and that, lifting their long hair out of the

way, and stood posture-perfect on their tippy-toes for the best fit. Much to the delight of their Step-Mother-to be, they had shrunk sufficiently to fit perfectly into their gowns.

As they were told Caleb smiled and clapped with glee. Even Van smirked in relief, as his brother hugged him in celebration, mashing their breasts together.

They were well on their way to being Lucinda's perfectly pretty, perfectly girly, perfect little bridesmaids.

The Week of the Wedding

Much to the despair of Caleb and Van, Derrick McBride was, *again*, away on business the week leading up to the wedding. Which meant that it was just them and Lucinda – and her friends Carl and Carl Junior.

The two large, imposing men prowled the house like they owned it. They made themselves comfortable, and didn't seem too apologetic about it. Carl Jr. Took up Van's former room, as Van was still sharing with Caleb. Carl was sleeping in a spare bedroom, located right next to Lucinda in the Master bedroom.

They treated Caleb and Van like servants, ordering them to fix their food and drinks for them. Of course, the boys also kept to their chores and cleaning duties, which Carl and Carl Jr. would inspect, alongside Lucinda. Van would have registered his usual objections, but he seemed to be off in a world of his own lately. He was detached from reality, his eyes unfocused and his attention elsewhere.

Caleb would try and break through from time to time, but Van just seemed to be putting up a wall between them. Though slowly, Van did start to come back to the real world. He was grasping at straws by this time. With his father and his brother both failing him, he wanted to find one thing that he could use against Lucinda. When he noticed that Carl seemed to be disappearing from time to time, just at the same time Lucinda would vanish, he had the opportunity he had been hoping for. Carl and Lucinda would vanish for hours at a time, leaving Carl Jr. to fawn over Van and Caleb ... but mostly Caleb.

By Van's estimation, Caleb didn't seem to mind.

While Van cleaned and polished, his little brother giggled, flirted and even kissed the linebacker-sized Carl Jr. ... *right on the mouth!*

At one point the elder McBride felt he had to interject, pulling his young sibling off to the side for a little 'one-on-one'.

"What the *fudge* are you doing?" spat angrily at the younger McBride, "That guy thinks you're a chick ... he's going to lose it if he finds out you're not."

"I can take care of myself, thanks," Caleb replied, "I'm a big girl you know."

"That's the problem!" Van half-shouted, half-whispered, "You're thinking like a gosh-darned girl and not like a guy. A guy would *never* let himself get into that position ... you've got to get out of this girly stuff she's got you believing and get real, Bro. When the wedding is over, everything is going back to normal ... you hear me?"

Caleb shook his head in disbelief, "For you, maybe."

It was Van's turn to be shocked. Was his brother actually *wanting* to remain a girl? Did he actually *enjoy* the attentions that this other man was giving him?

"Is everything okay?" Lucinda's voice rang out behind them.

Van turned around with a stunned look, "Uh ... umm..."

"Vanessa says we won't be girls anymore after the wedding," Caleb pouted to his step-mom.

"Vanessa?" Lucinda looked unimpressed, "Is this true?"

Van sighed. He realized that he couldn't save his brother anymore. He was in too deep. He also realized that the only way that he would be able to make it through himself would be to act more like Caleb and pretend to enjoy all of this ... this ... feminine *foolishness*.

He sighed again, then put his game face on, "Noooo," he whined in a girly tone, "That's not what I meant! I just was saying how ... um..." he struggled to come up with an ending for the sentence. "Well, Callie isn't doing any work anyway..." he whined again, "She just keeps making out with Junior," he pointed at the couch. Carl Junior looked up in time to realize that he was being included in something that didn't want to be, then looked away.

"But Mommmmaaaa," Callie whined, then covered her mouth in surprise. She had just accidentally called Lucinda her mother.

Van covered his mouth too. He also knew that calling Lucinda 'Momma' was a line, which, once crossed, could never be 'uncrossed'.

Lucinda's eyes began to well up with tears, "Oh my precious girl!" she said then threw her arms around Callie in a deep embrace.

Van sighed and went off to vacuum.

Later on that day, he noticed Lucinda and Carl Sr., disappearing into one of the guest rooms. He raised a thin plucked eyebrow in suspicion. He had seen her and Carl acting friendly together, which he supposed was no big deal ... but this was proof of his theory. He could finally have what he wanted over Lucinda.

How could she, in good conscious, be marrying his father in only a few days, and be sneaking around with an old flame like Carl? His father would surely break off the wedding once he knew.

Van decided to take action. He shut off his vacuum and headed to the second story of the home where Caleb was dusting.

"I think Lucinda and Carl are fooling around," he whispered to his brother, "I just saw them sneak into a guest room together"

Caleb looked shocked, "What?" he gasped.

"I'm serious!" Van said, "We have to do something. She can't marry Daddy ... er, Dad, if she's nothing but a two-bit hussy. We have to intervene."

“What do you think we should do?” Caleb asked.

“Follow me,” Van replied as he turned towards the stairs.

The two McBride boys made their way back to the ground floor and tip-toed down the hall (as best they could in three inch wedge heeled sandals) to the guest room Van had spotted Lucinda and Carl entering. They paused for a moment, listening to sounds of laughter and giggles inside the room.

Van’s eyes grew wide and a look of disgust crossed his face, “That *hussy!*” he said as he reached for the door handle.

Caleb reached for his hand to stop him, “Are you sure you want to do that?” he whispered. Clearly he was worried about angering Lucinda – and more so, worried about her leaving the family. He had grown quite attached to, and dependent, on the woman who would be his mother.

“Yes,” Van said sternly, “We *have* to protect Daddy ... er, Dad”

The effeminate boy continued to turn the handle, then threw open the door with a surprise, “Ah-*hah!*”

Van had expected to find Lucinda and Carl entwined on the bed, engaged in sexual frolic, but what he saw instead wasn’t even close. The two were sitting at the small table in the corner, decorating centerpieces made of vases with glass pebbles in the bottom and satin ribbon on the top.

Both of them looked up at Van and Caleb as they burst into the room with a curious expression.

“Vanessa?” Lucinda asked quietly, “Is everything okay?”

Van surveyed the scene again, a bewildered look on his face, “Um ... I...”

“He thought you were cheating on Daddy, Ms Lucy!” Caleb blurted out.

“Moi? Cheating on your father?” Lucinda looked shocked, “With *Carl?*”

She started to giggle, and Carl soon joined in.

“Seriously child,” she said after a moment of laughter, “Carl is my oldest and dearest friend.” She smiled at the chuckling man across from her, “I think of Carl as a brother ... and I am *certain* that he feels the same of me, don’t you Carl?”

“Somethin’ like that,” Carl chortled.

“My dear girls,” Lucinda continued, “I love your father intently, though we may often have our differences,” she paused for a moment, “But I would *never* betray his trust with another man ... *that* I can assure you of”

“See!” Caleb scoffed at his older brother, “I *told* you she loved him!” He turned and left the room, leaving a shattered Van to figure out what to do next.

“Now go and finish your chores Vanessa dear,” Lucinda smiled, “we’ve got to rehearse again this evening, as I want *everything* to be perfect – do you understand?”

Van nodded as he headed back to the hall to continue his chores. He slowly, absently went about his usual duties. Now, with no hope of stopping Lucinda, he had to think things out. He had to try and find some way to deal with this insanity. If he couldn’t trap his mother-to-be trying to be dishonest, he had to ask himself who, exactly, was being dishonest? After all this time, he now questioned exactly who was responsible for this situation. Was it Lucinda, for doing what she was doing? Why didn’t his father stop this? In fact, why did he condone it?

With nowhere left to go, Van decided fighting it had gotten him in deeper and deeper trouble. He had no way to save himself for now. He was just going to have to find a way through this, go with the flow and just survive.

And so, armed with a new attitude and embracing the changes that Lucinda had made, Van joined his brother and worked diligently to prepare for the big day. And, in what seemed no time at all, it finally arrived. And before they knew it, their father Derrick arrived as well, to witness all of the changes that they were ‘embracing.’

As he walked into the foyer of his mansion, he was stunned to see heart shaped décor everywhere, and white satin ribbons and bows over every doorway. When he finally found his sons, he was even *more* stunned to see them wearing skyscraper heels and micro-mini dresses, and made up with thick makeup.

He was absolutely astounded.

After seeing what Lucinda had accomplished at the boy’s ‘debut’ he completely expected that Caleb, the more impressionable of the two, would easily fall into line. But Derrick was extremely surprised to see that it had happened to Van as well. He had been certain Lucinda would never be able to change the elder boy, the mouthy, angry, aggressive son, but she had. The old Van was completely *gone*, replaced instead by a purple-wearing big breasted bubble headed transgendered girl.

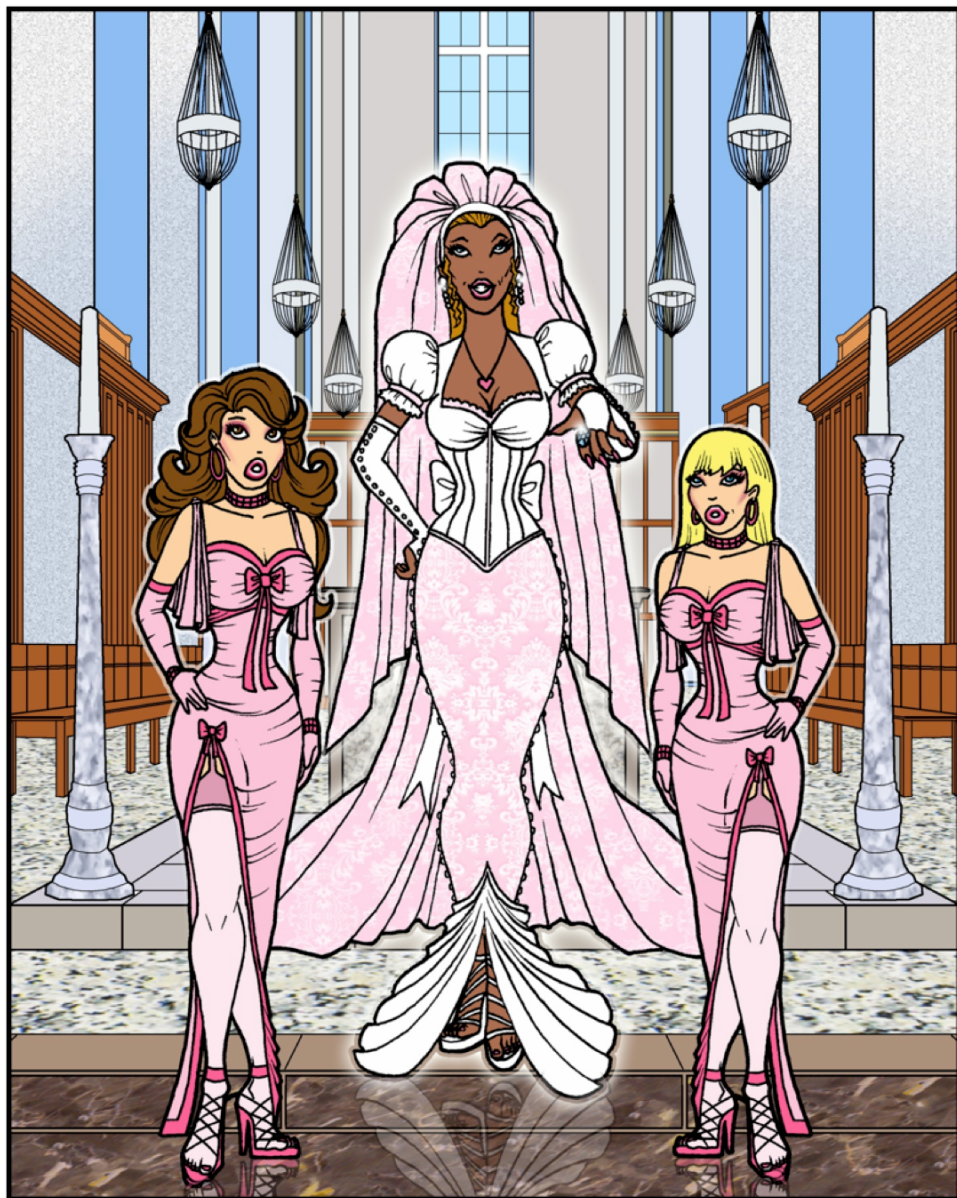
Change was indeed in the air.

So as he dressed in his tuxedo, Derrick knew that after today, his life would be forever changed. As *all* of their lives had been changed already. He glanced over at his best man, Carl Sr. and groomsman Carl Jr. The two weren’t his first choice of the men he wanted at his side. But Lucy had insisted. He wasn’t very comfortable around the two men, but seeing as he was going to spend a lot of time with Lucinda, it seemed that these two men were going to be a part of his life going forward. Carl Senior, it seemed, had never really warmed up to him, rarely smiling and barely making eye contact.

He wondered if it was the ‘race’ thing.

He shrugged. It didn’t matter. Having Carl and Carl in the wedding, made Lucinda happy, and right now *that* was all that mattered.

Meanwhile, across the house, a team of beauticians and attendants had been working since the early morning hours to prepare Lucinda and her maidens, to make sure they were happy, and gorgeous, for the ceremony.



Lucinda's extravagant bridal gown was custom-tailored to fit her every curve and had to be practically sewn onto her in order for her to get into it. She was dressed, head to toe, in white and pale pink satin and lace, with a built-in corset constricting her perfect figure further and displaying her lovely bosom. A single jeweled heart hung above her cleavage, the symbol of her family name. Her veil and train cascaded from behind her, trailing several feet and only adding to the grandeur of the outfit.

Her face and hair were perfectly done and ready to impress the crowd. She was nothing short of a princess ready to be made queen. And in their pale pink bridesmaids gowns, Van and Caleb were the stepsons that had been made into the new princesses of the family.

The dresses hugged tightly to every curve in their shapely, corset-constricted bodies, and held their augmented bosoms tightly in place. Dark pink piping and silky ribbons accessorized the outfit, just below their perfect cleavage, and just above the thigh-high slit in their skirt. The slit was *so* high in fact, that it exposed the pink tops of their smooth white stockings and the garter strap that held them tautly in place. Mesh-topped heels with thick pink platform soles and matching wide ankle straps adorned their feet, with matching choker collars around their necks. Large hoop earrings in their earlobes and long opera-style gloves covered their arms from the elbow down, completing their dazzling outfits.

Both 'girls' faces were painted like dolls, with smooth skin, overdrawn pink lips, pink blush and eye shadow blended with dark eyeliner with thick black mascara to finish their doll-like look.

Caleb's blonde hair was flat and straight, just like he always kept it, with short zig-zag bangs, and a glistening shine that resembled strands of gold. While his style was simple and understated, his brother's flowing brunette locks were dramatically styled with curves and waves that cascaded ever-so-gently over his soft, feminine shoulders.

They stood by their step-mom-to-be and posed for a quick photo before they were ushered out of the room, down the stairs, and out to the waiting limousine.

Upon arriving at the church, the boys were ushered into the front narthex where they waited for the ceremony to begin.

Caleb looked at his brother and smiled, and Van smiled back, "Well sis," she grinned, "Here we go."

Caleb embraced his brother one final time as the bridal march began to play. He took a step forward, no longer as Caleb, but now as Callie, and began her trek down the aisle.

"You forgot your flowers!" Van whispered loudly behind her, as he handed the silly girl her bouquet. Callie giggled, then began mincing slowly onwards, carrying her bouquet carefully as she smiled at the guests.

One guest in particular, a groomsman specifically, standing next to her Father, caught her particular attention.

It was Carl Junior.

He smiled at Callie as she sashayed down the aisle, causing her to blush under her heavy makeup base. She hadn't seen him in a couple of days, and thought he looked *particularly* handsome in his tuxedo. She paused before the altar, smiled once more at Carl Jr., then stepped to the left.

Van was next, following his sister-brother down the aisle. Unlike Callie, who had fully embraced the changes that had been made to 'her', the older McBride boy was still unsure about his role, and even more unsure about his gender. While his maleness had shrunk nearly nothing, it was *still* his maleness. The heaving breasts on his chest, a waspish waist and wide hips, pouty lips and slender legs had all the makings of a beautiful girl – but he was still fundamentally a boy ... *wasn't he?*

He caught a glimpse of his brother making eyes with the son of Lucinda's old friend. He saw the look in Carl Jr's eyes as he looked Caleb ... Callie ... over. Whereas mere weeks ago he would have felt disgusted at the thought of his sibling being ogled as she was, now ... at that exact moment ... steadily walking down the isle before his soon-to-be stepmom, he felt a new sensation.

Jealousy.

If Callie could draw the attention of distinguished man like Carl Junior ... why couldn't he?

Why couldn't *she*?

Van paused, mid-stride, as the realization of his emotions hit him. He blinked his long, feathery, fake lashes for a moment, then hearing some whispering in the crowd realized she needed to continue on. She looked up, past Carl Junior, to the man at his left ... his even-more distinguished father, Carl Senior.

The elder Carl looked back at Van with curious concern. Van smiled. Carl smiled back with a calming, soothing, mature expression that warmed Van, in an exciting ... 'tingling' kind of way. Carl winked. Van blushed and averted his eyes as he turned left at alter to stand beside his sibling. He turned his head to steal another glance at Carl ... to see if he was still watching.

He was.

Van blushed again as he realized that the good friend of the woman who-would-be-his mom, the man who was old enough to be his father ... was making eyes with him.

Worse still ... he *liked* it.

She ... liked it.

The bride followed next, looking splendid in her body hugging gown, with all eyes glued on her form as she made her way towards the alter. Her wide, strong hips undulated with every confident but demure step. Every male in the building couldn't help but watch. The pastor blocked his vision with the bible, looking up to heaven as he prayed for forgiveness for the thoughts that had invaded his head.

Derrick beamed from ear-to-ear as his bride walked towards him, and Lucinda returned the expression.

Both Callie and Van gently dabbed the edges of their eyes so as to soak up the tears of joy that had formed without ruining their elaborate eye makeup.

They felt a strange sense of peace as their father finally took a bride ... but not just *any* bride ... one that they felt would be their *mother*.

Lucinda smiled warmly at her 'girls' as she took Derrick's hands and stood before the pastor to say her vows and marry Derrick.

The newly married couple soon turned to the full pews of the church, containing the who's-who of Los Angeles and New Orleans, and kissed for the first time. But before she walked the aisle with her new husband, Lucinda insisted that she get a photo with her new daughters. She handed her bouquet to her husband, then motioned to Carl and Carl Jr., to take the flowers from Van and Callie, respectively, as she turned towards them and posed to for the photographer. She held out her hand, showing off of the gigantic 'rock' of an engagement ring that Derrick had proposed to her with as the camera clicked several different shots.

"Smile everyone" the photographer said, "Girls, show your mother how proud you are of her," he said to the two feminized brothers, "But don't upstage her ... just look demure and supportive."

Van looked confused by the man's comments as the camera clicked. Callie glanced over at Carl Jr., smiling, and Caleb offered a stoic expression as she pouted her lips and placed a hand on a slightly out-turned hip. Van did the same, trying to look pretty but not so much so that he would steal too much attention from Lucinda, or attract too much attention from Carl Sr. who was smiling at him as he posed.

"Wow!" the photographer exclaimed, "You are getting two pretty daughters in *this* deal Lucy. Two *very* pretty daughters."

Lucinda beamed proudly at the cameraman's comments.

It was true – she had made her groom's lazy, aggressive, and unkempt sons into a pair of sweet, demure, and very pretty girls. And even *they* were starting to believe it.

That evening, as Lucy and Derrick danced and thanked their guests for coming, Callie snuck off with Carl Jr. for a sequel to the date that they had had weeks ago, while Van was courted aggressively by Carl Sr.

As he chatted more and more with the elder Carl, and as the alcohol flowed to his brain, he soon began to realize that the older man was quite enthralled with him – and he ... or rather *she* – was becoming quite enthralled with *him*.

And so, later that evening as the newlyweds consummated their marriage in their private suite at the luxurious hotel where the reception had taken place, both Vanessa and Callie consummated their transitions to femininity with their newfound beaus.

And all was well.



The next morning, however, Derrick called his ‘family’ into the study for a meeting. His motives were plain and simple. He was following the long-held theory that the best time to announce bad news is when everyone is feeling good.

This theory has never been proved.

“You all know that our family business took a big hit in the crash of 2008,” he began. Callie, Vanessa and Lucy all nodded. “And you know that I’ve been working for a long time on this deal in the Middle East. It was supposed to be the deal that saved me ... saved *us*...” he let his voice trail off, “But ... it didn’t happen.”

The three ‘ladies’ gasped in shocked.

“Apparently, some Chinese firm dropped in a low-ball bid at the last minute ... and ... they took it. And I’m afraid that the bank called yesterday morning as soon as they learned that the deal was dead.” He gulped. “So I’ve had to have my lawyer draw up bankruptcy documents,” the girls gasped again, “And he filed them yesterday afternoon, just before our ceremony.”

He sighed and looked down.

Lucinda’s face contorted as anger and disbelief bubbled beneath the surface, “You ... you lied to me Derrick...” she said calmly, “To *us*” she pointed at his former sons who were seated demurely at her sides.

“And for that...” she continued, “I cannot forgive you.”

“But Lucy...” Derrick pleaded, “It wasn’t meant to happen like this ... if that Middle Eastern Deal had gone through, we would have been fine ... Now, now I have some feelers out there for an even bigger deal ... I just need time...”

"You are missing the point!" she yelled, "You led me to believe..." she paused the motioned at Vanessa and Callie, "Led us *all* to believe ... that everything was fine. That there were no issues."

Derrick sighed and looked down once more.

"How can I ever trust you again?" she whispered, fighting back tears.

Vanessa and Callie were in shock. They had never seen Lucinda so emotional. They felt terribly for her, and they felt anger towards their father. *How could he have done this?*

"I'm so sorry," their Dad finally said, "I never meant..."

Lucinda raised her hand to silence her new husband as she dabbed the corner of her eyes, "No matter..." she said finally, as she pulled her emotions in, "I should have expected this." She looked off into space as she dabbed her eyes again, "this always happens when fall for a..." she paused, "a person who isn't ..." she shook her head, "Carl told me this would happen," she sighed.

She turned and looked at her two dumbfounded former stepsons, "Don't you worry girls," she forced a smile, "We'll be fine"

She turned back to Derrick, "So how bad *is* it?"

Derrick sighed again, "it's bad" he said softly, "The bank is taking nearly everything I have ... but that's while I filed yesterday ... *before* we were married ... to protect you" he tried to put out a little smile, "I love you Lucy."

"Hal" Lucinda scoffed, "If you had loved me, you'd have told me about this. I could have helped you through it."

Derrick looked confused. "What do you mean?"

"I've survived my share of catastrophes, darling," she said sternly, "And I could have helped you to survive this one."

Derrick sighed, "I'm so sorry."

"Not as sorry as you're going to be..." she muttered under her breath as she looked around the room, "Well ... we need to get to work. This place needs to be ready for auction in three days..."

"Auction?" Derrick gasped.

"Oh yes dear," Lucinda replied, "the bank will only give you ten cents on the dollar for all of this," she said in a matter-of-fact tone, "An will do *much* better than that ... but first we need to get this place cleaned up to show the buyers."

"Show?" Derrick repeated with a bewildered expression.

"Well yes dear," Lucinda said, "we're not going to let the bank sell your home for peanuts. We'll list it with an old friend of mine ... she'll get top dollar in *this* neighborhood."

Derrick shook his head, “No, no Lucy,” he said, “You don’t understand. The bank is taking everything ... it’s done...”

Lucinda raised a perfectly sculpted eyebrow, “Oh?” she cocked her head to one said, “You don’t think I know how to ‘run’ things here?”

For a moment, Lucinda the aristocratic Lady departed and Lucy, the tough girl from the ninth-ward showed through, “You best believe dat I can get t’ings done around here...”

She paused for a moment to regain her composure, “What I mean to say darling, is that I’ll have my attorney contact your bank, and make arrangements to settle your outstanding debt. After which time you will no longer be indebted to any financial institution, but rather ... you’ll be indebted to *me*.”

Derrick looked scared for a moment, then cracked a smile. Lucy was going to pay off his debt and that his life would carry on as usual. It was exactly what he had hoped for. Planned on, really.

“Oh thank you my love,” he said as she threw his arms around his wife in comforting embrace.

“Oh don’t thank me yet,” she said, pushing him away, “We’ve got a *long* way to go, and I’ll bet a massive debt to pay, and you’re going to be working like you’ve never worked before to pay it off.”

Derrick nodded.

Lucinda glared at him, “Don’t you think a proper response would be in order when someone does something so magnificently nice for you?”

“Um ... yes, well thank you again,” he stammered, fishing for the correct answer to her veiled question, “And I understand that there is a lot of work ahead for me, both financially and personally, but I...”

She cut him off, “A simply ‘yes ma’am’ will suffice, dear.”

Derrick looked embarrassed, “Oh ... um ... yes Ma’am?”

Lucinda looked at her two step-daughters and smiled, “Girls,” she began, “We’re going to need to start packing up our things ... so run along to your room and decide what you’re going to need to wear over the next week, and pack up everything else, okay?”

Vanessa and Callie nodded and scampered away, eager to get ready to move.

“Just like that, boys?” Derrick asked his sons. His obstinate, difficult, spoiled sons.

“Momma’s going to take care of everything,” Callie said.

“You’ll see,” Vanessa finished.

Suddenly, Derrick felt a little anxious. This wasn’t quite the way he had figured things would work out.

Derrick's Dark Days

In the week that followed, Lucinda held true to her every word.

She negotiated a settlement with the bank, and paid off Derrick's multimillion dollar debt. She then found a buyer for what was left of Derrick's company that could be sold, and wound everything else down.

She listed Derrick's house and within a few days, found a suitable buyer. Then she prepared the contents of the home for auction. Callie and Vanessa, meanwhile, with Derrick's help, packed away the clothes that would not be needed, and had them shipped off to their new home – in Louisiana.

At first, Derrick was indignant about having to be an 'assistant' but after being reminded several times that he didn't have a penny to his name, he would sigh and come around to the idea.

His former sons-turned pretty TG girls seemed to love the idea of having their 'daddy' do their bidding, and would constantly call for him, "Daddy ... *do this*, Daddy ... *do that*," they would order him to pack and dust and sweep, and if he gave them any grief they would just call for 'Momma.'

Lucinda had already started proceedings to adopt the pair, citing their father as an unfit parent. The courts, it would seem, agreed, and granted her full custodianship very quickly. She also petitioned the court to change their names and genders legally, something that burned Derrick to no end. He protested, complaining that the expense of changing the records back, when the time came, was unnecessary.

"Back?" Lucinda answered. "Back into ugly, coarse, unfit males?"

"That was the idea! We just needed to scare them straight. That was the whole intention."

"Your intention was to control them," Lucinda answered. "And besides, I do think the decision should be left up to them."

But the girls didn't care. In fact, they seemed thrilled to become Lucinda's legal daughters, and to take her name LaCouer.

"It means 'heart' in French," Callie said proudly as she placed her new Louisiana drivers permit into her purse.

"I know," Vanessa rolled her eyes. She looked at the pouty picture on her permit, and then at the name. Vanessa Ann LaCouer, sex F. She giggled ... as it was hardly true. She would happily show the new ID card off when Carl and his younger son came by that evening, to take the girls on a date.

“Are you sure you don’t want join us?” the elder Carl asked Lucinda. She was looking down at a clipboard making notes as a downtrodden-looking Derrick looked on.

Carl eyed up Lucy’s husband with a disdainful expression. He and Lucy had been friends since they were kids back in the big easy. People like Derrick, who didn’t appreciate what they had, bothered him deeply. There was a certain amount of satisfaction in seeing the once powerful man taken down a peg – or two. Or taken down several pegs, as he watched his one-time son, turned ravishingly beautiful girl, wrap ‘her’ arms around Carl Sr.’s gigantic shoulders.

“You ready to go baby?” Senior asked.

“You betcha Daddy,” Vanessa purred. It hadn’t taken long for her strange attraction to the tall muscular black man to develop into something more ... something *much* more. She felt a connection to the Elder Carl like she had never felt before ... with anyone ... boy ... or girl.

Derrick sighed as he looked down at his feet which were snugly fit into strappy sandals. He thought about how drastically his sons had been changed, and knew that over the past few days, since he informed his wife of his financial collapse, he himself had changed.

Shortly after that his bombshell announcement, Lucinda insisted that he stop eating fatty foods and start eating only healthy items like greens and fruits and rice, which he did. It was the further insistence some days later that he take regular multivitamins, so as to improve his vitality that worried him most.

Derrick looked down at his three-quarter-length capri pants and tight fitting striped shirt that showed his constricted torso. She had placed him in a corset that same day ago, after she thinned out his wardrobe and pierced his ears with tiny gold studs. She had spent that afternoon removing all of his suits, ties and other formal wear, arguing that he would no longer need such things.



Not now.

The realization hit him with a terrifying jolt. Was his bride was going to transform him in a similar fashion to what she had done to his children? Would she *really* do such a thing? Was her hurt from his deception so deep that she would seek to emasculate him as some kind of punishment for his misguided deeds?

Derrick knew that she *could* do such a thing if she so wished ... but the bigger question was *would* she.

As the days wore on, it was becoming more and more clear that she very possibly *would*.

Carl senior scoffed aloud at the pitiful sight that Derrick was becoming, and took the arm of the former millionaire's former eldest son.

"Come on baby," he grinned directly at Derrick, "Let's go."

Vanessa smiled as she was led from the house by Carl. She had worn a chiffon miniskirt with a matching mauve colored blouse on top that allowed a glimpse of her sweet stocking tops below and her corset above. Her heels were a towering pair of five-inch stiletto platforms that forced her to sway her bubble butt with every mincing step, "Yes Daddy" she said.

Carl loved to be called Daddy, and Vanessa loved to do whatever made her 'daddy' happy, and he knew it. He also knew that it must be killing Derrick to see his son, turned into a girl, calling another man 'daddy.'

Derrick's other formerly male offspring was also just as infatuated with the younger version of the man her sister was courting.

Carl Jr. had disappeared with Callie into a vacant room for the last few minutes, and the pair were now returning to the front door. Callie stopped to reapply her lipstick ... thickly ... around her puffy, swollen, collagen-filled lips – just the way Junior wanted it.

He respectfully nodded his head to Lucinda, "Ms LaCouer" he smiled.

Callie kissed Lucinda on the cheeks, "Bye Momma," she twittered in her high pitched voice, "Don't wait up for us..."

Lucinda chuckled, "Oh I won't, dear. I won't"

She stood in the hall with her effeminate husband at her side watching Callie leave on the arm of Carl Junior. Her body-hugging pink mini-dress displayed every curve, her white stockings elongated her legs before they slipped into her five inch platform heels.

She was quite the prize and Carl Jr. was well aware of it.



In the weeks that followed, Lady Lucinda La-Couer and her two daughters, Callie Marie, and Vanessa Ann, would say goodbye to L.A. forever and move to Lucinda's family home in a parish outside of New Orleans.

With Derrick performing the bulk of the labor, the old home was catalogued, cleaned and auctioned off, and the few remaining items that Lucy had decided to keep were packed up and trucked from L.A. to N.O. His new bride further degraded him every day, adding frills to his outfits and softening his face with cosmetics, as the vitamin regimen he was on chemically reformulated him from the inside out. On the day that they were set to depart for the Big Easy, Lucinda insisted that Derrick shave his mustache off. He protested at first, but knew she would not back down. As he gazed into the bathroom mirror, he realized his facial hair had partially hidden his baby-like-face, and had made him look much more masculine and powerful.

Then lack of facial hair was apropos for his new position in life and his complete lacking of masculinity and power.

But if that weren't bad enough ... as the ultimate sign of how lowly his stature had become, Lucinda made him dress in frilly blouse and very girly capri pants, with wedge soled sandals, then made him up with a hint of lip-gloss and eye-liner prior to her leaving.

Derrick gasped, "I can't go on a plane like this!"

Lucinda paused, "You're absolutely right dear," she smiled as she ripped Derrick's ticket in two before him, "You'd never be allowed past security. You don't look *anything* like your passport anymore."

Derrick stood in stunned silence before Lucinda continued, "You'll have to take the bus dear," she reached into her purse and retrieved a handful of twenty-dollar bills and handed them to the one-time millionaire, "I'm sure



you'll be fine. After all, if you can survive the middle east, you can handle a bus trip halfway across the country."

With that, she turned and led Derrick's former sons towards the waiting limo. Derrick could feel tears rolling down his face from his eyes. He wiped them away with his hands, then noticed the black residue of his mascara and eyeliner on his index finger.

His youngest child offered to help by offering him a tissue from her purse. "There, there, Daddy," Callie cooed, "You need to learn to dab on the outside gently like this, or you'll keep ruining the pretty makeup that Momma gives you..." and with that, the child that had once-been his son Caleb, retrieved a series of compacts and tubes from her purse, and began to reconstruct his face.

After several minutes of standing still while Callie worked, she replaced her cosmetics in her purse, then kissed Derrick's cheek before turning him towards the mirror.

Derrick gasped loudly as he saw what she had done.

Instead of just glossing his lips and lining his eyes, Callie had completely made up his face, with dark pink lipstick, heavy liner, mascara, blush and blue-toned eye shadow. He also caught a glimpse of his new outfit for the first time.

"You can't do this to me!" Derrick yelled at Callie and Vanessa.

Vanessa sauntered over to Derrick and patted him on cheek. "Like you did to us?" Vanessa replied. "You don't really think we'll help you, do you?"

"But..." Derrick tried to speak.

"I don't think you



get it, sweetie. I'm Vanessa LaCouer. I'm Lucinda's daughter. You killed the McBride family with your selfishness. The McBrides don't exist anymore. And with it, went all concern we had for what you think."

Derrick felt dead inside. This was about as low as his life could get – or so he thought.

"Bye-bye Daddy!" his boys-turned-girls cooed as they headed out the door to the waiting limo.

Derrick raised a hand to wave, but his muscles would barely move. He was paralyzed by the realization that his old life was coming to an end.

A few moments later, he would grab his bag, call a cab, and say goodbye to his mansion, and his man-hood, for the last time ...

The Perfect Family

Once they landed in Louisiana, the LaCouer girls were shocked to see just how large their new home was going to be. Lucinda's plantation-style home was nearly twice the size of the place where they lived when they were boys, and featured a sprawling acreage of dense swampland. In addition, they learned that she owned a winter villa in Bermuda that they were welcome to visit at their leisure. Using the family plane, of course.

The manor featured a compliment of domestic labor, including maids, cooks, gardeners and a butler ... all of whom, incidentally, were Caucasian. The girls would soon learn that Carl and Son were very instrumental in that decision, loving the irony of a wealthy African-American woman owning a plantation and hiring white folk to be her servants.

Both Carls were to become frequent guests, and frequently chided and taunted the help ... especially one maid in particular.

Lucinda's personal maid, Deidra.

Carl and Junior Carl loved to torment her – him – the most.

They knew how it destroyed him to see his one-time sons on their arms, and especially to know that they planned to eventually finalize their trip to womanhood, and become fully functioning girls. At least Callie had agreed to it ... but they all knew that Vanessa would soon follow.

Once the procedures were complete, their men would finally be able to marry the girls of their dreams.

But that was still a ways away.

For now, there was much work to be done unpack and settle in to their new surroundings.

Deidra, as Lucinda had rechristened her husband, was placed in the guest room next to hers, and offered the hope that one day he might be permitted to return to the master suite, once he had repaid his debt as Lucinda's feminine servant. But few really expected that to ever happen.

Especially after Lucinda's cosmetic surgeon friend from Beverly Hills came to visit for the weekend. The Doctor convinced Lucinda that she didn't want people thinking she had some kind of 'freak' as a maid, and so arranged for Derrick to visit a nearby clinic for a little 'work'.

Two weeks later, Lucinda unveiled the new and improved 'Derrick' to her friends and family members.

As he clicked into the room in his new heels, Derrick had no idea what to expect, but knew it would be terrible. He had not yet seen his new reflection, but

could tell by the looks of his former sons and their partners that it was very different to what it had once been.

Just like Vanessa and Callie's reflections had once been very different, Derrick thought to himself.

He saw Lucinda waving him over, and obediently came to her side to fall under the gaze of Carl Jr. and his former son Caleb, now the sultry Callie.

He glanced over at the elder Carl with the former Van, now the sexy Vanessa, on his arm.

Carl sneered at him and Derrick averted his eyes, submissively.

Both former boys were dressed in form-fitting mini-dresses that left little to the imagination, with Vanessa in her trademark purple-mauve color, and Callie in her typical pink. Both outfits had very low-cut tops that displayed their twice-augmented D-cup breasts perfectly.

Vanessa's skirt was slit high on the thigh, something that she had first experienced with her brides-maid gown, and had subsequently begun to love. All of her skirts were now slit, exposing the tops of her stockings as they ended and her bleached skin began. On this day, she wore her favorite platform-heeled sandals with elaborate lacing up to her knees and lovely dangling earrings.



Her little sister's legs were encased in shiny pink

PVC boots with thick platform soles and spikey five-inch heels, her lovely legs in pink mesh stockings that ended just shy of her micro-short skirt. Large pink hoops hanging from her ear-lobes finished the look.

Both girls had spent their usual hour applying their faces that morning. They were never to be seen without their makeup ... heavy foundation, bold whorish blush, long feathery fake lashes (now permanently attached) fluttering

around heavily lined eyes.

Their lips, permanently pouting thanks to the cosmetic surgeon's collagen injections, were thickly coated in their base colors of pink and purple lipstick.



"My lovely girls," Lucinda smiled at the former McBride boys, "and my loving friends," she smiled next at the two Carls, "I'd like you to meet my newest domestic servant..." She paused and smiled turning her head from side to side, "Deidra."

Lucinda stepped aside to that Derrick could catch a glimpse of himself for the first time since his surgery. The former macho millionaire gasped loudly as scanned his newly modified reflection for the first time.

Dressed in a brief black French-maid's uniform with pink bustier, apron and frilly trim, Derrick was astounded at his new reflection. His low-cut top, revealed new breasts, only a modest C-cup, for now, but appropriate for his station in life.

A servant.

His long legs were encased in mesh hose, and his feet were 'locked' into dainty high heels with pretty pink padlocks that only his 'mistress' could open. His arms were covered from just above his elbows to the tips of his fingers with pink gloves.

Around his neck, a ruffled black and pink choker, with a dangling pink pendant. His skin had been blanched to a near-white ... as his former sons had also recently been.

With his pale foundation blended perfectly below his chin, his complexion from head to toe, wasn't just 'white', it was ghostly. His hair was pulled back and held in place with pink hairband, a few stray curls dangling softly at either side of his face, framing it perfectly.

His lips were plump and red, and his eyes, dark and mysterious.

He realized at that moment, that there would be no returning to Derrick after today. Lucinda, his wife intended to punish him for his dealings for the remainder of their lives, and he had better just learn to accept it.

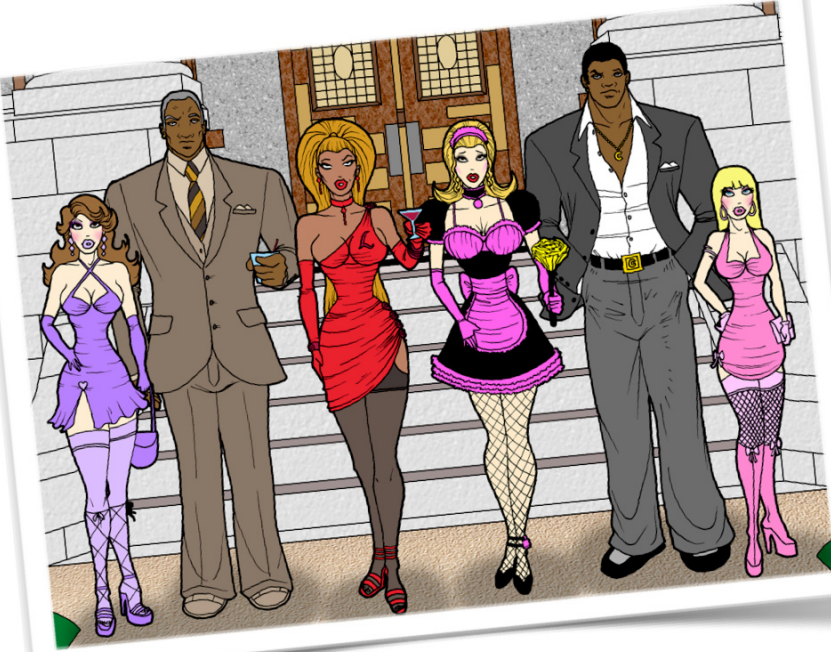
"Well? Lucinda asked eagerly, "What do you think?"

Deidra sighed as she realized she had been the very last McBride ... groom. The irony of the thought made her chuckle slightly, McBride Groom. *Ha, that's funny.*

"What's so funny?" Lucinda inquired.

Deidra's smirk quickly disappeared and her look of shock and surprise returned, "Nothing Ma'am," she said, "Nothing at all."





The End





Next in The Stepmother Series: Little Miss-ter Popular



Leon Christie is an average teenage loner. He doesn't have many friends, and spends most of his time alone ... and he's just fine with that.

Leon also has a beautiful blonde bombshell in his life – his Stepmom, Gina. She's not satisfied with having an introverted son, and knows Leon can be more than just a shy wallflower. She's so confident of it in fact, that she convinces Leon's Mother and Father to enroll their son in a program called the 'Confidence Club.'

The Confidence Club is something Gina started at the high school where she teaches. There, using techniques that some may consider less-than-orthodox, she's helped dozens of students go from being nerdy, geeky losers to being some of the most popular, attractive and social students in the school.

One tiny, little, teeny-weenie detail she may not have mentioned to them, however ... The program has only ever been used on girls. But what could go wrong, really? And even if her Stepson did become a little bit feminine in the process ... That's not the end of the world. As long as he becomes 'Little Miss-ter Popular' – who cares?

Little Miss-ter Popular, by James J. Craft

Superbly illustrated by rocketdave

Titles by Sick Puppy Press

Sick Puppy Comics

Making Friends

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

The Pet Sitter

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

A Curious Curse

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

Teens Transformed

She Made Me Into My Sister

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

Gone Girly for Good

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

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

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

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

I, Candy

"Sissy Sweets" by James J. Craft, illustrations by rocketdave. 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

Stories of the Supernatural**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**Sisters for the Summer**

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