



The cold war
Written and illustrated
by ds1000



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How far would you be willing to go to prove a point? How much of yourself would you be willing to sacrifice?

For Ben Quinn, who had already lived through his fair share of tragedies growing up, the opportunity to put his step-sister, Irina, in her place and make a little money in the process is just too good to turn down.

But after agreeing to the unusual challenge, Ben soon realises, that perhaps he has bitten off more than he can chew, as proving his point, will require allowing himself to be feminised beyond recognition.

Will Ben learn to accept his new self? what will he do when his best friend see his new look? And what will happen when his life accidentally gets entangled with a mysterious Russian man looking to settle a score. Read on to find out.

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23 images

Chapter 1 – Infiltration

Benjamin Quinn exited Central Park, walked along the sidewalk past the American museum of natural history, before turning up west 81st street.

The weather was definitely starting to turn as the days were becoming shorter and the leaves on the trees were starting to change colour. Feeling the chill from a gust of wind, Ben pulled the hood of his favourite hoodie over his head and turned his music up a notch to drown out the noise of the busy city around him. He would soon be home after another boring shift, at the pretzel stand, not exactly his dream job, but it didn't need to be, it was only temporary, just until he could save up enough money to start a new life.

He hadn't always lived in New York City; he had actually grown up in a small town in Nebraska. He had fond memories of growing up there, with a group of close friends, he did everything with, and a loving family, even if his father, a military man, was away for long stretches of time.

Ben had lived a typical if not remarkable life up until he was twelve years old but coming home, from a normal day at school one day, he was unaware that the first of three major events in his young life was waiting for him beyond the front porch of his three-bedroom country home.

He had entered the house to find it empty, which was odd, as with his mother, being a housewife, was usually there to greet him by the door. She hadn't mentioned that she would be going out that day, and as Ben looked around the dark interior of the house, he felt a little apprehensive.

After yelling for his mom a few times, and receiving no reply, he'd walked into the kitchen to find a note lying on the table, the life-changing bit of paper, with its words that would be forever etched in his mind. She had left, without any warnings or goodbyes, she had just gone. The note explained how she couldn't waste her life any longer and how she needed to go out and do something for herself. Ben never heard or saw her again, and the resulting fallout turned his world upside down.

His father took the news particularly badly, usually a cheerful, positive man, he became cold and reserved, barely speaking and seemingly incapable of looking after himself never mind his son. Ben had spent the next two years of his life living with his father's sister, Aunt Nancy, which wasn't a terrible experience, but with Ben missing how things used to be, blaming his mother for ruining everything, he made a vow to himself to always be on his guard when trusting a woman.

The second big change in his life came just before his fifteenth birthday, when his father, out of the blue, announced he was getting re-married. He had met a woman online, from Russia of all places, and having applied for and been granted a 90 day marriage visa, his bride to be, would be arriving within a few days accompanied by her daughter Irina.

The day Elena Volkova entered his life, was another memory that Ben would never forget, having been told to put on his best outfit, which in his case, meant his uncomfortable and slightly too small suit, he wore to church each Sunday, he remembered standing on the front porch, looking on in awe, as a tall leggy blonde, struggled to exit his father white SUV, without showing the world her panties, in the incredibly short skirt that hugged her voluptuous backside like a glove.



From the moment she opened her mouth, Ben knew the two of them wouldn't get along. He could see why his father liked her, she was stunningly beautiful, her hair and makeup were immaculate, and she was dressed like a movie star, a stark contrast to the casual and quite drab clothing the women around his area normally wore.

Ben smiled as she approached on her tall over the knee boots, trying to be friendly, but the response he got to his, "hello I'm Ben, welcome to America", set the tone for their whole relationship, as Elena wasn't one for pleasantries, "Yes, Bun", she had said in her thick Russian accent, "Bags are in car, you get".

Surprised by the command, Ben looked over at his father for guidance, who had now exited the car along with Elena's daughter Irina. Ben's shocked face was met with an angry scowl from his father, who told him to get his lazy ass off the porch and help his new mother with her bags, all eight of them. With the arrival of the two Russian women, Ben now found himself back in his family home, haunted by the memories of all the happy times with his mother, as he tried to adjust to the two bossy new women, who were quickly taking over the place.

It soon became apparent, that Elena and her daughter Irina, were not used to country living, complaining about everything and generally a complete pain in the backside to live with. So, it didn't come as much of a surprise, when Elena started saying she wanted to move to a city, but what was a surprise was when his father agreed. You see, Elena Volkova was a rich woman, used

to all the luxuries in life, money was no obstacle for her, but the one thing she couldn't buy was an American education for her daughter.

So, that's how Ben, a country boy, having never left Nebraska before, found himself on a metal bird for the first time, where, in just a few short hours, transported him halfway across the country to the big apple, New York City, an alien world of high rise buildings, polluted air, and all the hustle and bustle that came with city life.

At first, Ben found it extremely difficult to adjust to his new way of life, having nothing in common with the other kids at his school, who all seemed so much more street smart and mature. But slowly, after making a fool of himself on more than a few occasions, he started to get to grips with how things work, and although he was never going to be the most popular kid in school, he had managed to make one or two close friends.

He had barely acclimatised to his new surroundings when the third major change in his life occurred, and possibly the most devastating. He arrived home from school one day to be told that his father had been killed while on active duty in the middle east, leaving him alone in a strange city, with two foreign women he found it impossible to connect with.

Three years on, Ben was living, what most people would consider a dream life, he was in one of the most desirable cities to live on the planet and went home each day to a multimillion-dollar apartment on the upper west side of Manhattan, but the problem was, he felt like an unwelcome guest in his own home and had almost nothing in common with the snooty rich kids that lived around him.

Approaching the entrance to the apartment building, Ben nodded towards the doorman, after seeing him mouthing some words, drowned out by the loud music in his ears. He took the elevator up to the sixteenth floor, and after taking a deep breath, he placed his key in the lock and went inside.

Elena, who was sat on the sofa, turned as he entered, her face devoid of emotion, and after confirmed who he was with a nod, she quickly turned back towards the television without any form of greeting. Ben was used to the cold welcome, in a way, feeling relieved that she hadn't wanted to speak to him, as all she ever did was moan and complain.

He set off down the hallway, towards his room, where he planned to spend the rest of the evening, hopefully undisturbed. But those plans went out the window as he pushed open the door to find his beautiful but bitchy stepsister, Irina, going through his things.

"What are you doing in here? Get out", Ben yelled angrily.

The girl turned, as Ben felt a mixture of anger and arousal as her perfect breasts bounced slowly up and down, he couldn't help but feel attracted to the girl, even if she did always treated him like dirt, "My tablet is broken, so I'm borrowing yours", Irina stated, making it clear she wasn't asking.

Ben looked down to see his tablet, clutched in her hands, just below her distracting cleavage, it was his only possession of any value, something he had saved up to buy, and his main source of entertainment as he spent the evenings alone in his room "you're not taking that, it's mine, I need it", Ben replied sternly.

"You'll get it back", Irina replied, "God, you are so selfish, Benny".

"Ha, me selfish!", Ben snorted, "you have a room full of the expensive items and designer clothes, you have a weekly allowance, more than I get in a year, and you're calling me selfish"?

"Yes, you live here for free, my mother even gives you money to spend", Irina shot back, "you should be grateful, if she wasn't such a compassionate woman, you would be out on the street".

"Compassionate is not the word I would use", Ben replied, "and that money you talk about is 20 dollars a week" do you realise how expensive this area is to live in, what the hell can I do with 20 dollars a week in this neighbourhood"?

“You see, selfish”, Irina spat, as she started walking towards the exit.

With her mind occupied by some reality show about soccer moms from Ohio, Elena Volkova was trying to relax after a busy afternoon of shopping. As a cultured woman from an illustrious family back in the motherland, in her mind, she was living the life she deserved and having gone through all the trouble to secure a green card, she was now enjoying all the benefits New York city had to offer, which meant lunches with her girlfriends, shopping trips, and attending important events hosted by some of the most powerful people in the country.

To anyone who didn't know her, she seemed like your typical lazy, rich airhead, only concerned with her appearance and what others thought of her. But Elena Volkova was anything but lazy, she was cunning, resourceful, and always got what she wanted. In a very short time, she had worked hard to build up a network of influential people and had even started a company to help other Russian women like her, enter the United States.

Taking a sip of her Bloody mary, she almost spilt it down her top as an ear-piercing scream filled the spacious apartment, making her almost jump out of her skin. She turned towards the doorway just as her pride and joy, her reason for her being, and the person she would do anything for, ran into the room, clutching her hand, almost in tears.



“What happened, baby? Are you ok”? Elena asked her daughter in their native Russian dialect.

“He attacked me”, Irina replied angrily, “look he broke my nail”.

Elena stood up quickly and rushed over to console her daughter, seeing the large crack through the centre of one of her long acrylic nails, and knowing how painful it must feel, “Bun”, she screamed at the top of her voice, “you come here, now”.

The hair on Ben’s arms stood up as the voice of wicked witch of the East, as he called her, carried through to his bedroom, as he looked down at the cracked screen of his tablet that Irina had just dropped to the ground after he had unsuccessfully tried to take it from her. Tossing the broken tablet on his bed, he marched off towards the living room, angry and ready for a fight.

Entering the room, he found Irina, sat on the sofa, glaring at him, hugging her mother tightly.

“Bun, why you injure your sister”? Elena asked in a serious tone.

“I didn’t, I mean, I didn’t mean to”, Ben stated, “she was going to take my tablet”.

“Tablet”, Elena said loudly, “you attack sister for worthless computer”?

Ben was now shaking with anger, “it’s not worthless, I use it to talk to my friends, it’s important to me”.

“You too angry, Bun, you need treat sister with respect, computer replaceable, Irina not”, Elena answered shaking her head.

“You keep calling her my sister like I’m actually part of this family, but you don’t treat us the same, you give her everything, and I get nothing, I don’t even have enough money to fix my tablet, which is now broken, not that you would care”, Ben said angrily.

Elena screwed up her face and narrowed her brow, “you are family, I give place to live, I give food, I give money”.

Ben couldn’t tell if she was being sincere, “what? 20 bucks, a week? when she gets thousands, how is that fair”? He whined like a little baby.

Elena looked over at her daughter before looking back at Ben, “Irina is girl, she need money to do girl thing, she need look pretty to attract husband and be presentable to attract client to company”.

Ben threw his arms in the air, “She works like two or three days a week, and probably does nothing even when she is there, a trained monkey could do her job”.

“Bun, calm yourself, remember who you talk to”, Elena replied, raising her voice slightly.

“You think my life is easy”? Irina said joining the conversation, “you should try it sometime”?

“What? get an endless supply of money to maintain your slutty image and hang out with your idiot friends, sure sounds real hard”.

He knew he had struck a nerve; he could see the rage behind her eyes. He also knew his chances of coming out of this conversation on top were slim to none, but at least he had got in one good shot.

Irina turned to her mother and started speaking in Russian. Ben tried to listen to what they were saying but even after living with these women for years, his Russian only extended to a few choice words.

Finishing their conversation, the two women turned to face him, now smiling broadly, which was a rarity in itself and made Ben feel uneasy as he looked down nervously.



“Do you know how much Mamulya, gives me each week, Benny”? Irina asked now back to her normal calm and collected self.

“Erm... a lot”, Ben shot back.

“Ten thousand dollars”, she stated bluntly, “sometimes more, if I really need to buy something for an event”.

Ben’s mouth dropped open in surprise, he knew she received a hefty sum, but ten thousand dollars, when he was making seven bucks an hour, freezing his ass off, selling pretzels in a stupid embarrassing hat.

“You want same”? Elena asked, staring up at him, “You want do what Irina do? I pay you same”.

Ben just stared at her, was she being serious? Was she really offering him ten thousand dollars a month? “You mean work in your company”? He asked trying to work out what she meant.

“Yes, you work in company, you go shopping, you look pretty, everything Irina do, you do”, Elena replied calmly.

Ben didn’t know how to answer, it sounded too good to be true, with that amount of money, he could save up enough to move out and start over. He also knew there had to be a catch, and the "look pretty" comment made him wonder if these women were planning to humiliate him in some way, but he was used to humiliation, having gone through high school surrounded by rich kids who shunned him for being poor, he could cope with a little humiliation if it led to a better life.

“Ten thousand a month”? He asked to confirm, “you’re serious”?

“Deadly”, Irina replied, as the smile on her face grew wider, "but you have to do everything that I do, no exceptions”.

“Ok”, Ben said nodding his head, “I’m in”.

Chapter 2 The repair job

As her alarm rang out, awakening her from her slumber, Irina Volkova, rolled over on her side and smiled. She wasn't a fan of waking up early, even if she was used to it but today was different, with her mother giving her the next few days off work, she was going to have a lot of fun toying with her stepbrother.

Stepping out of bed, she looked around her spacious room, full of expensive items and designer clothes, a stark contrast to the room she had grown up in, back in Moscow. Life had been different back then, and although her family had always been well off, wearing designer clothes to show off one's wealth wasn't a common thing.

From a young age, Irina had always been fascinated with American culture, as a child, she watched every American movie and TV show she could get her hands on, studying the way the characters behaved and spoke, idolizing the girls from the show Gossip girl, in particular, spending hours in front of the mirror trying to imitate their mannerisms and accent.

Arriving in America, she had immersed herself in the culture and fell in love with the freedom that living in America offered, but that didn't mean she always fitted in, she knew that she would always be a little different, coming across a little blunt at times, some people would even call her unfriendly, but it just wasn't in her nature to smile and continually say thank you for no reason, she was happy with who she was and always did what made her happy if people didn't like it, then to hell with them.

After showering, she got dressed in a casual outfit, and applied a light coating of makeup before it was time to get to work, "today, is going to be so much fun", she thought to herself as she skipped happily towards her stepbrother's room. For years she'd had to put up with Ben's snide comments about the way she dressed and behaved, and today it was time for a little payback.

She entered the dark pit, that her stepbrother called his room as the stench of rotting food and stinking clothes filling her nostrils making her want to throw up. Carefully avoiding the minefield of takeout boxes and discarded clothing, she made her way towards the window, wherein one swift action, she whipped open the curtains, allowing the bright morning sun to bathe the room in light.

"Wakey, wakey", she yelled, as Ben's eyes shot open, the startled look on his face bringing a smile to her face.

"What the hell, Irina"? A groggy Ben asked, "What time is it"?

"Seven am, time to get up", She announced.

Ben rubbed his eyes, "seven am? Why the hell are you waking me up at seven am"?

Irina glared at him, "have you forgotten already, from now on, you do as I do, which means you wake up when I do, I let you sleep in today, while I got ready, but from now on you need to set your alarm for 6.30 each morning".

She could see his mind racing trying to process her words, expecting him to start complaining or arguing but to her surprise, he just lifted himself up into a sitting position on the edge of the bed, "ok, I'm up, what do I need to do"? he asked yawning.

"Exercise, I always start the day with a good workout, so find a pair of shorts and meet me in the gym in 5 minutes", she announced before turning and walking out of the room.

A few minutes later, having laid down two yoga mats in the room, she called the gym, which in reality was a multipurpose room, her mother used to store things, Irina watched as Ben staggered into the room.

She rolled her eyes, seeing him still wearing the same dirty T-shirt he had slept in, “we’ll have to get him some gym clothes later, something more appropriate”, she thought to herself.

“Ok, this mat is yours”, Irina announced, pointing to her left, “I’ll go easy on you today, we’ll ease you in and stretch those muscles a little”, she said as she picked up a remote and turned on an aerobics video presented by a muscular woman in a leotard.

30 minutes later, as she stopped the video, she looked over at the sweaty mess to her left, Ben was clearly not used to regular exercise and the light workout had left him exhausted.

“Ok, the workout is over”, Irina announced, “time to shower, don’t take too long and when you’re done, meet me in my bedroom”.

She watched as Ben nodded his head, heaved himself up on to his feet, left the room the room without uttering a word, “hmm, surprising”, she thought to herself, “he hasn’t complained once, let’s see how long that lasts”.

As Ben exited the shower, wrapping a towel around his lower body, he felt his leg muscles ache, “wow, who knew stretching, could be so tiring”, he thought to himself, “but on the bright side, I guess it won’t hurt to get a little fitter”.

Stepping out of the bathroom, He was determined to stay positive and put up with whatever the two Russian women could throw at him, well, for at least a month anyway as by that time if things were getting out of control, he could just quit ten grand better off.

As he knocked gently on Irina’s door, stepping inside upon hearing her shout to come in, his eyes were instantly drawn to a small white pile of clothes folded up neatly on the bed. He knew they were for him, and he also knew that putting them on, was going to be the first of many instances where he would have to swallow his pride over the coming month.

“Your clothes are on the bed, put them on”, Irina commanded.

“Are we going outside”? Ben asked stepping closer to the tiny pile of clothes and getting nervous as noticed a pair of black panties with the label on, slightly off to the side.

“Of course, I go out every day, I ’m far too busy to sit around the house all day like you, I have errands to run”, Irina replied sternly.

“Hey, I work too, you know, in fact, I have a shift later today”, Ben said defending himself.

Irina looked surprised, “What! on that pretzel stand? No, you have a new job now, mimicking me, and it pays a lot more I’m sure”.

Thinking he may have a chance of getting out of a day out with Irina, dressed in the girly clothes, folded up on the bed, Ben ran with it, “typical”, he said, “I don’t know if you know this, but here in America, we have something called honour, I can’t just quit without warning, I have to give Mr Davidson at least a two weeks’ notice”, it’s the law”.

Feeling happy with his reply, Ben couldn’t help but smile, he didn’t know if it actually was the law to quit without giving notice, but what he did know, was that Irina didn’t know either.

“What time is your shift”? Irina asked looking like she was trying to hold back her anger.

“Yes, got her”, Ben thought, feeling ever so pleased with himself, “I start midday”.

“Ok, this is not a problem, I’ll make sure you are there by midday”, Irina stated, “now get dressed, this means we have no time to waste”.

Ben sighed, knowing his plan had failed and that there was now no way out of wearing the girly clothes.

With no reason to delay the inevitable, he walked over towards the bed, "Are you going to watch"? He asked, "can I have a little privacy, please"?

"I will stay in case you need any help, but I will turn around", Irina replied", trust me, I have no desire to see what you have under that towel".

Ben watched as she turned her back before turning his attention to the pile of clothes. At arm's length, he picked up the black panties between his thumb and index finger, noticing the soft delicate material and shuddered at the thought of wearing them.

"I don't hear anything, what are you doing"? Irina's voice boomed from behind him, making him jump a little.

"Geez, give me a break I'm doing it", he moaned, quickly dropping his towel, and stepping into the silky material, wanting to get it over with as quickly as possible.

Snapping the band around his waist, he felt the tags digging into his skin, and with one swift movement, he reached down and ripped them off as he caught a glimpse of himself in Irina's full-length mirror.

The sight of him stood there, in the middle of his step-sister room, wearing just a pair of bright white panties, which looked completely out of place against his hairy body, Ben suddenly felt really awkward and embarrassed.

Looking back over towards the bed, he quickly snatched up the next item of clothing, unfolding it to find a small white T-shirt. Without a moment of pause, he placed his arms through the short armholes and pulled it down over his head only to find his lower belly completely exposed as the T-shirt was clearly not in his size.

"Can I turn around, yet"? Irina asked impatiently.

"Not, yet", Ben replied flustered, "give me a minute". With no time to waste, he quickly grabbed the last item of clothing, finding it to be a stretchy pair of white jeans or where they leggings, he couldn't tell, but with no desire to examine them any further, he sat his pantied backside down on the bed and forced his legs through the tight restrictive leg holes before wiggling around, struggling to pull the tight material into position.

By the time he managed to fasten the little belt around his waist, Ben was out of breath and incredibly uncomfortable, especially as he looked down at his outfit to see the word, "queen", written on his right thigh.

Irina turned around and giggled upon, seeing him, "a little small perhaps, she announced, "but don't worry, after a few weeks of exercise and following my diet, you will fit those clothes much better".

"Diet!" Ben repeated looking up, "what diet"?

Irina smiled, "I thought, you would get it by now, little Benny, you do as I do, you go where I go, you dress as I dress, you eat what I eat, and I have a very specific diet, I only eat between midday and 6 pm, and never any animal products, I am a strict vegan, and now you are too".

Ben didn't like the sound of his new diet one bit, he loved eating junk food and especially meat, but with so much money on offer, he reasoned that he could cope with it for a month, "no problem", he replied, "I'll eat what you eat".

"Good, well we better get going then, but first we need to do something about that", Irina said, pointing to the obvious bulge in the front of his tight white pants.

A short while later, Ben found himself stood by the front door, feeling extremely uncomfortable, his legs compressed in his tight white pants, his exposed ankles, which Irina had decided needed to be quickly shaved up to the knee, and his crushed testicles, which had been forced up inside his body into a cavity, he didn't even know existed.

Now wearing Irina's pink puffer jacket, that exposed his midriff, and a pair of her clumpy platform sneakers, that made his feet feel twice their normal weight, Ben knew he looked ridiculous and would draw more than a few stares once out in the city, but as the two Russian women looked over at him, examining his appearance and making comments, he tried to keep his head held high, one thought running through his head, "ten thousand dollars, you can do this, ten thousand dollars", he told himself, over and over again.



Stepping out of the apartment building, Ben shivered as he felt a gust of wind dance around his freshly shaved ankles. Grabbing his puffy pink coat with both hands, he tugged down on the bottom in vain, in the hope of making it stretch enough to cover his exposed belly.

“Stop pulling on my coat, you’ll rip it”, Irina announced, standing to his right, wearing a similar outfit to his.

“This jacket is too small, and aren’t your ankles cold? Why didn’t you wear a pair of socks”? Ben asked frustrated.

“It’s called fashion, socks don’t go with an outfit like this, you’ll get used to it, just don’t think about it”, she announced striding on towards the street.

“Good morning, err... ladies”, Clive the doorman announced, a huge smile appearing on his face as he recognised the pair.

“Good morning Clive”, Irina announced, as Ben ducked his head and kept on moving.

That encounter was the first of many strange looks, he received that day, but Ben was determined not to let it get to him, after all, they were just clothes and he had seen people dressed stranger than him, this was New York City, a melting pot of weird and eccentric individuals from all walks of life.

After a silent cab ride into lower Manhattan, Ben exited the yellow taxi and discovered the location of their first stop of the day. Without hesitation, Irina led the way, pushing open the door causing the attached bell to ring out loudly, announcing their presence.

As he nervously stepped inside, Ben could feel the whole room staring right at him, from the woman at the front desk to the rows of women sat having their nails done, they all seemed intrigued by the boy in the pink coat and tight leggings who had just walked in the door. Time seemed to slow down as Ben surveyed the room, trying not to make eye contact with anyone but also trying not to look as frightened as he felt.

“Good morning Irina”, the woman at the front desk said in a cheerful voice, her eyes firmly fixed on Ben in his feminine outfit and trying to decide what to make of him. “I didn’t know you were coming in today, weren’t you just in a few days ago”?

“Hi Janice, yes, but I had a little accident, do you think you can fit me in”? Irina asked showing Janice her cracked nail.

“Ouch, that looks painful”, Janice said taking her eyes off of Ben for a second and looking at Irina’s outstretched hand, “of course, doll, we can sort that out for you, no problem”.

“Thank you”, Irina replied, “and one more thing, I brought my brother Ben along with me today, as he’s always wanted to see what a full set of acrylics feel like, do you think you can fit him in too”?

Janice’s eyes shot back towards Ben as her mouth fell open slightly, “Your brother? He wants acrylic nail tips”? She asked to confirm that she had heard correctly.

“Yes, just do them exactly like mine”, Irina replied, like it was something completely normal, “that’s not a problem is it”?

Janice looked back at Irina and composed herself, “no... no problem at all, as long as you’re paying, we can do his nails anyway he wants”.

“Great”, Irina replied, looking around at Ben who had finally lowered his head, the embarrassment of the situation finally getting to him, “let’s do a pedicure too, while we’re here, you guys give the most relaxing foot massages”.

It was an awkward experience at best, as Ben sat having his nails filed and his cuticles trimmed adjacent to Irina. The woman doing his nails, kept looking at him oddly, obviously not sure what to make of him, barely uttering a word as she worked on his outstretched hands.

It was a completely opposite scene on the seat next to him, as Irina chatted away with her manicurist, who she obviously knew well, talking about some new bar that had just opened up in Greenwich Village. But the silence suited Ben just fine, as he wasn't in the mood for chit chat, he just watched on fascinated as the skilled manicurist worked at lightning speed, transforming his shortly clipped nails, into something a lot more glamorous.

An hour later, Ben was stood back by the front desk, holding his hands in front of him, transfixed on his new claws. They didn't seem real, as he tried to get his mind to accept that, it was in fact his feminine looking hands, sprouting ten shiny long acrylic nails, that he was looking at.

He wiggled his fingers and watched as the light bounced off the glossy surface, of what he had been informed, was called a classic square tip French manicure.

As he moved his hands back and forth slightly, he winced, noticing how feminine his hands now looked, but having been told not to put them in his pockets, he was forced to hold them out in the open for all to admire, the new inch long extensions keeping his fingers slightly apart and making him exaggerate his hand movements in a swishy manner.

"So, what do they feel like"? The receptionist asked.

"Ben", Irina shouted, "Ben, Janice asked you a question".

Ben quickly looked up, unaware of what was happening around him "err... sorry... what"?

Janice laughed, "don't worry about it, cutie, "I just asked how your new nails feel, that's what you wanted, right? To see how they feel"?

"Err... yeah, right", Ben stuttered.

"So, what's the verdict"? Janice added wanting an answer.

"Err... different I guess", he said feeling his cheeks turn red.

"Well, I bet, getting nails that long for the first time, will take some getting used to, just remember to be careful with them, you don't want to break one, just ask your sister, she knows how painful it can be", Janice said with a smile.

"Err... yeah, I'll be careful", Ben replied, "looking over at Irina, who was nodding her head.

Leaving the salon, Irina hailed a cab, as Ben who had been trying to hide his new manicure unsuccessfully, gladly jumped, "where to"? the cabbie asked clicking on the meter.

"5th and 74th street", Irina announced while fastening her seatbelt.

"You got it", the cabbie announced, as Ben looked over at Irina confused.

"5th Avenue, have you forgotten? I have to work soon, I need to get home and change, remove these nails", Ben whispered to avoid the Cab driver hearing who was clearly trying to eavesdrop on their conversation.

Irina let out a loud ha, "don't worry, you still have plenty of time before work, but I hate to break it to you, those nails are not coming off without a trip back to the nail salon, and as for your clothes, you wear what I wear from now on, remember? No exceptions".

Ben looked shocked as he quickly looked down at his ridiculously long nails, "but... I can't work like this, I couldn't even open the door to the salon, how am I supposed to serve people their pretzels"?

"Not my problem", Irina announced, "you were the one who wanted to live like me, you are the one who said my life was easy, so stop complaining and prove your point".

Ben sighed, knowing he only had himself to blame for his current predicament, if he had only kept his mouth shut, and just called Mr Davidson at the pretzel stand and told him he was quitting, he

wouldn't have to go through the embarrassment of standing in Central park dressed like a complete fairy, "So, where are we going"? Ben asked miserably.

"Shopping, of course", Irina replied cheerfully, "now that you're living my life, you'll soon see, that there is always time for a quick shopping trip. We can walk about and do a little window shopping on 5th Avenue and with it being right next to Central Park, I figured you could just walk to work after, perfect, right"?

Ben shook his head and turned to look out of the window, "yeah, just perfect", he thought to himself as he saw the image of his miserable-looking face above a big pink girly coat, reflected back at him in the window.

Later in the park, it was a disastrous shift on the pretzel stand, Ben had felt humiliated standing out in the open with his portable cart as people stared and complimented him on his nails. He tried to rise above it, thanking them, but having dropped more product on the floor than he had actually sold, Mr Davidson was not going to be happy.

It was almost impossible to control his hands, now tipped with his flashy new nails, what had previously been an easy job, he could do without thinking, had become an elaborate puzzle, which required inventive solutions to perform simple tasks. For example, to open containers and pick things up he now had to twist and bend his hands in unnatural ways, and to pick up certain things he now had to use two straws like chopsticks, as the customers watched him fumble about in a comical fashion.

"Two, pretzels, please", came a woman's voice snapping Ben out of his thoughts.

"Err... sure", he replied, looking up to see a mother with her young daughter.

"Mommy, that man has nails like a girl", the young girl announced loudly.

"Now don't be rude, Katie", the mother quickly replied, "it's not for us to judge how other people want to live their lives".

The young girl looked up, "sorry, mister, your nails are really pretty", she announced with a big toothy grin.

Ben smiled, "thank you", he replied, wondering how much more he could take as the humiliation of the situation was becoming unbearable. But things were about to get much worse for the young, feminized man as after passing the order to the woman and receiving a 10 dollar bill, he delved into his money pouch to find her some change and snagged one of his nails on the side of the bag.

"Owww", he screamed, "son of a bitch".

"Oh my", announced the mother, "you need to watch your language, young man, you keep the change, come on Katie we're leaving".

The woman quickly ushered her young daughter away dragging her by the arm as Ben quickly pulled his hands up to inspect his cursed nails, his right index finger was throbbing with pain and felt as though he had ripped his nail clean off.

Examining it further he found a small crack running across the centre, "shit, I broke one", he thought to himself, "I can't believe it hurts, this much, I guess I should have shown Irina a little more sympathy yesterday, perhaps this month is going to be a lot tougher than I thought after all".



Chapter 3 – In over his head

After tossing and turning all night, the sound of the alarm on his phone ringing out felt like a jackhammer to Ben's brain. Reaching over to silence the piercing sound, Ben fumbled with his phone, knocking it to the floor and feeling a sharp pain in his cracked nail, letting out a small groan as the events of the previous day came rushing back to him.

Reaching down to pick up his phone, he struggled to slide his finger across the screen to switch off the infuriating alarm. Using his phone had now become a tedious task, he needed to position his hands to the side, bend his fingers upwards as far as they could go, and carefully place the tip of his finger on the screen in order for the touchscreen to register his touch.

Closing his hands into a limp fist, he carefully rubbed the sleep from his eyes with his knuckle as the door to his room opened and Irina popped her head through the opening, "ah, good, you're awake", she said, "get dressed and meet me in the gym in five minutes".

Ben nodded his head and watched her disappear, looking down at the time on his phone, 6.33 am, "why on earth would anyone willingly chose to wake up at this time", he thought to himself, wanting nothing more than to lay back down and rest his tired eyes.

Throwing on a pair of shorts, he lumbered over to the bathroom, and after emptying his bladder, he joined Irina in the gym. The morning exercise routine, seemed much more difficult that morning compared to the previous day, his muscles ached, and his stomach felt completely empty, having only eaten a few pretzels in the last 24 hours. But not wanting to show weakness and admit he couldn't compete with his stepsister, Ben went through the motions, stretching and moving his body in time with the instructor on the video, all the while, dreading what the day ahead had in store for him.

"Well done", Irina announced switching off the video, "you're already becoming more flexible, how do you feel"?

Ben couldn't help but smile at the compliment even if he didn't feel particularly happy having to do a full exercise routine first thing in the morning, "hungry and tired", he replied looking at Irina who seemed to be in a good mood that morning.

"Yeah, that's understandable", Irina replied, "your body needs time to adjust, but it won't take long to get used to your new routine, you'll see. And besides, we've got nothing too strenuous planned for today, we'll eat brunch, do a little light shopping but first, we'll head back to the nail salon and fix that nail of yours".

Ben nodded his head, brunch sounded like a wonderful idea, and he was keen to stop the pain he received from his finger every time he tried to use his right hand, but light shopping, he had his doubts, he knew Irina well and knew full well what she considered light was probably going to be anything but.

"Ok, go and take a shower, I'll find us something to wear", Irina announced, "oh and seeing as we have more time today, I want you to shave your legs, armpits as well, you'll find an unopened pack of razors in the bathroom, do you need any help"?

Not liking the idea one bit but having already come to the conclusion, he would be asked to remove his body hair at some point, Ben didn't argue as he thought back to the previous evening. It was true what Irina had said, he would indeed have plenty of time that day, as he no longer needed to work on the pretzel stand.

Having finished his shift, the previous evening, he was approached by Mr Davidson, the owner of the pretzel stand, who didn't look happy. The woman who he had accidentally sworn in front of had made a complaint and when Mr Davidson saw the way he was dressed and the floor around the stand littered with dropped pretzels, he had fired him on the spot.

“No, I don’t need any help, I can manage”, Ben replied starting to walk towards the door.

“Ok, just take your time, you don’t want to cut yourself, meet me in my bedroom when you’re done”. Irina said as she watched him exit the room.

45 minutes later, Ben entered Irina’s room, his skin feeling all tingly and sensitive, he had successfully managed to remove all his body hair, without cutting himself, but the sensation of having hairless skin was a strange new experience. He had never been the hairiest of people, just a light fuzz that had covered his body, but without it, his body looked pale and thin even the touch of the towel wrapped around his waist now felt rough against his sensitive skin.

Stepped into the room, the thought of his hairless body was suddenly replaced with the feeling of worry as he eyed up a neatly folded pile of pink clothes on the bed and knew they were for him.

“There you are”, Irina said as he entered the room, “ok, your clothes are on the bed, get dressed”.

“Irina, do I really have to wear pink? Can’t you pick out something else”? Ben whined.

“No”, Irina announced in an authoritative voice, “It’s part of being a girl, being able to express your mood with the colour of your outfit, and today I’m in a pink mood”.

“But I’m not a girl”, Ben moaned, “you know I’ll look ridiculous”.

“Irina smiled, “Well, that’s your problem, try to change the way you think from now on, you need to think as I do, try to imagine yourself as a girl, and you won’t look ridiculous, you’ll look cute, especially when I finish with your hair and makeup”.

“Makeup! Hair!” Ben exclaimed in horror.

“Of course,”, Irina quickly shot back, “when do you ever see me out of the house without my hair and makeup done, I went easy on you yesterday, but today we do things properly, now get dressed and remember to tuck, when you’re done come over to my vanity and I’ll help you out for today, but eventually, you’ll have to learn how to do this stuff for yourself”.

Ben sighed, the day was already off to a bad start, could he really make it an entire month, it was only day two and he was already way out of his comfort zone, had he perhaps bitten off more than he could chew?

As Ben swung his legs out of the yellow cab, feeling the chill of the wind against his feet, he ducked his head slightly to stop his hair colliding with the top of the door frame, still not used to the extra height of the ponytail extension, Irina had attached after pulling back his hair.

Placing one foot on the sidewalk, he once again felt the unusual, angled position of his foot, inside his extremely girly pink wedge shoes, the ones he had tried to argue against wearing but having been told he could have a pair of stilettos instead if he wanted, he had quickly backed down and strapped into the clumpy wedges to his feet without further complaint.

Placing a long-nailed hand against the frame of the car door, Ben lifted himself onto his feet, closed the door and watched as the cab sped away, leaving him standing in the middle of lower Manhattan dressed in an embarrassing unicorn-themed, pink outfit, which he suspected was something Irina hadn’t worn since her early teens.

“Come on, let go”, Irina announced, striding on towards the entrance to the nail salon.

Ben watched as she confidently strode ahead on her much taller heels and more mature outfit, like him she was dressed entirely in pink, but unlike him, she looked trendy and stylish. For a moment, a stranger thought popped into his head as he felt a tinge of jealousy but quickly dismissed it as realised what he was thinking.

“Come on”, Irina shouted back from the entrance, getting impatience at being kept waiting.

Snapping out of his daze, Ben looked up at her unhappy face, “sorry, coming”, he announced as he started clomping his way towards the nail salon, his second visit within the last twenty-four

hours. At least this time he knew what to expect, but as his heart started to beat a little quicker in his chest, he knew knowing what to expect wasn't going to make the experience any more pleasurable.



“You’re back!”, Janice the receptionist announced as Ben and Irina enter through the front door of the nail salon, “love the new look, doll, very cute”, she added looking over at Ben and smiling.

Ben lowered his head and let Irina do the talking, “Hi Janice”, Irina announced, “yeah, Ben had a little accident and needs a patch up, can you fit him in? Ben show her your hand”.

Ben slowly stepped forward, the clip-clop sound of his pink wedge shoes, echoing throughout the small room as he raised up his right hand and tried to avoid eye contact.

“Ooh, yeah, that looks painful, I did say to be careful, right? But not to worry, cutie, we’ll get you fixed up right away, take a seat guys, I’ll see if Miki is free”.

Half an hour later, having had his acrylic tip removed, the nail beneath glued together and a new long acrylic nail fixed on top, Ben was glad to leave the nail salon. His finger felt much better having been patched up but having sat there aware of the other customers taking sneaky glances in his direction and hearing the staff compliment him on how feminine and cute he looked Ben felt as though he was about to have a breakdown.

“Can we get something to eat now? I’m starving”, Ben announced as the pair stepped out on to the street.

Irina took out her phone to check the time, “not yet”, she replied, “it’s only ten thirty, I told you, we only eat between twelve and six, it’s better that way, it’s what all the celebrities do, you burn fat all morning and then stopping at six to give your body time to digest everything before bed”.

“Does that really work”? Ben asked hearing his stomach growl.

“Yeah, look at me”, Irina replied opening her coat to show off her lean fit physique, “you’re just not used to it yet, give it a few more days and you won’t even feel hungry in the mornings”.

“Fine, can we at least, get a coffee or something and have a sit-down, preferable somewhere quiet with no people”? Ben asked.

“That we can do, but sit down? Irina asked surprised, “you’ve been sat on your backside for the last hour having your pretty nails repaired”.

“I know, but my legs are aching from all the exercise and these shoes aren’t helping, the muscles in the back of my legs feel like they are being stretched and my toes keep cramping up”, Ben moaned.

“Again, you just aren’t used to it, give it time”, Irina announced, “you were the one who said I had it easy, we can swap shoes if you like, those wedges look a lot more comfortable than what I’m wearing”.

Ben looked down at the pink ankle boots on Irina’s feet with their tall thin heels and platform sole, terrified the thought of wearing such a towering pair of heels, and finding it hard to comprehend how she wasn’t in more pain, “err... no, you’re alright, I’ll stick to these, you’re right, I just need more practice”, he quickly replied.

“Exactly, so let’s have less complaining, ok? You can be a real downer sometimes you know? There’s a coffee shop around the corner, but we aren’t going to waste the rest of the morning sat around and as to finding somewhere with no people, this is New York City Ben, good luck with that”.

A little later, sat in the backseat of a taxi once again, Ben clutched his iced blonde vanilla bean coconut latte awkwardly between his palms. It tasted terrible, not helped by the fact he had always hated the taste of coconut, but as Irina had informed him, it was low in calories and at the moment her go-to drink.

Watching the city pass by out of the window of the cab, Ben looked out upon the familiar streets that had once upon a time seemed so scary and intimidating, but a lot had changed in the last few years and New York City, somewhere along the line, had become to feel like home.

Letting out a yawn, he lifted his pink furry arm with its delicate manicured hand popping out of the end, automatically up towards his face and instantly felt silly again.

Looking down at his pink pants, embroidered with unicorns, pressed tightly together, the way Irina had told him to sit, he wondered how long until she made him wear a skirt. It was a worrying thought, but he knew it was inevitable, Irina wore skirts most days, and he was surprised she hadn't already tried to get him into one.

Looking across at his stepsister, Ben was met with a smile, "ok"? she asked.

Ben nodded and turned back to look out of the window feeling confused, most of the time, it seemed like Irina was doing her utmost to humiliate him, but at the same time, she was constantly checking to see if he was ok, and thinking back to his thought about the skirt, she could have made things much worse for him in the last few days, but she hadn't. did she actually care about him? Was she in her own way looking out for him? But if that was the case, why was he currently dressed like a prissy twelve-year-old princess? It just didn't make any sense.

With at least another hour to kill until he could finally eat, Ben didn't need to ask what the next activity would be, and as the cab pulled up outside a large shopping centre his suspicions became reality.

Stepping inside, Irina informed him that he needed to get some proper workout clothes and some new underwear. He had been wearing a few new pairs of hers, over the last few days, but now, having come to the end of her supply, she informed him, he would need his own, as although she didn't mind him wearing her clothes, now that he had removed, in her words, "all of his disgusting body hair", she just didn't feel comfortable with him wearing her underwear.

So, with Ben, mentally prepared for the humiliation ahead, they walked side by side through the busy shopping centre, only for a chance encounter momentarily change their plans.

"Good morning, girls, can I interest you in a little eyebrow threading today, it's half off for the next hour".

Ben looked over at the area set up in the centre of the floor, two empty chairs sat in wait, "half off!?" Irina repeated as a smile crossed her lips, "I could do with a little maintenance and my sister here is in dire need of some work, sure, let's do it".

Ben's head shot around to look at Irina, but appearing unmoved by his pleading eyes, he knew she had already made up her mind and kicking up a fuss would just make the whole ordeal even more embarrassing.

"Great, take a seat over there, miss", the woman said pointing to the far chair", my colleague will take care of you and I'll take care of your sister", she added knowing full well, that Ben was in fact a boy, but professional enough to ignore the fact.

Ben shuffled over slowly, looking around at the pictures of perfectly arched brows all around him, and got a familiar sinking feeling in his empty stomach.

"Jump on up, miss", the woman said to Ben, "is there any specific shape you want"?

"Make them look like mine", Irina announced from the adjacent chair.

The woman was taken aback by the comment but looking down at Ben, she saw no signs of protest, "ok, sit back and try to relax, it might sting a bit at first".

She was right about the stinging, as Ben looked up in horror at the woman, holding what looked like a bit of string, as she yanked the hairs from his forehead as a tear formed in the corner of his eye before rolling slowly down his cheek.

Irina was done first, of course, with only a few stray hairs needing to be removed, this gave her plenty of time to look around the little pop-up beauty station, where she came across a price list of other services they provided, “is your ear piercing half off too”? she asked.

“Yes, all services are half off at the moment”, the woman who had worked on Irina replied.

“Oh goody, I’ve been thinking about getting a third hole in each ear, can you do that right now”? Irina asked the woman.

“Of course, miss, sit back down in the chair and I’ll get the equipment”, the woman replied with a smile.

“oh, and I don’t want little sis, to feel left out”, Irina started, “she’s been talking about getting her first holes for ages but has just never got around to it, give her a hole in each ear too”.

With his whole brow area now hot and sore, Ben wanted to run for the hills at the announcement he was about to have his ears pierced, but like everything else he had been through in the last few days, he instead, took a deep breath and thought about the money awaiting him at the end of the month.

“Ok, time to get what we came for and then we’ll eat”, Irina said to a grumpy looking Ben as they exited the brow station.

Ben nodded, feeling a little shellshocked after the experience, feeling an unfamiliar weight dangling from each earlobe and feeling a warmth in his brow area, “I need to use the bathroom”, he announced seeing a sign.

“Ok, I’ll wait over there, don’t be too long”, Irina replied pointing, seeing a seating area where she could wait.

Desperate to see what damage had been done, Ben set off, trotting along the floor and his cumbersome wedge shoes, following the sign to the restrooms.

Upon entering, he went straight to the sink area, where he came face to face with what he had been dreading. His slightly messy but perfectly normal masculine brows had been butchered, they were now a shadow of their former selves, and what replaced them sent a shiver down his spine, two thin slightly angled lines, thinning out to a delicate thin point at the outer edges.

He shook his head, once again feeling the weight of his new earrings as he stared on in horror as he noticed the two large heart-shaped pink objects piercing through his earlobes.

It was hard to imagine how a few small changes could change his appearance so dramatically, making him look much younger and feminine, but with the evidence staring him right in his pretty face, he knew he would have to just suck it up and get on with things, “it’s too late to back out now”, he thought to himself, “I’m going to see out the month, no matter what”.

“Err... miss, I think you’re in the wrong bathroom, this is the men’s room”, came a man’s voice to his left.

Ben took a deep breath, “I am a man”, he muttered quietly to himself, still staring at his feminized image in the mirror, the reflection looking back at him, contradicting his words.



Chapter 04 – Assimilation

As Irina woke up the next morning and got ready for her workout, she couldn't help but feel surprised that Ben had lasted as long as he had. She had been convinced that after a trip to the nail salon, forcing him to deal with long acrylic nails, that he would have quit on the spot, especially given their length, but he hadn't, he had soldiered on and even gone to work.

Looking down at her own hands as she turned on the tap to splash some water on her face, she had to admit, nails this long were a little troublesome. Normally, she wouldn't have gotten extensions this long, but knowing Ben would have to do what she did, she had made an exception on this occasion, still annoyed after the altercation in the bedroom that had caused her to painfully break a nail.

Brushing her teeth, she thought back to the trip out the previous day. Ben had complained most of the day, but he had never once refused anything outright, even if she had gone out of her way to push him to the limit, in order to make him throw in the towel. Thinking back to the outfit, she had picked out for the trip, still made her chuckle a little. She had found it in the back of her closet having forgotten it even existed. An outfit she hadn't worn in years and one she would never dream of wearing out these days.

The look on his face had been priceless, as he had first laid eyes on the childish pink outfit, but to his credit, he had put it on, and no matter how many stares or comments he had received that day, he had remained calm and composed, she had to give him credit for that.

Leaving her room, she made the short walk up the hallway to see if he was awake. After knocking a few times and receiving no signs of life, Irina opened the door to find the room empty.

Finding her stepbrother somewhere other than his bed was definitely surprising as she wondered where he had gotten to. She set off to find him, first trying the living room, followed by the kitchen, before Irina received her second surprise of the day, as she entered the gym to find Ben waiting for her, having dressed himself in one of the new workout outfits, they had purchased the previous day, and stretching in preparation for their workout.

"What time do you call this"? Ben asked with a smile as he saw Irina enter the room.

Irina looked over at Ben in his tight black leotard, his legs encased in a pair of leggings with the top half covered up by a pink sarong wrap that matched the hairband tied around his head, "you seem in a better mood today", she replied, picking up her yoga mat and dragging it over, before placing it on the floor opposite him.

"Well, even though I'm not exactly loving all this, living like you stuff, I figured, being stressed out all the time isn't going to change anything, right"? Ben replied.

Irina found the comment intriguing and if truth be told, she didn't really believe him, but then again, if he was telling her he was ready to continue, who was she to argue.

One thing was for sure though, she had to respect his determination, deciding right there on the spot, not to be as hard on him going forward, after all, he was like family to her, even if at times he drove her crazy with all his nagging and constant derogatory comments. "From now on, I won't go out of my way to embarrass him", she thought to herself, as she stepped onto her workout mat, "I'll just live my life as usual and if he wants to join me, that's up to him".

"So, ready to begin"? Irina announced looking over at Ben, still getting used to the change to his facial features caused by the eyebrow threading that had left him with eyebrows more suited to a kpop star than a young American man.

"Yep, ready to go", Ben announced cheerfully, "so what's the plan for today anyway, more shopping"?

“Oh, sure, there’s always time for shopping”, Irina announced, “but as you know this is my last day off before I have to go into the office tomorrow, so, I’m planning to pamper myself a little, today, I’m going to visit my stylist”.

Watching his reaction, she saw his face drop for a second upon hearing the announcement, but he quickly regained his composure, as an awkward looking smile returned to his lips, “ok”, he replied, “sounds easy enough”.

“Oh really”? Irina shot back, “you’re willing to do what I do without complaining”?

“As long as nothing is permanent, then yeah”, Ben replied in a confident tone, “I mean, you do this stuff all the time, right? so it must be pretty easy”.

And there it was, the old Ben was back, the arrogance and the backhanded insults.

Irina nodded, smiled, and turned on the workout video, for a moment there, she had been considered calling up the salon to change some of the treatments, she had booked for later, but looking across at her grinning stepbrother, who still didn’t have a clue how difficult her life could be, she now had no intention of cancelling any of them.

“I’m not doing anything I wouldn’t normally do”, she reasoned to herself as she looked over at Ben, stretching and following along to the instructor on the screen. “And besides, it’s been weeks since my last appointment, I’m not changing my plans just for him”,

They continued their morning workout in without a word, as Irina continued to ponder the strangeness of the situation, she now found herself in, one where she was being tasked with remoulding her previously macho, slob of a stepbrother, in her own image, “perhaps he actually wants to be a girl”, she thought to herself, “I mean, what real man would allow himself to be feminized like this”?

“And 4 and 5, keep it up now”, came the voice of the video instructor.

“I guess I’ll find out soon enough, as surely he’ll quit when he gets to the salon and realises what’s in store for him, if he doesn’t, he’s going to walk out looking like a completely new person”.

“Squeeze in those glutes ladies, and 1 and 2”, came the voice once more.

“Let’s see what happens”, Irina thought nodding, as she looked over at a now tired-looking Ben, “I guess if nothing else, it should be an entertaining day, and if he is serious about all this, he will need to look the part when he accompanies me to the office tomorrow, we can’t have him embarrassing the company reputation”.



Stepping through the tastefully decorated entrance of Lotus salon and spa, Ben was feeling extremely anxious, He looked around scanning his surrounding noting that everything was so bright and clean, a world apart from the usual barbershop he frequented, when he needed to get a trim.

It was his third day of the challenge and the toughest yet, having not eaten a proper meal in three days, he felt extremely weak and empty, not helped by the morning exercise routines, that seemed to be focussing on his legs and bum, which now ached all the time from all the focussed stretches and exercises.

At least his outfit for the day was more appropriate for someone his age, even if the silky top with its puffy cape sleeves was a little more feminine than he would have liked. Below the top, he was wearing a pair of cut off denim shorts, and a pair of Ugg boots, which were actually pretty comfortable, but looking in the mirror before leaving the apartment, Ben had again felt ridiculous, seeing his head above an obviously feminine outfit. His body looked like that of a teenage girl, a

flat-chested one, but with his shaved legs and thin frame, the girly outfit didn't look out of place. On the other hand, his head definitely looked out of place, his eyebrows softened his face making him look a little more androgynous but with his shaggy boy cut and wearing no makeup, everyone would know he was a boy. He had hated the clip in ponytail and the makeup, he had been forced to wear the previous day, but without them, he realised, he felt exposed.

It was a strange thought, but in that moment looking at his freaky reflection in the mirror, he had almost begged Irina to let him wear the fake hair and a little makeup, but with her having already told; he wouldn't need them for their trip to the salon as they would just be removed as soon as they arrived, he would need to just grin and bear it.

And bear it he would, as no matter how tired or humiliated he felt, he was determined not to show it, he was going to make it to the end of the month no matter what, he was going to collect his payment, thinking of it as compensation for ruining his eyebrows and all the other humiliating things he'd had endured in the last few days.

Back in Lotus salon and spa, Ben had made it past the reception area, and was now in a small changing booth, wearing a small white robe. It was time for his first appointment of the day, a full-body wax and he was trying to delay leaving the changing room for as long as possible, he had heard stories of waxing being painful and wasn't looking forward to the experience one bit.

following on from the waxing, he knew things weren't going to get much better, he had a whole list of appointment to attend filling up much of the afternoon. He had tried to listen as the woman in reception had reeled them off, but he not being familiar with beauty treatments he hadn't understood most of what she had said as she might as well have been speaking in a foreign language, seaweed wrap, facial peel, eyelash something or other, dermal filler, the only one he really understood was hair appointment, which would be the last one of the day.

For a moment, he had second thoughts and thought about redressing and making a run for it but calming his nerves, he focussed once again on the money, also reminded himself that his girly eyebrows were going to take a while to grow back in and any treatment he received today would probably help with his disguise. Not that he wanted to look like a girl, but if he had to live like this for the next few weeks, he reasoned it was better to blend in, and besides Irina had promised nothing they did that day was going to be permanent.

Four hours later, a thoroughly relaxed Irina sat admiring her reflection in the mirror, she was thinking about how much she loved coming to this place and how they always made her look and feel amazing.

She turned to the left slightly and looked at her glowing complexion, the facial peel and numerous scrubs having left her skin as smooth as porcelain.

Leaning forward slightly, she inspected her lips, which were still a little tender. She pushed them together and wondered if the lip filling injection had made much of a difference, not that she wanted it to, the idea wasn't to make her lips any bigger but just to maintain her previous pouty look.

Looking up at her eyes, she smiled, seeing her eyelashes. It had been too long since her last appointment, and her eyelash extensions, which had looked a little patchy, and sparse the last few days, now once again looking full and curled.

"Everything ok"? asked Irina's stylist having watched Irina thoroughly examine all the changes to her appearance.

"Yes, I love it", Irina replied, "amazing work as always".

“Aww, you’re too kind”, The stylist replied, “just doing my job and it’s easy to make my clients look beautiful when they already have all the raw materials”.

Irina smiled, “what do you think of the hair”? She asked, “It’s so new, I’m not sure what to make of it”.

“Well, it’s definitely different, but that colour looks great on you”, the stylist replied, “and if you decide it’s not for you, I can always dye it back to your original colour”.

“You’re right”, Irina announced, “I’ve been wanting to try this colour out, like, forever, and you know, now just seemed a perfect time. Thanks, Liz”, she added fluffing up her newly coloured hair, “Oh, by the way, is my stepbrother done yet”?

Liz the stylist, took a few steps back and turned her head to look across the room, “No, he’s still under the dryer”, she said trying to suppress her laughter, “I can’t believe he agreed to have all the same treatments as you, my brother would have told me where to go, but you know, from over here he actually looks pretty cute”.

“This I’ve got to see”, Irina said getting to her feet.

With the heat of the dryer baking his head and its incessant hum giving him a headache, Ben was now regretting his discussion not to run earlier than a day.

He knew when he arrived, the goal was to make him look a little more feminine after all that is what beauty salons did, but what he hadn’t been prepared for was the sheer number of treatments and the drastic changes each one of them, would make to his appearance.

He hadn’t yet seen the finished look, receiving glances in the odd mirror after each treatment, but even so, he had a pretty good idea what he looked like, some of the changes hard not to think about.

His eyelashes were the most obvious as he sat there and also the most irritable, they had been extended and were now incredibly long and curled, feeling incredible odd but surprising light given the volume of them. Every blink was a reminder of his feminine-looking eyes, worse still he knew they weren’t going to be easy to remove.

His skin was now completely hairless and silky smooth to the touch after all the strange lotions and liquids, applied and removed from his skin, but that wasn’t the worst part, that honour definitely went to his lips, his puffy sore lips, which had been assaulted by a very long scary looking needle.

He still felt panicked thinking about them, as he had previously believed lip injections were permanent, but the woman had said the effect was temporary with the initial swelling making them look bigger than they actually were, Ben sure hoped so as right now they felt enormous.

With the sound of the dryer in his ears, Ben didn’t notice Irina walk up to him from across the room but feeling as though someone was watching him, he tilted his head upwards to see a stunned looking Irina, looking down on him with her mouth wide open, confirming his suspicions, that the changes he had undergone that day had changed the way he looked pretty dramatically.

“Oh, wow, look at you”, Irina announced staring down taking in the sight of her feminised step-brother.

Ben saw her mouth move but didn’t hear the words with the loud dryer humming in his ears but that was fine, he wasn’t in the mood for conversation.

Ben took a moment to examine Irina's new look and he had to admit she looked stunning after a full day of pampering. But the sight of his beautified step-sister only compounded Ben's misery, knowing he'd just undergone all the same treatments. He was now desperate to see what they had done to him and if he still looked like a boy, especially after seeing Irina's hair, now dyed bright platinum blonde.



Chapter 05 - Working girl

Stopping dead in his tracks, as he caught sight of his reflection in the bathroom mirror the next morning, Ben hardly recognised himself.

He shook his head in disgust at the sight of his feminised reflection as his newly dyed platinum blonde hair bounced from side to side. His eyes fell upon his long extended eyelashes, which not only opened up his eyes, giving him an innocent doe-eyed look but also made it look as though he was wearing makeup.

His big puffy lips were also an unfamiliar sight and not a particularly attractive one, given their dark red tone, covered in small pimple marks. Reaching up he prodded his swollen bottom lip with one of his long nail tips finding it firm and slightly numb, he had hoped the swelling would have reduced overnight but as he let out a sigh, he realised, if anything, they looked even larger than the previous day.

Trying to put the changes to the back of his mind, Ben placed a shower cap carefully over his blonde locks, as instructed by Irina, and hopped in the shower, remembering the message about not getting any water on his eyelashes.

Stepping under the warm stream of water, for a moment at least, Ben forgot his troubles as the water massaged his smooth skin, washing away the perspiration from his morning workout and easing the ache in his tired muscles.

He reached across for his bottle of body wash, trying to avoid the jet of water touching his head, before struggling for a moment to open the lid, his long nails once again getting in the way. It was another small task, he would have to relearn how to do, but after thinking about it for a second, and using the inside edge of his thumb, he managed to open the bottle and dispense a healthy dollop on to his hand as the flowery smell invaded his nostrils, only to remind him of his current situation, "what have I done"? he thought to himself, as he started to lather up his silky soft skin, "how long will I be stuck looking like this"?

Twenty minutes later, a clean sweet-smelling Ben stepped in through the door to Irina's bedroom, immediately noticing how much more grown-up she looked, having straightened her long blonde hair, applied her makeup in a sophisticated style, and dressed in a professional-looking skirt suit.

"Ok, let me help you get dressed today", Irina said.

Ben wasn't in the mood to argue and having already put on a pair of panties and a matching padded bra, he was keen to put something on, even if it was going to be the black and white checked dress, that was hanging from Irina's closet door.

He was instructed to sit on the bed, where he watched Irina opened a pack of sheer black pantyhose and roll up one leg into a little doughnut shape, "when you wear pantyhose, it's easier if you roll them up first", she instructed, "especially with nails like yours, here place your foot in here", she added lifting the nylon doughnut towards his feminine looking foot.

Angling his foot, Ben briefly saw the light shine of his brightly coloured toenails before they disappeared inside the fabric. He watched in awe as Irina started to unroll the stretchy material, feeling the tight restrictive material encase his foot, then his ankle and then his whole lower leg.

It was a sensation he had never experienced before and he had to admit, the feeling of the silky soft nylons snuggly compressing his smooth skin beneath actually felt pretty nice.

"Ok, you do the next leg", Irina commanded, bringing him back to reality.

After fumbling around for a while still not able to manoeuvring his hands with any accuracy, Ben finally managed to roll the other leg of the pantyhose into a shape that somewhat mimicked the

one Irina had made, and after slipping his foot through the hole, he rolled the exotic feeling material up his other leg and snapped the waistband high against his stomach.

Running his hand down the outside of his right thigh, Ben was lost for words, his legs felt so different. "Ok, stop playing with yourself and put your arms out", Irina said bringing over a crisp white blouse with a large collar.

"I...I... wasn't", Ben stammered, quickly removing his hand, lifting up his arm before placing it through the sleeve of the blouse, careful not to snag his long nails.

"I'm only messing with you", Irina laughed, "they feel good against freshly waxed legs, right"?

"Err... I guess Ben muttered", not wanting to admit she was right.

After watching Irina fasten the buttons on his blouse with her own long nails, fascinated and slightly jealous at how well she could use her claws, Ben was instructed to place his hands above his head. He closed his eyes, as he knew the moment, he had been dreading all week was about to happen, he was about to wear a dress, the most feminine of items.

With his false lashed tickling his cheekbones, Ben felt the heavy fabric of the dress wriggle its way down his body, stopping around mid-thigh before Irina started fussing around closing buttons and fastening a loose belt around his midsection.

"Ok, done", she announced standing back, "You're probably not going to like me saying this, but you actually look pretty good, now move over to the vanity and I'll teach you how to do your hair and makeup in an office-style".

The tutorial went by in a flash with Ben retaining little if anything of what Irina had told him, he was too preoccupied with the strange feeling of his little skirt resting high on his nylon covered thighs and terrified of the thought of having to leave the apartment dressed up as an office lady.

Slipping his feet into a pair of black and white wedge pumps, Irina fastened the little straps around his ankles, knowing the intimidating-looking shoes were going to be trouble to remove later with his nails and even more trouble to walk around on all day.

After the addition of a few pieces of jewellery and a spritz of perfume on each side of his neck, Irina announced him ready and told him to stand.

Ben stood up, feeling the muscles in the back of his legs tighten and his legs wobble, "Irina, I don't think I'm going to be able to walk in these shoes", he moaned, "I can barely stand".

Irina tutted, "Come on Benny, you haven't even tried, take a few steps".

With a worried look on his face, Ben took a few tiny mincing steps forward, "See, you didn't fall", Irina announced, "have a little more confidence in yourself".

Ben sighed, "yeah, but I wasn't exactly graceful, was I"?

"Oh, so you want to be graceful, I had no idea", Irina laughed.

"No... I...just... ", he was cut off, "practice Ben, that's all you need, unless you are finally going to admit, you can't do something I can do", Irina said lifting up one of her legs, showing off the tall spiky heel on the end of her foot, before strutting gracefully towards the door, "now come on, try to keep up".

Ben watched as she exited the room, leaving him feeling more than a little silly, but she was right, if she could walk in heels, higher than the ones he currently wore without a problem, so could he.

Stepping forward, he felt his standing foot roll and the tremendous weight of his new blocky wedge shoes pulling him down, but with one carefully placed foot after another, he slowly made his way across the room, reaching the doorway and feeling a little more confident, realising that if he focused and took smaller steps, walking in these shoes perhaps wasn't as bad as he first imagined.

Stepping out of the room, he turned, carefully placing his long-nailed fingers on the handle of the bedroom door, pulling it closed behind him, "you can do this, Ben", he said quietly to himself, grasping the bottom of his short skirt and giving it a tug downwards, "they're just clothes".



Fully concentrated on the position in which he placed each foot, in his tall wedge pumps, Ben slowly stomped into the kitchen, where Irina sat alongside her mother Elena, chatting, and drinking their morning coffee.

“Come on, Ben, how many times do I have to tell you”, Irina announced from the kitchen table, “you need to keep your head up when you walk, you look really awkward looking down at your feet”.

Ben stopped in the centre of the room, feeling the tightness in his calf muscles and the strange angle his feet were forced into, “I’m trying, ok”, he replied in an annoyed tone, “all this is kind of new to me, you know”?

“Wow, someone’s in a bitchy mood today”, Irina replied shaking her head, “there's nothing wrong with a woman with a bit of attitude, but try to tone it down a bit when you're talking to me and Mamulya, ok”?

Elena, who up until now, had just sat there looking him up and down, placed down her coffee cup and looked up into his eyes, “turn”, she commanded twisting her finger in front of her.

After a moment of looking at her and realising she was serious, Ben shook his head a little before slowly spinning around on the spot feeling ridiculous.

“This is acceptable”, Elena announced nodding, “but, remember, Bun, today you are girl, reputation of business, very important, this no joke, understand”?

Ben nodded, “Yes, Elena, I understand, I’ll try to blend in, believe me, the last thing I want is any more embarrassment”.

“Good”, Elena replied, “now, come, sit, you want coffee”?

“Yes, thank you”, Ben answered, before making his way over to the kitchen table where he carefully removed his little purse, placing it on the chair next to him before plomping himself down on the chair in a less than elegant manner.

“Oh, no, that won’t do”, Irina announced, “take a look at your legs, how many women do you see sat like that”?

Ben looked down and knew she was right, “his legs were apart like he used to sit when wearing pants, but the worst part was his short skirt had ridden up almost to his waist allowing anyone looking on a clear sight of his silky underwear beneath his sheer pantyhose. Embarrassed, he quickly grabbed the side of his skirt, and in one swift movement stood up and pulled it back into position.

“Like this”, Irina said, standing up and showing him how she did it, smoothing out her skirt behind her backside with her hands before slowly placing herself on the chair with her back held straight, she then crossed her legs at mid-thigh all the while keeping eye contact with him, “now, you try”, she announced.

Feeling a little emasculated but having experienced much worse over the last few days, Ben did his best to imitate what Irina had just shown him.

“Again”, she commanded as he crossed his legs, “but this time don’t look down, keep your eyes on me”.

After another three attempts, Irina finally seemed satisfied, “much better”, she said pouring him a coffee from the filtered pot in the centre of the table, “do that every time you sit from now on, skirt or no skirt”.

Ben sighed and shook his head giving Irina a frustrated look.

“Hey, you were the one who said living like me would be easy, Benny boy”, Irina said passing him his coffee, “no one is forcing you to do this”.

“It is easy”, Ben announced to the surprise of Irina and Elena who glared at him, “I mean, if I was a girl that is”, Ben quickly added.

“Oh really, please explain”, Irina said crossing her arms, “how is this easier for a girl”.

“Well... all we’ve done the last few days is shopping and beauty treatments, if I was a girl and found it as easy as you to walk all day on heels and I could use my hands as well as you with these long nails, life would be pretty sweet”.

“Ha”, Irina exclaimed as her mother looked on stunned, “do you really think I don’t feel pain in my feet after walking around in heels all day? or find long nails frustrating? Surely, you can't be that naive, Benny? Do you not realise how unfair it is for a woman to have to dress and behave in a certain way just to be afforded the same opportunities as the men of this world? And why? Because we weren't born with a piece of meat hanging between their legs”?

Elena nodded her head, “You have lot to learn, Bunny”, Elena announced from across the table, “business world is man’s world, a woman need to act certain way to succeed”.

Irina suddenly broke out laughing breaking the tension in the room, “what”? Elena said turning to her daughter”, what is so funny”?

“Mamulya, say Benny again”, Irina said struggling to get the words out whilst laughing.

“Bunny”, Elena repeated as Irina laughed even louder, “why is this funny”?

Irina tried to calm herself down a little, wiping away a tear from the corner of her eye, “remember earlier, you asked me what we were going to call, Ben, while in the office? Well, I think you just came up with the perfect name for our new office girl. What do you think, Bunny”? Irina said looking across the table at Ben, bursting out in laughter once more, "I think it suits you".



Chapter 06 – The family business

As Ben followed Irina into the elevator, his darkly lined eyes fell upon the mirror on the wall. He had been accompanying Irina to the office for a week now dressed up as an office lady but that didn't make it any less strange seeing his feminine looking image reflecting back at him.

His outfit that day consisted of a soft black blouse, its shaggy material shining slightly whenever he moved and its voluminous nature making his ever-thinning frame look slightly larger than it actually was these days. His legs, encased in a pair of smooth off black pantyhose were pressed tightly together thanks to the tight restrictive black and white checked pencil skirt, that allowed little movement to his legs and making it difficult to walk especially paired with the tall thin stiletto pumps on his feet, their colour matching his skirt perfectly.

Examining his expertly applied makeup as well as his hair which had been teased into a feminine style and was held in place by a generous amount of hairspray, Ben felt a tinge of pride, knowing he had done a pretty good job.

He now felt much more confident around makeup and beauty products, having given himself a crash course in the basics, spending a lot of time over the last week watching online beauty tutorials, having realised if he was going to be stuck looking like he was, he would rather look like a woman and blend in rather than some freak.

Seeing him looking at himself in the mirror, Irina smiled, "I have to admit, you make quite the attractive woman, Bunny, I like how you've done your hair today".

Ben, blushed, he hated it when Irina gave him compliments and told him how feminine he looked almost as much as he hated it when she called him, Bunny. But having decided not to let her see his embarrassment, he turned and smiled, "Thanks Reeny", using her new nickname, he knew she hated, but he figured if he had to have a silly name, she could have one too, "I found this look online, but there is only so much I can do with hair this length", he replied, touching the side of his hair with the palm of his hand, and giving it a little pat. She looked like she wanted to comment but before she got the chance, the elevator pinged, and the door opened as the two of them trotted out into the hallway of the 5th-floor office building.

The office which Elena rented was the second door on the left, a plain-looking door with no name just the number 54. After struggling to open the door for a second, with all the bags she was carrying and her long nails, making Ben chuckle a little, Irina finally opened the door and in they stepped inside.

The office itself consisted of one large room, with two smaller adjoining rooms, one a bathroom and the other a small kitchen area. Ben had expected something much grander when he'd first visited but it seemed the modest office was all the Volkova's needed to conduct their business, whatever that was, as even after a week of coming here, Ben still had no clue how they made their money.

The main room in the office was a little inconvenient with more than one person inside all day but was otherwise quite spacious. The right side of the room was dominated by a big glass-topped desk with two chairs positioned in front, and a large glass window behind that looked out on to the water. This was where Irina spent most of her time while they were in the office, usually on the phone speaking in Russian or typing away on her computer.

The left side of the room contained a seating area with a couple of comfortable sofas and a coffee table. This area was supposedly where they met with clients, but so far, in the time Ben had been accompanying Irina to the office, no one had ever visited. This sofa area was where Ben was forced to sit and wait for Irina to complete her work, which could last anywhere from an hour to half a day.

Knowing the drill by now, Ben tottered over to the sofa area, placed his handbag on one of the cushions before smoothing out his skirt, which wasn't necessary wearing his tight pencil skirt that was moulded to his backside like a second skin, but out of habit he did it anyway, before sitting down gracefully on the cushioned seat.

Opening his handbag, he rummaged around for the phone, Irina had given him, in case she needed to contact him, intending to waste a few hours watching some videos to see if he could pick up any new beauty tips and tricks.

"Before you turn that on, go and make us some coffee", Irina commanded from behind her desk.

"Yes, master", Ben answered sarcastically, it wasn't an unreasonable request, but Ben just hated when she ordered him about, "Anything else, how about champagne and caviar"?

"Hey, less of the attitude, missy", Irina replied annoyed, "I'm only asking you to make us a drink, I'm the one who has to do all the work around here while you just sit around watching makeup tutorials.

"Well, let me help then", Ben shot back, "If you told me what you do here, I might be able to help".

Irina thought for a second, her mother had instructed her not to involve Ben in the day to day running of the business, but having watched him sit around all week, making snide comments, she'd had enough, "you want to help? You want to do what I do"? She said sternly, "fine, but be warned once tell you what we do here, there's no going back, what will it be, Bunny"?

Hating the thought of another day of sitting around doing nothing and more than a little curious as to what the Volkova's business was, Ben carefully rose to his high heeled feet, tottered across the room before repeating his sitting routine in the chair opposite Irina's desk, "I want to know", he replied looking her dead in the eyes, "tell me what you do here".



Irina leaned back on her chair and looked over at her stepbrother, looking so prim and proper in his smart office outfit. “perhaps he can be useful”, she thought to herself, “I mean, if he’s going to be following me about like a lost puppy, I might as well give him something to do”.

“как твой русский сейчас”? Irina asked.

Ben looked over at her and smiled, “not good”, he replied, “but I know enough to understand you were asking me, how my Russian language skills are”.

“Well, that’s a start”, Irina said crossing her legs and watching Ben mimicked her actions, sliding his right legs over his left knee, causing his checked skirt to stretch to its limit.

“Is it important”? Ben asked placing his hands neatly on top of his knee.

“Yes”, Irina replied, “most of our clients are Russian or from countries that speak Russian, but I guess for now you can speak to our clients stateside, while you learn”.

“What learn Russian”? Ben exclaimed, “that would take months, I’m only doing this until the end of the month, you know”?

Irina let out a chuckle, “if you say so, Bunny”, she replied, “of course, if you want to quit, you can at any time, but those eyebrows aren’t going to grow back anytime soon and those lips are going to look rather full for a few months yet, besides why would you quit now, isn’t this more interesting here than working for peanuts on that pretzel stand”?

Ben let out a heavy sigh and dropped his head as though he was thinking, “well... I guess I could do one more month while my brows grow back in and I let these lips settle, but I’m not committing to anything now, I’m going to decide at the end of the month”, he announced finishing his sentence with a nod.

“Ok, no problem, but how about you download a few language learning apps in the meantime, I can even help you practice”? Irina replied.

“Sure, why not, it couldn’t do any harm to learn a new skill, but first, you still haven’t told me what you do here”, Ben stated trying to look serious but just looking cute with his lips pursed together into a shiny pink pout.

“Well... we help people”, she announced.

The room fell silent as the two siblings looked at each other across the desk.

“Help how”? Ben asked, “you do their shopping? Help them cross the street? Can you be a little more specific”?

“Ok fine, we help women from Russia and the former soviet states settle in America, we find them sponsors or husbands so they can get green cards”, Irina said before pausing to see Ben’s reaction.

“And who pays”? Ben asked.

Irina smiled, “good question, Bunny”, she thought to herself, “thinking about the money, perhaps we’ll make a businesswoman out of you yet”.

“Well, that’s the beauty of it”, Irina announced, “they both pay, the client coming over, pays us to find a sponsor, and the client in the states pay us to find them a woman”.

“And what do they want these women for”? Ben asked.

“Some are looking for wives and some are looking for reliable workers”, Irina replied, “but to be honest, who cares, as long as they pay, we don’t ask too many questions”.

Ben suddenly got a worried look on his pretty made-up face, “but... this is... this is legal, right”?

“Of course, Irina replied confidently, “we’ve been doing this for years, everybody wins and surely if it was illegal, someone would have come and arrested us by now, don’t you think”?

Irina could tell by the look on Ben’s face, he wasn’t too sure and if truth be told, she wasn’t entirely sure everything they did was legal herself, but her mother had told her not to worry and she and had no reason whatsoever to doubt her.

“So, what do you want me to do”? Ben asked from across the desk.

“Well, at the moment we have more women wanting green cards, than we have sponsors, we need to get some new American clients on the books”, Irina announced.

“How do we do that”? Ben asked.

“Networking”, Irina replied, “I have a few contacts here in New York who can help us out, all we need to do is arrange some sort of social event, so we can discuss business and sign on the new clients”.

“Like a party”? Ben asked, “you want me to organise a party”?

“Exactly”, Irina replied, “you catch on fast; I’ll leave the details up to you and remember it needs to be classy. Do you think you can manage that”?

A small grin appeared on Ben’s face, “no problem, easy peasy”, he announced in a confident voice.



Chapter 07 - When the past comes to visit

It was four thirty in the afternoon as Elena Volkova sat in her living room, sipping her chamomile tea, she had considered making herself something stronger to drink, but with it being a Thursday, she had decided to try and be good.

So far, it had been relaxing week, business was quiet, as it always was in the fall, and with Irina taking on more responsibility lately, and with Ben now helping out, she had more time for the other things she enjoyed in life, like painting, going to the theatre, and meeting with friends.

Thinking about Ben, she shook her head, she still couldn't quite believe the messily dressed, slothful boy, who she had taken in, and received nothing but childish disrespectful behaviour in return, was the same person who had left the house that morning with her daughter, dressed in a cute top and skirt, off to do a little shopping and get their nails done.

She thought back to when her daughter had first mentioned the idea of teaching Ben a lesson, and that by experiencing some of the things she had to deal with each month, he might gain a little more perspective on what modern day women have to go through.

Elena had found the idea amusing, but never thought her stepson would actually agree to it, and if he did, she had expected him to have quit at the first sign of something he disliked. But to his credit, he hadn't quit, he had stuck with it, no matter the how embarrassing or inconvenient the challenge put in front of him.

She still found the idea of a boy dressing as a girl strange, in her culture, men were men and women were women, there was no grey area, but with Ben adapting to the role like a duck to water, she had been starting to question her ideas about gender lately.

"He must want to be a woman", she thought to herself, "it's the only thing that makes sense, that must be why he has been so rebellious and difficult all these years, he must have felt miserable and trapped".

It wasn't the first time she'd had this thought, as she had watched him over the last few days looking so comfortable wearing her daughters clothes and strutting about in Irina's high heeled shoes. He had even started learning Russian, shocking her the other day by calling her Mamulya, just like Irina, and asking her how her day had been.

The question that kept coming to her mind, was, how did she feel about Ben living as a woman? She still hadn't decided. There was a side of her, having lived in the west for so long, that said to hell with it, if he's happy, then let him live his life as a woman, but then there was another voice in her head, the voice telling her it wasn't right, and that a man should be a man.

There was also the matter of her business, Irina had gone against what she had told her, explaining to Ben what they did in the office, she had even given him the number of some of their most important clients. This worried her, as most of these men were very traditional in the way they thought about the world, if they found out, the person they were talking to was in fact a sissy boy in a dress, it would ruin her reputation, it could even destroy the business she had worked so hard to build.

But it was too late to change things now, it had already been done, she had scolded Irina for disobeying her and made her promise to treat Ben like a real girl from then on. No more trying to embarrass him, he was to be treated like a woman at all times, and she was to go out of her way to make sure none of their clients ever found out his true gender.

Hearing the front door open and then close, Elena turned her head towards the doorway, "Mamulya, we're back", Irina's voice sang out through the appointment.

"I'm in the living room", Elena replied in Russian.

Elena looked over to the chair opposite, where her guest sat and gave him a nod. He looked a little awkward sat there with his cup and saucer, obviously not a fan of chamomile tea, but at least he was polite enough not to say so.

They had sat in silence for the last ten minutes or so, the young man, had at first, tried to strike up a conversation, but the silence didn't bother Elena, and she had no intention of wasting her time with pointless chit chat.

The voices in the hallway were getting louder, "so you're saying you wanted them to add sparkly jewels to your nails like mine", she heard Irina say.

"No, that's not what I'm saying", Ben replied, "it's just if we don't have to do things exactly the same anymore, why couldn't I at chose the length or at least the colour, this red it so bright"?

"It matches your lipstick", Elena heard Irina reply as she noticed an odd look on the face of her guest, "well it did before you wiped most of it off on that skinny latte cup".

giggling, Irina entered the room and stopped dead, noticing the man sat opposite her mother. Ben following her in couldn't see the man as Irina was blocking her view, "Mamulya, do you like my nails", he said looking towards Elena, and wiggling his fingers, his long acrylic red nails, shining in the light.

"Yes, very pretty, Bunny, but we have guest", Elena replied.

As Elena finished her sentence, Irina stepped out of the way, allowing Ben to see the man sat on the other side of the room staring at him with a shocked look on his face.

"Jake, oh my god", Ben shrieked, "what are you doing here"?



"I... I... came to see if you were alright, I mean, I haven't heard from you in weeks", said a stunned looking Jake, "dude, why are you dressed as a girl"?

"It's a... a long story", replied Ben in a shaky voice, looking around to see Elena and Irina staring on.

Not wanting to talk in front of the two women, Ben stepped forward on his cork wedged sandals, tottered across the room, and reached out with his right hand as Jake just looked on horrified at Ben's flashy new manicure, his long red ballerina style nails extending out far beyond the end of his fingertips, "come with me", Ben said looking down at his confused friend, "we can talk outside".

Jake nodded before placing the cup and saucer, he was still clutching on his lap, onto a nearby side table, he then stood up without taking Ben's outstretched hand, "ok, lead the way", he said looking around at Irina and Elena a little unsure of himself.

Ben turned and walked out of the room, feeling incredibly nervous hearing Jake following behind. He tried focussing on his footsteps, not wanting to stumble and embarrass himself even more but this only exaggerated the sway of his backside, gyrating from side to side with every step he took on his ramped footwear, "Is he checking me out", Ben thought to himself not wanting to turn and find out, "I would be if the situation was reversed, shit, what am I going to say to him? This is so messed up".

Stopping in front of the glass patio door, Ben fumbled with the lock, the combination of being nervous and not wanting to chip his new manicure making the normally easy task near to impossible.

"Would you like me to open that"? Jake said seeing Ben struggling.

"Err... if you wouldn't mind", Ben replied embarrassed, stepping to one side.

Ben watched as Jake easily undid the latch and slid open the door, before stepping out. Following him out, the first thing he noticed was the chill in the air as he felt the breezy night air dance around his ankles and sandaled feet, the material of his snake print asymmetric skirt gently fluttering around and massaging his upper legs only serving to remind him of how he was dressed.

It was much warmer earlier when he and Irina had headed out, but with the sun now low in the sky, and stood high up on his apartment balcony, Ben instantly regretted choosing the balcony for their conversation.

"So... err...this is a bit awkward, ay? Ben said shuffling his feet and looking down, causing him to look even more feminine.

"Dude, make me understand this"? Jake said, "we've known each other for years, why have hidden this from me"?

Ben quickly looked up, "Oh, no, it's not like that, it's... it's like a job", he stated.

"A job"? Jake replied pulling an unconvinced face.

"Yeah, it started off with Irina moaning as usual about how difficult her life was, and I said something like, how difficult can it be, I forget the exact words now, but the next thing I know, I'm being offered ten thousand dollars a month just to do what she does", Ben said realising how crazy he sounded.

Jake slowly looked Ben up and down before shaking his head as the two friends just looked at each other, the hum of the city and Ben's skirt rustling in the wind the only sounds to be heard.

"What? You don't believe me"? Ben stated annoyed.

"I didn't say that! I'm just trying to process this", Jake replied, "you just look so feminine, and the way you came into the room earlier, that voice, it all seemed so natural".

"I'm not gay", Ben stated loudly.

“And what’s wrong with being gay”? Jake shot back in a booming voice, surprising Ben with the response and making him back-pedal.

“Nothing, dude, you know me, I’ve got nothing against people like that, you know, each to their own and all that”, Ben stated nervously, “I just don’t want you to think that of me”.

“Gay, straight, bi, purple with blue spots, I don’t give a shit, man, just be honest with yourself”, Jake replied.

There was another moment of silence as Ben felt a little frustrated, not only had his best friend surprised him while crossdressed and coming home from the nail salon but now he was getting entirely the wrong idea.

“So, how does it feel”? Jake asked.

“How does what feel”? Ben quickly replied, slightly surprised by the question.

“Life dressed as a woman”, Jake replied, “it must be an interesting experience”.

“Oh, it’s hell”, Ben replied, shaking his head, “not that I’m going to admit that to Irina, it’s crazy, Jake, female beauty seems to be designed to restrict movement, and I’m forever having to check my appearance just in case my lipstick has smudged, or my hair looks a mess.

“Well, you always were pretty vain, checking your reflection in every mirror you passed, and are you sure you hate it as much as you make out? you seemed pretty comfortable, when you walked in earlier, showing off your new nails to what did you call her, Mamulya? Jake stated, “there must be some part of it that you like”?

“That was just me acting to... oh never mind”, Ben said feeling frustrated and wanting to change the subject, “I guess parts of this are quite interesting”, he added before getting flustered, “I mean... like an experiment, you know, to see how women live and working with Irina at the office is finally answered a lot of questions I’ve had for years.

Jake smiled, “so, you’re going to be like this for a while then”?

“Err... yeah, well... not that long, a few more weeks, six tops”, Ben said looking down at the ground and seeing his shiny pedicure, through the open toe area of his girly shoes, that although much more comfortable than a pair of stilettos, were still causing his ankles to ache after a day of walking the city wearing them.

Jake nodded, “I see, well, at least now I know about all this, you can stop ignoring my messages, and we can start hanging out again”.

Ben’s head shot up, “I wasn’t ignoring you; you know I lost my phone a few weeks back, and then Irina went and broke my tablet, I had no way to contact you”, he said sadly, “I’ve got this new phone, Irina gave me, I can give you the number if you really don’t mind being seen with me looking like this”?

“I don’t mind”, Jake said, casually taking his phone out of his pocket, “do you know your new number”?

“Yeah, Irina made me memorise it, 098...”, Ben said before being interrupted.

“Woah, hang on, I’m just setting a new contact, one second... and there, done, go ahead, Bunny”.

“What? Oh no, not you too, please don’t call me that” Ben said placing one hand on his hip and trying to sound forceful.

Jake laughed, “too late, babe, it’s already in the phone, and besides, looking as cute as you do right now, the name suits you”.



Chapter 08 – Getting into character

Having just completed his morning exercise routine and shower, Ben wandered into Irina's room as he prepared himself for another day tottering around as Bunny. Now proficient enough to do his own makeup and dress himself, he no longer needed Irina's help but having no clothes of his own, Ben still had to collect his outfit for the day.

Walking in, feeling hungry and tired, Ben looked over at Irina, "Reeny, can't I just pick out an outfit in the evening? It would make things so much easier"?

Irina rolled her eyes, partly from being called by the nickname she hated, and partly from hearing the same complaint she heard every morning, "leave it with me ok, I've got something worked out", she replied from in front of her vanity where she was straightening her hair, "now, get dressed".

Looking over to the closet door, where his outfit for the day usually hung, waiting for him, Ben suddenly felt a little confused, "um... are we not going to the office today"? He asked, not seeing the type of outfit he was expecting.

"Not today", Irina replied, "Mamulya will be heading in, we have other plans".

"Let me guess, we're going to a costume party dressed as hookers", Ben said, picking up one of the thigh-high platform boots, which had been placed on the floor next to his outfit.

"Ha-ha, very funny, it's called fashion, Bunny, "Irina announced without looking, "over the knee boots are in, and trust me you'll be glad you're wearing them once you get outside, it's going to be a cold day today".

"Yeah, I'm sure I'll be real glad", Ben scoffed, "so where are we going today anyway"?

"Let's just say we need to complete your transformation", Irina replied with catching his eye through the mirror and smirking.

Ben gulped, "finish my transformation? What does that mean"? He said with a nervous tone.

Irina put down her hair straighteners and span around to face him, "Listen, when you asked to help out around the office, Mamulya wasn't happy that I let you".

"Really! What doesn't she want me to help? She doesn't think I'm capable", Ben replied waving his arms around.

"Oh, stop pouting", Irina stated, "It's not like that, she just doesn't want to embarrass the business, if some of the more traditional clients found out you were a sissy boy, our reputation would be ruined".

"Don't call me that", Ben stated eyeballing her.

"Fine, an effeminately dressed boy, but my point remains", she stated, "nobody can know".

"That's not exactly something I want either, you know"? Ben replied, "the last thing I want is for anyone to find out who I really am".

Irina smiled, "I know, that's why we just need to make a few minor tweaks to your appearance, nothing major, just a few finishing touches if you like, so no one finds out you're a boy, ok"?

Ben nodded, "ok, I guess I've come this far, at this point, I can't imagine what else you could do to me".

"Oh, you'd be surprised, now go and get dressed", Irina ordered, "we leave in an hour".

A few hours later, Irina's words, "a few minor tweaks", were running through Ben's head as he sat in the cushioned chair of a fancy hair salon, staring at the masses upon masses of hair cascading over his shoulders, ending just above his backside.

The difference the new hairstyle made to his appearance was startling, framing his face on either side with choppy bangs cut in, making him look unmistakably feminine.

The sewn-in hair extensions had been a time consuming and boring process as Ben had just sat there staring at the strands, of what he was told were human hair, being bonded to his own as his head grew heavier and heavier.

He had to admit, the image now looking back at him from the mirror, was definitely cute and completely changed his look. His new hair colour, a mixture of brown highlights on a darker base, looked more natural than the flashier platinum blonde colour he had woken up with that morning, which was exactly the reason Irina had decided to change it, she wasn't happy being a blonde and now had a hairstyle and colour very similar to Ben's, minus the bangs.

If the trip to the salon wasn't shocking enough, the second stop of the day was an experience that would remain in Ben's memories for a long time to come. After a short cab ride, the pair were dropped off outside a plain-looking building with no sign to indicate what awaited inside. But after following Irina through the two sets of doors, what awaited Ben inside was scarier, than even he had imagined.

The store was some kind of adult fetish shop, with all manner of clothing, wigs, sex toys, and a plethora of other unrecognisable objects strewn across the store. Ben watched as Irina bound up to a cute looking saleswoman in the middle of the store and embraced her with a warm hug, the two then proceeded to speak in Russian as Ben, looked around the store amazed by the odd-shaped items hanging from the walls and ceiling.

"Bunny", Irina announced as Ben continued to look around in a daze, "Bunny, wake up!"

Ben jumped, making him stumble slightly on his tall platform heels before turning to face the women, staring at Irina with fear in his eyes.

"This is Dasha, she is going to help you complete your look", Irina announced.

"Hello, Bunny, there is a dressing room behind me, go inside and take off all your clothes", Dasha stated bluntly.

"What? But... I...", a shocked Ben mumbled before being interrupted by Irina, "It's ok, Dasha knows about your extra parts, she's going to help, trust me, everything will be ok".

Ben was hesitant as he knew what awaited him behind the curtain, was not going to be a pleasant experience, but he did trust Irina, although well capable of inflicting humiliation and embarrassment on him, he somehow knew, when it came to safety, she would never intentionally put him in danger.

Nodding his head slowly, he trotted off into the changing room without uttering another word as he heard Dasha say that she would join him in a few moments.

"A few minor tweaks", Irina's words from earlier again ran through Ben's head as he stared horrified at the feminine figure in the mirror in front of him. He was glad to no longer be stood there naked, but the lingerie set that included stockings and garters, that Irina had brought in to show off his new curves were messing with his mind.

It was like he was looking at another person, and that person was an attractive young woman. Starting at his stocking-clad feet standing on the cold tiled floor, Ben scanned up his feminine looking figure, his shapely long legs seemed to extend up forever before ending in a worryingly plump set of hips and buttocks, thanks to the morning exercises.

The sight of such smooth long legs dressed only in lingerie was getting Ben a little hot and bothered, which was now a slightly uncomfortable experience with his manhood now straining

against the gaff fitted between his legs, holding it tightly in place, and leaving the front of his silky black panties completely flat.

Taking a deep breath, he continued to scan up, past his now tiny waist, Irina's strange vegan diet with all the rules, having had the desired effect, only to be greeted by the most shocking change, two huge heavy fleshy mounds, bonded firmly to his chest, the seams now somehow invisible thanks to Dasha and her makeup magic.

The sight of his new breasts, made him shudder slightly, making them wobble disturbingly as he felt his newly extended hair brush against his bare back, and his heart-shaped earrings tapping gently against his cheeks. For the first time since he had agreed to the challenge, Ben was having serious second thoughts as his brain tried to comprehend, how one of the sexiest women he had ever seen, was his own reflection.



2 hours later, Ben exited the cab, he and Irina had just taken, outside their apartment building. Standing up he once again felt strangely off-balance, still not used to extra weight attached to his chest that seemed to jiggle about with every step he took on his high heeled feet.

“You’ve hardly said a word all day”, Irina suddenly asked, seeing Ben stood in a trance like state looking down at his new body shape, “Is everything ok”?

Ben slowly looked up, removing a strand of hair that had blown across his face and stuck to his glossy lips, “I guess so, I just wasn’t expecting all this”, he said pouting.

“Well, now you have what all real girls have, they’ll take some getting used to, but if it’s any consolation, you look beautiful”, Irina said as they started walking towards the entrance to the building.

“You’re just saying that to make fun of me”, Ben shot back, not wanting to admit what he knew to be true “No one would think I’m beautiful, dressed like this”.

Irina shook her head, “oh really, watch this”, she said as they approached the entrance, seeing Clive the doorman stood outside his little office.

“Good evening Clive, this is my friend Bunny”, Irina announced, stopping to talk, “she’s visiting me for a few weeks, can you make sure to let her in if I’m not with her”?

Ben watched as Clive looked him up and down feeling very awkward, “no problem Miss Volkova, I’ll be sure to do that”, Clive replied before turning to Ben and looking him straight in the eyes, “Nice to meet you Bunny, if you need anything, please let me know”.

“Thank you”, Ben muttered nervously looking down to avoid eye contact.

“Thanks, Clive”, Irina added, “oh and one more thing, we’ve just been to have our hair done, I told Bunny she looks beautiful, but she doesn’t seem to believe me, what do you think”?

Ben head shot up in shock as he was again faced with Clive the doorman staring right at him, “How does he not recognise me”? he thought, “I’ve walked past him every day for years, is he just being polite”?

“Well, I have to agree with your friend Miss...”, Clive said before pausing.

“Petrova”, Irina said with a smile, “Bunny Petrova”.

“Well, Miss Petrova, you look very beautiful today, I’m sure your boyfriend will love your new hairstyle”, Clive said, charming and polite as always.

Ben could feel himself going red in the face, “thank you, but we must be going now, nice to meet you Clive”, he said, not waiting for Irina and tottering off towards the elevator.

He heard Clive, shout “you too”, before Irina caught up with him, “see beautiful”, she said playfully giving him a little nudge with her elbow.

Ben rolled his eyes, reaching out to press the button that called the elevator, “was that really necessary”? He asked, “and what’s with the Russian name”?

Irina chuckled, “just having a bit of fun, and I don’t know, it’s the first name that came into my head”.

The elevator arrived with a ping and the two stepped in, the sound of high heeled shoes clip-clopping, echoing loudly throughout the small metal box as Ben once again caught sight of himself in the mirror and breathed a heavy sigh.

Irina put her arm around his shoulder and pulled him in tightly, “go on, tell me I’m wrong”, she said looking into his eyes through the mirror.

“Fine”, Ben exclaimed, “I guess I look pretty good”.

Irina placed her head on his shoulder, “not pretty good, beautiful, just ask Clive”, she said playfully.

“You don’t think he believed that do you”? Ben asked, liking the attention from Irina, she had been a lot friendlier lately, a side of her he had never really seen before.

“Who cares, he’s the doorman”, Irina stated, “I could have told him you were the queen of England and he would have nodded and said nice to meet you”.

Finding the comment funny, Ben joined Irina as the two laughed loudly together as the elevator ascended up taking them home.

It felt good to laugh after the stressful day of surprises, Ben had just endured, his feet were killing him, and he couldn’t wait to get inside and take off the tall thigh high boots he had been walking around on all day. But just as they reached the apartment door, Irina turned to face him, “before we go in”, she stated, “I have one more surprise for you”.

Ben stopped and looked at her, from her body language, he knew it wasn't going to be a nice surprise, “I’ve had enough surprises for one day Reeny”, he moaned, running his hands through his extended long hair before pointing at the breast forms attached firmly to his chest.

“Don’t hate me ok? We’ll change it back when you change back”, Irina said sounding nervous for once”, I was just so sick of you complaining every morning”.

“Reeny, what have you done”? Ben exclaimed.

“As I said, nothing that can’t be undone, but while we were out today, the decorators have been in to give your room a little makeover, I’ve even donated some clothes I don’t really wear any more, now you have somewhere to get dressed in the mornings”.

“No, tell me you didn't, not my room”, Ben said in a panicked voice, thrusting his hand into his purse, rummaging around with his long red nails trying to find his front door key.

“Here let me”, Irina said, finding her own key and moving to open the door, “just don’t overreact ok, your room was a pigsty, it was well overdue a bit of TLC”.

As the door swung open, Ben dropped his purse on the table by the door and set off, scurrying comically down the hallway towards his room.

Flinging open the door, his mouth fell open in shock, his usual dingy but comforting room had been transformed, much like him, it now looked much more feminine.

The old, stained carpet, which had previously been littered with clothes and old boxes, had been replaced with a brand new peach coloured one. The colour matched the new flower-patterned wallpaper, that now covered the walls, his collection of posters nowhere to be seen.

Shuffling slowly inside, the fresh, fragrant smell of Jasmine, invaded his nostrils as he looked around at the alien environment, examining the new furniture, a chest of draws, a vanity covered with makeup and beauty products, and a writing desk.

He was now standing in a young teen girls dream bedroom, and he felt sick to his stomach knowing he was the one who was going to have to live in it.

As he continued to edge his way across the room, he noticed a rather large closet, taking up almost all of the wall space on the right side of the room, which Ben assumed was full of the clothes Irina donated, but not in the mood to find out, instead he wandered over to his new feminine-looking bed, covered in cushions with pictures of flowers on them, seemingly the theme of the room, and sat down to try and process all the changes this day forced upon him.



Chapter 09 - Run rabbit, run rabbit, run, run, run

A week later, Ben and Irina were sat in the living room of their apartment, discussing the event later that evening.

“Are you sure everything is ready for tonight”? Irina asked Ben for the third time that day.

“Yes, I’ve already told you”, Ben replied slightly annoyed, “everything is under control, are you ok? I’ve never seen you this stressed before”?

Irina took a deep breath, “I’m fine, It’s just... I don’t want to disappoint Mamulya, she’s trusted me to help her run the business, so if anything goes wrong tonight, it’ll be my fault”.

“Wow, I didn’t realise you felt so under pressure, “Ben announced, “perhaps you should talk to her, let her know how you feel”.

“No”, Irina shot back forcefully, “I can handle it, we just can’t make any mistakes tonight, everything has to be perfect, perhaps now you can see that my life is more difficult than it seems”.

“It will be”, Ben announced, “everything is arranged, you can relax, hell, it should be me freaking out, given the outfit you have chosen for me to wear tonight”.

Irina looked over and smiled, “Yeah, well, you were the one who decided it should be a costume party. I couldn’t resist”.

“It’s the day before Halloween”, Ben answered shaking his head, “I figured it was mandatory, but did you really have to choose that costume”?

“I guess I could have just chosen something more traditional, like a vampire or something, but we are the hosts, we need to stand out and look sexy”, Irina replied.

Ben sighed, “well, I’ll definitely stand out, that costume hardly covers anything”.

“It covers enough, Irina replied, “and besides, I’ll be wearing the exact same costume, you’ll be fine, now let’s run through things one last time, who are the most important guests”?

Four hours later, Ben stood in his newly decorated bedroom, feeling incredibly exposed and uncomfortable. Everything about the costume Irina had chosen felt strange and alien to him.

Starting at the bottom, his feet were forced into a very steep angled position by the ridiculously tall, open toe ankle boots zipped tightly to his feet, the front toe portion open and exposing his red painted toenails.

Above his boots, his legs wobbled encased in a pair of fishnet tights with the toe part missing. As for the rest of his freshly shaved legs, apart from two elasticated bands with little black bows circling each thigh, they were on full display for all to see.

Further up, the costume didn’t get any better for Ben, as apart from the little cuffs and collar, that matched the bands around his thighs, the only other thing covering his body was an unfamiliar item of clothing, part bustier top, part bikini, and part corset, that Ben had no name for. but what he did know was that once wearing it with strings on the back pulled out and tied off, it was dam uncomfortable and impossible to bend.

His now, extremely thin-looking midsection, felt crushed, just like his balls, tucked away in the cavity between his legs. The skimpiness of the bottom of the costume had also forced him into wearing a thong for the first time, as he struggled to stop himself from fiddling with costume, now constantly aware of the string between his ass cheeks, which parted them slightly and lifting them upwards.

He knew quite a few eyes would be drawn to his backside that evening, especially given that half his butt cheeks were on display and the little fluffy tail just above them. That's if people weren't already staring at his scarily real looking fake bosom, pushed up into an incredibly inviting looking cleavage by the built-in padded cups of the costume, again the seams of his breast forms were somehow invisible as his breasts blended into his upper chest and exposed shoulders and arms.

With his makeup done in a dramatic fashion, to emphasize his pouty lips and long lashes, he had hardly recognised himself in the mirror earlier and had failed to see the humour in the situation as Irina called him by his new adopted name and burst out laughing. She may have found it funny, but he would be the one that would shortly have to leave the house wearing the costume, and the thought terrified him.

Looked up at the floppy ears sat atop his tied-back hair, he couldn't believe she had done this to him as he imagined the embarrassment he was going to face all evening introducing himself as Bunny, the bunny, but that was something he could worry about later, first he had to get through the impromptu photoshoot Irina had sprung on him as he posed in his skimpy costume trying to recreate the poses she was showing him.

"No, arch your back a little more, and lift your heel off the ground, not your whole foot", Irina barked from behind the camera lens, "like this", she added showing him the pose.

He snorted and shook his head, having tried now five times to do what she wanted and still unable to please her, his legs and feet already feeling the ache from the towering heels zipped to his feet.

Readjusting slightly, he once again raised two of his fingers and his thumb, as Irina had shown him, to the side of his head wishing the night to be over.

"Better, but can you smile"? Irina announced, "who wants to see an unhappy bunny"?



A few hours later, standing in an upstairs room of a rented out nightclub, Irina stood next to Ben feeling rather exposed in her own bunny costume,

Having reluctantly given up her coat, Irina was now regretting the choice of costume, it had seemed like such a funny idea when she'd first come up with the idea but having not realised quite

how revealing and uncomfortable the costume actually was, she now knew, that she would be fighting off the advances of their guests for the rest of the evening.

On the other hand, looking around the room, she felt pleased with the evening's preparations, everything looked professional and elegant, she had to hand it to Ben, he had done a wonderful job and was very good at following instructions.

The room itself decorated in a purply pink theme wasn't a particularly large room but would be perfect for the fifty or so guests arriving later that evening. The way the room had been set up also helped to make it appear larger than it actually was. as long drapes hanging from the walls served to separate it into smaller closed-off areas, perfect for closing a business deal.

In the centre of the room, a DJ was setting up, performing a last-minute sound check, and testing his equipment. He had been instructed to keep the volume to a level where people could talk but to also keep the songs lively enough were people could dance and have a good time.

Behind the DJ box, stretching out along the far wall was the bar. Drinks for the evening, as well as the snack like food, to be walked around by the hired sexy waitresses, was all free.

Having a free bar was always one of the largest expenses at an event like this one but as Irina knew from experience, allowing the guests to drink as much as they pleased, made for drunk and happy people, and drunk and happy people were much more likely to agree to more favourable terms in any business deal they concluded, especially as she would be sober as a judge the entire evening.

Turning to her right, she looked Ben up and down. He looked a little wobbly on his feet and he was stood pouting with his arms covering his chest, "you are going to smile when the guests arrive, aren't you"?

She watched as Ben turned to look face her, "I thought you said Russian people don't smile just for the sake of it"? He replied with a hint of sarcasm in his voice.

Irina laughed, "that is true, I did say that didn't I? Just try not to look too unhappy, tonight's an important night".

Ben nodded, "I know, you've told me a million times, and don't worry, after the last few weeks, I'm a master of hiding my true feelings, I can turn them on and off like a tap", he said giving her a big cheerful grin.

"Good to know", Irina replied, "but you know, I don't think you are as unhappy as you make out, I've seen you having fun, and it was only the other day that you said you wanted to keep this up for another month, are you sure you're not enjoying being me"?

Ben's mouth dropped open in surprise, "No way", he announced, "of course I'm not enjoying this, I... I... just couldn't say no to the money, I've already done the hard work, right? and like it or not, I'll need to wait for my eyebrows to grow back in".

"If you say so, Malyshka", Irina replied and not wanting to push him decided to change the subject., "so who do we need to sign up tonight"?

Ben sighed, "do we really need to go through this again, I know who we need to impress".

"Come on, Bunny, you know this is important, it's the whole reason we're here tonight doing all this, these potential clients are how we make money", Irina announced sternly, "now tell me, who are they"?

"Ok, fine", Ben replied, "well there's Igor Kutznekov, a long-time client, he's rich, likes his drink and loves it when you laugh at his terrible jokes".

"Good, and the other"? Irina said nodding.

“Oleg Turgenev, always places big orders, quiet and reserved but livens up after a few vodka’s, keep serving him drinks and compliment him, playing up to his ego”, Ben replied, “see I’ve got this, you don’t need to worry”.

Irina was impressed with his answers, again he was performing at a level well above what she had expected when all this had first started, he was a natural at the job and looking at him at that moment, it would have taken a brave person to call him anything other than a natural woman, “ok, she announced, “mingle, be friendly, flirt a little, and remember if you get into trouble, don’t freak out, just come and find me, ok”?

“Trouble, what kind of trouble”? Ben asked suddenly looking a little worried.

“Well... maybe trouble was the wrong word, but this is a party, Bunny, and most of our guests will be drunk men, especially as the evening goes on, they could get a bit hands-on, you need to be prepared to have a few wandering hands come your way and your bottom squeezed”.

“What!”, Ben exclaimed loudly, “you didn’t mention this before”.

“You’ll be fine, really”, Irina said squeezing his hand, “it’s an unfortunate part of being a woman in this industry, just smile and tell them to keep their hands to themselves, no one will push it any further, and if they do, security is on hand to throw them out, potential customer or not”.

Irina watched as Ben gulped before looking down at his feminized body, “I wonder how he will get on tonight”, she thought, “I hope he doesn’t do anything crazy”.

It was late into the early hours of the morning when Irina finally got the chance to take a break, with her feet throbbing in pain, and her mouth dry, she hobbled over to the bar, where she pulled up a stool next to her mother and sat down, “ give me a glass of water”, she told the woman behind the bar to tired and uncomfortable for pleasantries.

“It has been a very successful evening, Irina”, Elena said, turning to look at her daughter, “four new clients and almost all of our previous ones have renewed their contracts, with better terms for us, you have done well”.

“Thank you”, Irina replied after receiving her water and gulping down half the glass in one go, “but I’m afraid, as much as I want to, I can’t take the credit for this one, it’s mostly down to Bunny, she arranged all of this, and she’s been extremely popular with all our guests, they all seem to love her and were fighting all evening just to talk to her”.

“Yes”, Elena replied, “I had noticed, I still can’t quite believe the change in the last month, perhaps I should prepare myself to have two daughters from now on”.

Elena nodded, downing the rest of her water before suddenly looking around the room, she could now see the room much clearer as most of the guests had already left, “Mamulya, speaking of, Bunny, have you seen her recently”?

Elena turned to survey the room herself, as Irina saw a puzzled look appear on her mother’s face, “you know I haven’t, not for a while”, she replied, “come, let’s look for her”?

Irina suddenly got a bad feeling as she quickly climbed down from the stool back onto her aching feet, before followed her mother across the room, to look behind the draped curtains, stopping occasionally to greet a customer.

It didn’t take long to find Ben, given the size of the room, but when they did, Irina noticed a look of fear on her mother’s face, like nothing she had ever seen before.

“Irina, you stupid girl, why did you invite him? He shouldn't be here”, Elena said, panic-stricken but still quiet enough so she wouldn't be heard.

Irina was confused and a little frightened, it was incredibly rare to see her mother this animated, “I didn't, Bunny must have” she replied, “I've never seen that man before in my life, who is he”?

Elena's face was now as white as a sheet, as she inhaled deeply, “his name is Danila Abramov, he was a client of ours a long time ago, but not anymore, he's a dangerous man, Irina, promise me”, Elena said turning and grabbing her daughter by the shoulders, “whatever you do, do not get involved with that man!”.



Chapter 10 little miss popular

Walking into the kitchen the next morning, Ben could sense something was wrong as Elena and Irina who had been chatting away suddenly stopped to look at him, “Bunny, please sit down”, Elena announced.

Pulling up a chair, Ben joined the two women at the kitchen table, “this seems serious”, he quipped, “did I do something wrong”?

“No, nothing like that”, Irina said, reassuring him, “we just need to talk to you about something”.

“Oh, ok”, he replied yawning, “can I at least make a coffee first? I’m still half asleep”.

“I’ll make it”, Irina said, standing up and walking over towards the fancy coffee machine built into the wall.

“Bunny, last night, there was man, Danila, do you remember”? Elena asked in a very serious tone.

Ben shuddered as the memory of his interaction with Danila came back to him, “yes”, he replied pulling a face, “he kept following me around, who is he”?

“Not important”, Elena replied, “did you invite him”?

Ben thought for a second, “hmm... maybe, I don’t remember”, he replied, “Irina said to get fifty guests, so when only thirty agreed to come, I went into the computer and found some past clients, he might have been one of the names got from there”.

“Idiot”, Elena shouted slamming her hand on the table, making both Ben and Irina jump, “you should not have do this”.

“I’m... I’m sorry”, Ben said surprised by the sudden outburst, “I was just trying to use my initiative”.

At this moment, Irina returned with his coffee, placing the cup between his long red nailed fingers, “its ok, Mamulya, isn’t angry with you, she knows you were trying to help, and it’s my fault, I should have told you not to contact any of the older clients”.

Elena nodded, “what did you talk to Danila about”?

“Erm... not much really”, Ben replied trying to think back, “he did most of the talking, I was just trying to be polite, and in the end, I was just trying to get away from him, there was something about him that frightened me, he had this really intense look in his eyes, and he kept staring at my body and licking his lips”.

“This not good”, Elena answered shaking her head, “Bunny, you stay away from that man, he is not good man, and if you do see him again, you tell me, understand”?

“Yes”, Ben replied, “trust me, I never want to see that creep ever again, that stare is going to haunt me forever”.

Elena looked into his eyes for a few seconds before nodding, “ok, good”, she said, “we do not talk of this no more”.

She then stood up walked around the table to kiss Irina on the forehead, before doing something that surprised Ben, she leaned down, and gave him a kiss on the same spot, “it was good party yesterday, good work, girls”, she said before walking out of the room.

Ben looked over towards Irina with a stunned look on his face, Irina just shrugged her shoulders, “exercise in 15 minutes, I’ll see you in the gym”, she announced before flashing him a smile and following her mother out of the room, leaving Ben to try and process what had just happened.

Two weeks later

Sat on the sofa in the office, Ben looked at the clock on the wall for the third time in as many minutes, Irina had gone out to fetch them some lunch and with his stomach growling it felt like she had been gone for hours.

Looking down at his phone to try and pass the time, he scrolled through his messages, stopping on one from Jake.

The message was asking him if he wanted to hang out but not knowing how to answer, Ben had just left the message sat there for the last few days.

After speaking at the house, the two friends had once again started messaging each other and had even met up on a few occasions. The first time for a coffee, and after getting over his initial nervousness, Ben had relaxed and enjoyed catching up with Jake.

After that, they had met up on two more occasions, the first being an interesting experience in the china town area.

Meeting up with Jake after work one evening, the pair had gone out for a meal, but this time Ben had felt a little self-conscious in his work clothes, making the encounter feel more awkward than the first, but that wasn't the reason for his hesitance in replying to the message on his phone, that came from their third meeting.

Ben knew he should have known better than to accept the invitation to the house party, but Jake had always been a persuasive person, and after assuring him, he wouldn't know anyone there, he had reluctantly agreed to go.

Being a party, Ben had made an effort to look good, and with Irina's help he had dressed himself in a pair of her designer jeans, that he could now fit into, even if they were so tight, they felt painted on.

Along with the jeans, he had worn a low cut sparkly top, that showed off a lot of fake cleavage. Paired with a leather jacket and Irina's favourite blocky ankle boots, he had to admit he looked good. Jake seemed to agree too, as he had treated him different that evening especially as the night went on and he drank more and more.

Ben had felt awkward all evening, tottering around the room, Jake's arm around his waist, as he was introduced to all his friends like he was his girlfriend especially as after nervously saying hello, he was left to stand awkwardly hanging off Jake's arm as he talked to his friends.

Jake to his credit, had been the perfect gentleman all evening, no matter how drunk he got, in fact, he had actually been really caring and attentive, always checking in with Ben to see if he needed a drink or to check how he was feeling. Nice as the attention had been, it left Ben with some strange feelings, especially the way the night ended when Jake had walked him home.

After saying goodnight there was this moment, time had seemed to slow down as the two boys found themselves staring with their eyes locked, and at that moment, Ben was sure Jake was about to kiss him.

In the end, it came to nothing, as Jake turned away, but the thing that scared Ben most, was after a few drinks and the fun they'd had together that evening, at that moment, just for a brief second, Ben had actually wanted Jake to kiss him.

Back in the office, Ben's thoughts were interrupted by a loud knock as he quickly turned his head towards the door, his long hair, piled on top of his head, flopping around, and striking him lightly on the side of his cheek.

Jumping up off the sofa, he felt his feet angle themselves into a now-familiar arched position inside the new pair of Charlotte Olympia heels, he had recently purchased.

Who could it be? He wondered, no one had ever visited the office in all the time he had worked there. Perhaps it was Irina? Perhaps she had forgotten to take her key?

There was another loud knock on the door.

That must be it, she's back with lunch and doesn't have her key, he concluded, setting off loudly across the room on his designer heels, his mind still thinking about the message from Jake.

Unlocking the door, he grabbed the handle and swung open the door, "did you forget....", Ben stopped mid-sentence, looking up into a familiar but terrifying face looking down at him.

"Hello gorgeous", Danila announced in his deep gruff voice, "did you miss me"?



With his mouth hanging half-open, Ben looked up at the giant Russian man towering over him even in his six-inch platform pumps, "err... Danila! Hi, what are you doing here"?

Danila smiled, "I came to see you beautiful, can I come in"? He said stepping forward, not waiting for a reply forcing Ben to step to one side to avoid the large man ploughing into him.

"Urm... yes, of course", Ben muttered, his reply now pointless as Danila was already standing in the centre of the room.

"This is nice office", Danila said looking around, "lot nicer than old one".

Ben closed the door, his heart now beating a little faster, "I wouldn't know", he replied.

“Of course, you are new”, Danila said looking Ben up and down slowly, making him feel more than a little uncomfortable, “Elena and myself, we go back long way, long before you worked here”.

“Oh, so you are friends”? Ben asked, hoping to keep the man talking until Irina arrived back with lunch.

“Friends”, Danila announced loudly before chuckling, “perhaps once but friends keep in touch, do you know, Zaychik, it was I who helped Elena come to this country”?

Ben remained quiet and offered a nervous smile.

“Do you know, it was I who gave her the money to start her own business”, Danila continued, “and how does she repay me, not, thank you, Danila, thank you for all your help, I don’t know what I’d do without you, Danila. No! Instead, one day she is gone, office empty, no goodbye, nothing, do you believe this”?

Ben folded his arms and ran his hands down the upper sleeves of his silky red blouse, feeling his long acrylic nails slide along the shiny material, pulling his arms inwards to try and cover his fake cleavage, that Danila’s eyes seemed to be drawn to.

“Umm... so Irina is out right now, she does most things around here, but she’ll be back soon if you are looking to do some business”? Ben said, speaking rather quickly, hoping to let Danila know, he wasn’t alone in the office.

“I know, I saw her leave, but it is you I’m here to see” Danila announced, making Ben shudder, “she went to get lunch at that deli, three blocks from here, you two eat lunch from there, two or three times a week, right”?

Ben felt his legs start to shake. He pushed his high heeled feet into the ground to steady himself but the sound of his thin stiletto heels rattling against the floor was still loud enough to be heard.

“You look a little pale, Zaychik, come sit with me for a moment”, Danila said walking towards Ben, gently taking his arm, and leading him towards the sofa he sat on most of the time, when in the office.

Moving along the sofa to get as far away from Danila as possible, Ben sat down and folded his legs, hearing the swish of his dark pantyhose, as the two pieces of nylon, covering his legs, slid over each other. He then folded his arms once again to cover his chest and watched in horror as Danila sat down and edged his way towards him.

“Do I make you nervous, little Bunny”? Danila asked, his intense eyes locked on and peering into Ben’s soul.

“Uhm... no, I just haven’t eaten today, I think maybe my energy levels are low”, Ben quickly replied, trying to keep eye contact but having to look away due to the intense stare.

“Ahh, good, because you have no reason to be afraid of me”, Danila announced leaning back and crossing one leg over the other, a position Ben use to often sit in, now made impossible thanks to his short tight skirt.

“In fact, you might say, I am in your debt, when Elena left all of those years ago, I lost touch with her, I had almost forgotten about her entirely until you called and invited me to your little party”.



“You’re not going to hurt her, are you”? Ben asked, trembling.

“Hurt her”? Danila said loudly, before once again chuckling, “little Zaychik, do not worry, there is nothing I could do to hurt her as much as she hurt me. But enough about Elena, right now, I’d rather talk about you”.

Ben gulped, “Me? What do you want with me”?

Danila smiled as Ben felt a shiver down his spine, “well, little Bunny, I think you’ll agree, we made a connection at that party, I’d just like to take you out to dinner, talk some more”.

Ben’s head that had been looking down at red fingernails playing nervously with the hem of his skirt suddenly shot up, “dinner! you mean... like a... a date”?

“Exactly, I know this restaurant, it has the best food outside of Vladivostok, you’ll love it”.

“I... I... can’t”, Ben muttered, “thank you for the offer, Danila, but... I... I... have a boyfriend”, Ben said thinking fast, “his name’s Jake and I’m sure he wouldn’t like me going out with another man, I’m sure you understand”.

for a second, Danila looked a little taken aback before quickly regaining his calm composed demeanour, “oh, I see, and yes, If I had a girlfriend as pretty as you, I also wouldn’t want her spending time alone with another man”.

Ben nodded and let out a quiet sigh of relief.

“So, he will come with us”, Danila announced, “has he ever eaten Russian food? if not he is in for a treat”.

“Err.. I... I.. don’t...”.

“Next Saturday, I’ll send a car to your apartment to pick you both up, shall we say seven? Danila interrupted, “I’m looking forward to meeting this man of yours”.

“You... know where I live”? Ben asked in a shaky voice.

“Of course, Zaychik, one of my associates was kind enough to pass on that information”, Danila replied leaning over and patting Ben on his nylon clad thigh before standing up. “So, our business here is concluded then, please, send my love to Elena, and tell her I’ll see her real soon, ok”?

Ben watched as Danila confidently walked across the room and opened the door, he then turned around and smiled, without saying another word, he nodded and then he was gone.

As the door closed, Ben wrapped his arms around his knees, curled up into a ball and collapsed on the sofa, where he remained, shaking, until Irina returned ten minutes later.

Chapter 11 - His date with the devil

“Am I really doing this”? Ben thought to himself, not for the first time that day.

Having spent the last few hours getting ready for his, so-called date, Ben had stepped outside to get some air. He now stood dressed to the nines, staring out over the sprawling city in front of him, watching, through his long dark lashes, as the sun crept down towards the horizon.

Feeling the cold chill of the wind circling around his legs, through his semi-opaque dark hose, Ben tugged on the sides of his little fur jacket, pulling it tightly around his upper body.

Being November, it wasn't particularly warm out on the patio, outside his apartment, and it wasn't helped by the fact, he was currently wearing a little black dress, its thin material, hugging his feminine looking frame, perfect for a summer evening out clubbing. But at that moment, Ben wasn't too worried about the cold, he had more pressing issues on his mind.

After his encounter with Danila a few days back, Irina had returned to the office to find him in a state on the sofa. She made him a coffee and after 20 minutes of just holding and rocking him gently in her arms, he'd finally calmed down enough to tell her what had happened.

When he finished his story, she looked almost as pale as him.

“Well, you're not going”, Irina announced”, “you heard what Mamulya said, “we need to stay away from him”.

Ben looked at her with a worried look in his slightly puffy looking eyes, “I know, but If I don't go, I think he's going to do something... something... bad to you and Mamulya”, Ben said with a shaky voice.

“Why”? Irina shot back, “what did he say”?

Over the next couple of minutes, Irina listened intently, asking the odd question here and there as Ben told her about Danila having followed them, how he knew where they lived, and the comments he had made. When he finished speaking, the pair sat for a moment silently thinking of a way out of the predicament.

“I think... I have to go”, Ben mumbled quietly.

“You can't”, Irina replied loudly, “it's too dangerous”.

Ben gave her a weak smile, “I don't want to, trust me, but if I don't and something happened to you and Mamulya, I would never forgive myself”.

“You can't go alone”, Irina said, looking him straight in the eyes.

Ben went on to tell her, how he had tried to get out of the meeting by telling Danila that Jake was his boyfriend and how Danila had invited him along.

“Will he go”? Irina asked.

Ben smiled, “Yeah, I think so, I'll have to ask, but he's never let me down before”.

Irina sighed, “ok, but I'm coming too”, she announced, “I'll stay out of sight and keep an eye on things, that way if I sense, even a sniff of anything strange going down, I'll call the police”.

Ben nodded, “thank you, Reeny, you know, I never expected any of this to happen, I'm scared”.

Irina reached out, pulling Ben into her arms once more, “I know, I know”, she said in a soothing voice, stroking the top of his head, “I'll be with you, I won't let anything bad happen, I promise”.

Back on the patio, Ben could feel a dull ache starting to form in his toes. and worryingly he had only just put on his shoes for the evening. The shiny leather pumps were brand new and would definitely add an extra level of discomfort to his evening, given their height and the way the back of his nylon clad foot kept slipping out the back with every step he took.

Looking down past his shapely legs, towards the towering designer pumps he was perched on top of, Ben still found it hard to imagine why anyone would ever pay so much money for a pair of shoes as uncomfortable and unpractical as these.

The shoes, along with the dress he currently wore, had arrived the day before by courier, a gift from Danila. They were accompanied by a note that read, "looking forward to seeing you my sexy little Zaychik", it wasn't signed but it was obvious who it was from.

So, not wanting to anger his scary Russian dinner date, Ben had squeezed himself into the revealing black dress and slipped on his expensive new shoes, which Irina informed him were worth over a thousand dollars.

Fully dressed, with his makeup carefully applied and his hair styled, Ben had never felt so nervous in his life as Irina told him he looked beautiful and tried to help him settle his nerves with a few shots of vodka.

It helped a little, but Ben still couldn't shake the feeling that they should have told Elena what they were doing that evening.

With her mother out of the City on a business trip, didn't want to worry her, and had persuaded Ben not to call her.

He felt guilty having promised to tell Elena if Danila contacted him, but not wanting to go behind Irina's back, Ben had gone along with her idea, hoping she really did have things under control as she kept telling him.

"Oh, wow, you look amazing", came a voice from behind, snapping, Ben out of his chain of thought,

Quickly spinning around, feeling the skirt of his dress flare out and brush past his upper legs, Ben came face to face with a grinning Jake, leaning against the doorframe, holding a single red rose, "so, ready to get going"?



When he received the call from Ben, Jake had felt relieved. After hanging out a few times, and having fun, their last meeting had ended on a bit of an awkward note.

Over the course of the evening, things had seemed to have morphed from two friends spending time together to what felt like to Jake something else and it excited him.

From the moment Jake first laid eyes on Ben, wandering awkwardly through the school hallways, shortly after arriving in New York from Nebraska, he'd felt somehow drawn to him.

He didn't know why at the time, chalking it up to Ben looking so helpless and lost, and wanting to help him, but as the two got to know each other and started hanging out, Jake came to realise, he had feelings for Ben, feelings that he found hard to process.

Over the next year, Jake did a lot of soul-searching, trying to work out where these new feelings were coming from, he had always been attracted to girls, so at first, he thought he might be bisexual, but after trying to think about other men in a sexual way, he found the only boy he felt attracted to was Ben.

Not knowing where these unfamiliar feelings were coming from, or how to act on them, Jake had pushed them to the back of his mind, he decided to keep them a secret as the last thing he wanted was to scare Ben away, who he thought wouldn't understand.

In all the time he had spent with him, Ben had never once given him the impression he was interested in anything other than women, with two often chatting about all the beautiful girls they knew and arguing over who was hotter.

But the feelings Jake had tried to bury, awoke once more, hitting him twice as hard, the moment he saw Ben totter into the living room, a few weeks back, dressed up and looking more feminine than most of the girls they knew.

At first, he didn't push things, he listened as Ben told him about his crossdressing escapades, how he was just doing it for the money, and how he couldn't wait to get back to normal. But no matter how Ben had tried to justify things, Jake found it hard to believe him, he was just so comfortable in his new clothes and playing the role of a woman.

Answering the call from Ben, Jake was ready to apologise for the way the night had ended, but before he got a chance, Ben had asked him to join him for dinner.

He instantly agreed, only later being told about the scary-sounding Russian man who would be joining them. But even after hearing all the details and feeling more than a little apprehensive, Jake was determined to help, Ben needed his help, and he wasn't going to let him down.

Later that evening, Jake found himself, sat looking across the table, right into the intense gaze of Danila, the last of the evening's three courses had just been cleared from the table, and Ben had excused himself to use the restroom.

It had been an interesting experience, the restaurant itself was situated on one of the top floors of a city skyscraper, giving them an amazing view from their table, especially being such a clear evening. The food on the other hand was more of an acquired taste, it wasn't terrible, just not what Jake would normally consider delicious.

"So, you love her"? Danila announced from across the table, surprising Jake. Apart from a few questions towards the beginning of the evening, the large Russian man had mostly ignored him.

Having talked through a back story with Ben over the last few days, where the two had been dating for the last two years, Jake was prepared to be questioned, but this one was a little too close to home, "err... yes, I do".

"Hmm, you sound hesitant, boy", Danila replied, still locked on as Jake tried to match his stare.

Perhaps it was the wine, or perhaps he had just reached the point where he couldn't take it anymore, but having watched this man, intimidate, and belittle them all evening, he had to say something, "What's your deal anyway, man"?

"My deal"? Danila replied smiling.

“Yeah, can’t you find a girl of your own? Jake shot back, “or are you like some kind of creep that gets off on watching other couples go at it, can’t you satisfy a woman with what you’ve got going on down there”.

Jake watched as the smile on Danila’s face disappeared and his eyes narrowed even further. He was waiting for him to shout, scream, get angry but instead, he calmly picked up his wine glass and took a sip.

After what seemed like an eternity, Danila placed the glass back on the table and folded his arms, “you know, not many people have the balls to speak to me like you just did, boy, I’ve had people killed for less”.

Jake didn’t respond, he was trying to look tough but on the inside, he was now shitting himself.

“Perhaps instead, I should just have one of my men visit your parents and make an example of them, you can watch they are punished for your insolence, it’s Frank and Mary Fuller, right”?

The façade dropped, “what! how do you know their names”? Jake replied in a worried voice.

Danila leaned forward and placed both palms on the table, “I always make it a habit to get to know my associates, Jake Fuller”, he replied before pausing briefly, “ I learnt a long time ago that it is always a good idea to know who I am dealing with, perhaps it’s a lesson you are about to learn too”.

“Please... I’m sorry”, Jake said, his voice quivering, “please don’t hurt them”.

Danila smiled once more, “Now that’s better, a little respect. I tell you what, how about you do a little job for me and we’ll forget all about what you just said”?

“A job”? What type of job”?

“Oh, don’t worry about the details right now, I’ll explain all another time, I’d hate to ruin such a pleasant evening by talking business”. Danila replied leaning back on to his chair, “so do you accept my offer”?

Jake nodded slowly, “I don’t really have a choice, do I”? he said before looking to his left, hearing the sound of someone hobbling towards him, their high heeled shoes clicking loudly as they approached.

Arriving back at the table after using the bathroom, Ben could feel the tension in the air, as looked down at the two men started up at him, “err... what’s going on”? he asked, looking first towards Danila, then at Jake, and then back at Danila”, is something wrong”?

Danila smiled, “No, of course not, little Zaychik, it’s actually the opposite, we were about to celebrate, your friend, Jake, has just agreed to work for me, let’s have a toast, but first, please, sit”.



With a confused look on his face, Ben minced slowly around behind Jake, smoothed his wispy skirt beneath him before taking a seat between the two men.

He folded his legs in a feminine way, feeling the smoothness as they slid over one another, extremely grateful, to once again be able to take the weight off his tortured feet.

Looking over at Jake, Ben saw a worried look in his eyes and dreaded to think what had just happened in his absence, but before he got the chance to ask Danila cleared his throat loudly drawing his attention.

“To new friends”, he announced, picking up his wine glass, “I have a feeling this is going to be the start of some beautiful times together”.

End of book one