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140 pages 25 illustrations

WHAT'S YOUR TALE, NIGHTINGALE?

Story by *Lauren Bliss*
Art by *DreamLN*



CROSSED
TV/CD
FICTION



L A U R E N B L I S S

**WHAT'S
YOUR TALE,
NIGHTINGALE?**

Story by Lauren Bliss

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A Crossed Fiction story



2024 Edition

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Illustrations by [DreamLN](#)

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WHAT'S YOUR TALE, NIGHTINGALE?

It was a warm spring day in early March, when a moving truck pulled into the driveway of the long abandoned house, on that quiet little corner in the sleepy suburb, just north of Los Angeles, California. It was a private community with fences, yards, dogs, cats, trampolines, elderly power walkers, and children playing with their friends; nothing out of the ordinary. In contrast to the rather dull backdrop, the bold prints, heavy gloss of the furniture, and numerous garment racks being carried into the house couldn't help but be noticed. William Knox certainly couldn't help it.

One wouldn't normally call Will Knox nose-y. He was a very quiet boy. His garbage was always disposed of in the correct container, and placed on the curb at the correct time. His yard was maintained by a service every week. His sprinkler use was perfectly within regulation during drought times. In fact, if someone didn't know better, and the same light wasn't left on in the upstairs bedroom every night, they might think nobody lived there. Yes, Will was a very private person, with very little interest in the outside world, but something about these new neighbors had caught his attention.

He worked from home normally. Sitting at his computer desk, he tried to focus on his job, but it seemed like every item the two burley moving men transported into the residence, begged for his attention. The record collection, the vintage jukebox, the plethora of garments, and even the giant plastic chair shaped like a high heeled pump; they all begged the question, "Just who are these people?"

After a couple of days anxiously pacing around the house, Will finally worked up the courage to go meet his new neighbors. His grandmother had always told him never to show up both uninvited and empty handed, so as the sun was setting, armed with a tray of fresh baked cookies, he skittishly made his way across the street. It took him a few minutes to gain his composure, but eventually he rang the doorbell. Much to his surprise, two young women answered the door, dressed in a manner that he found strangely anachronistic, but familiar. "Well, hello there!" said the brunette, with a slight southern drawl. "What do we have here?"

"I do believe we're being welcomed to the neighborhood," said the redhead sweetly, as she pushed up her white horn-rimmed glasses and smiled. "Come on in Sugar. We were just about to have some drinks. Won't you join us? I'm Molly and this is my roommate Ruby."

"He... hello... I'm umm... Will. Nice to meet you." Try as he might, the youth was petrified. "Thank you for the offer, but I must be going." He turned to walk away briskly, but was quickly stopped by the well manicured hand on his shoulder.



“We insist, you must come in.” said Molly, guiding him through the threshold. “We don’t bite... I promise.”

“At least not hard,” chuckled Ruby. To say that Will was overwhelmed by the two beauties leading him to the sofa and taking a seat on either side of him, was an understatement. Both were wearing daisy dukes, showing off their thick thighs and wide hips. Ruby was wearing a red tube top showing off her ample cleavage, and glowing honey skin. Her makeup was simple enough, with just bold eyeliner, and thick mascara being the only stand outs. Her long dark curly hair was piled high on her head with a navy bandana tied at the top of her hair-line. Will could only assume that what little bit of skin that was hidden by clothing was just as covered in tattoos as the rest of her. From her sleeves to her back and neck they all just seemed to blend together, but the one that stuck out the most was her chest piece. It was a large heart with wings. It was hard to miss. Will tried not to gawk, but found it difficult when he could barely find any naked skin all the way down to her bare feet.

Contrastingly, Molly’s appearance was on the softer side. Her natural red hair was pulled back into a small twist that spilled over the top and cascaded in a wave of loose curls down the back of her neck, accented by a little green bow pinned to the side of her coiffure. She wore a matching green top that was off the shoulder, with the neckline decorated in scalloped lace. Her makeup was soft and simple, letting her freckles show through, with only a bold red lip making any kind of a statement. She wasn’t dripping in ink like her roommate, but she had a few tattoos here and there; flowers and the like. She took a cookie from Will’s tray, and tasted it. Her face lit up. “This is delicious!” she nearly shouted, with her hand over her mouth, trying to maintain some level of grace. “Where did you get them?”

Will meekly responded, “I made them myself. My grandmother taught me to cook, and I try to bake something at least once a week.”



“Aww, don’t blush sugar,” said Ruby, as Will’s cheeks began to turn crimson. She took a nibble for herself, and was equally impressed. You’ve got nothing to be ashamed about. These are delicious.” The two girls thought he was embarrassed by his domestic prowess, but in reality his grandmother had drilled into his head that pride always comes before the fall.

A brief moment of awkward silence was all Molly could handle before every impulse she had started her on a long and rambling story of how they came to be his neighbors. “Well, we wouldn’t be good neighbors unless we told you something about ourselves,” she began.

Ruby and Molly met at a convention called Viva Las Vegas in the titular city about five years ago when they were both twenty, Ruby coming from North Carolina, and Molly coming from Minnesota. Both girls were active in their local rockabilly music and dance scenes, and like many others, both had driven across the country in classic cars with their boyfriends to model at the car show. They just happened to be set up in the lot spaces next to each other, and while their partners were on the ground answering questions, and talking proudly



about their hot rods, the two girls discovered they had a similar sense of humor. They joked back and forth while suffering through the heat in their vintage dresses and hairdos. Later that afternoon, in the hotel bathroom, they found more camaraderie as Molly shared the secret of makeup setting spray to save from so many touch ups under the beating down sun, and then Ruby reciprocated by sharing her extra parasol with Molly.

That evening they just happened to run into each other at the dance. Ruby joked it must be fate, and the two wound up sitting and talking all night, much to the annoyance of their neglected boyfriends. They both bought the same makeup. They both shopped on the same websites. They both followed the same instagram accounts. They both listened to the same records. It was as though fate had brought them together. After the convention, they video chatted at least once a week, and there wasn't a detail that they didn't share.

The next year at the convention, which they attended almost solely for the purpose of seeing each other again, they noticed the rich guys who came with dozens of cars had multiple models for each vehicle. Realizing that there was no way that some of those skeezy old creeps were on good terms with that many girls their age, they asked the models how that was possible. Turns out there was a lot of money to be made for "alternative models," suicide girls and the like, especially on the west coast.

Then and there, the two hatched their plan. Modeling in the alternative retro car scene was going to be their path to fame and fortune. Once they were back home, after an awkward and heartbreaking conversation with their boyfriends, they liquidated nearly everything they owned — barring clothes, grooming products, laptops, and Ruby's sewing machine. They packed up their respective cars, and made their way to sunny Los Angeles, California. For the first couple of weeks they slept in their cars, and fortunately, just as Molly's car died, they found an affordable studio in West Hollywood. As affordable as SoCal could be anyway. Ruby set to work on a business plan, and started acting as their agent, getting the duo booked for every classic car show she could find, from the Mojave Desert, all the way up to San Francisco. Through hard work and perseverance, they eventually found a two bedroom apartment that was within their price range, and just in time too, since Ruby was at her wit's end with all the random furniture, clothing, and nonsense that Molly would drag in from the thrift store on a seemingly daily basis. This process repeated itself through a few more apartments, until they finally had enough money to get themselves this nice house in the suburbs.

While babbling on and on, Molly deftly rolled a joint. Ruby had snuck to the kitchen, and returned with a pitcher of strawberry daiquiris, just as Molly was wrapping up. All the while, Will sat firmly in place with his hands on his knees, trying not to die from the anxiety. He hadn't said more than a few words to another human being for over a year. He was desperate to leave, but couldn't find a window in Molly's flurry of verbiage to excuse himself. He was too polite, and

thus found himself tied to that very spot. Before he knew it, he was holding a tall glass of daiquiri with a long pink straw and cute umbrella resting on top, and this gorgeous redhead was lighting a joint next to him. He'd never even smelled cannabis before. Imprisoned by his good manners, he took a sip of the daiquiri, and was surprised to find that it wasn't that bad.

Previously, in his somewhat sheltered life, he had only ever had whiskey, and that wasn't really his choice. Some of the older boys from high school poured some down his throat in a bit of hazing during an overnight field trip. He spent most of that night puking in the toilet. By comparison, this drink was pleasant. Ignorant to how much alcohol he'd just consumed he accepted another without hesitation, and tried to act just as nonchalant once the joint was offered to him. The first puff he took, he didn't inhale. Unsure of why the girls were snickering, he asked, "Am I doing it wrong?"

Ruby chuckled and took it from his hands, playfully admonishing him, and showing him how to be a proper delinquent. She then took the joint and placed it in her mouth backwards, holding it in place with her teeth. Floored by this feat, Will sat dumbfounded with his mouth hanging open. Before he realized it, she had put her face right up to his, and was blowing a shotgun right through his lips. He choked and gagged, and the two girls couldn't help but let out a giggle. Once Will regained his composure, he quickly stood up, embarrassed, and tried to leave. It was only then that it hit him just how intoxicated he had become. He was powerless when Molly took his hand, and while profusely apologizing for their little joke, sat him down on the floor between her legs.

Will melted into place while Molly ran her fingers through his long blonde hair. She was amazed by how soft and well cared for it was. She had certainly never seen hair like this on a boy before. It spilled over his shoulders beautifully, and the only flaw she could find were the split ends that all rested down at the small of his back. It had obviously been a while since he'd gotten a haircut.

He answered a series of get-to-know-you questions Ruby asked, while Molly had begun pulling a brush through his long locks. He relaxed even further, as he found all the tugging, pulling and twisting very pleasant. Though his responses were concise, they were able to gather just a little bit of information about this boy. He was nineteen, he lived in the large pink house across the street, and he worked, doing something on the internet. Beyond that, they couldn't get much else out of the youth, other than he thought the drink was delicious, and that he was sleepy.



It was around five in the morning when Will woke up, covered by a blue and yellow afghan, with his head on a couch cushion. The room was dimly lit by a small nightlight, plugged into an outlet by the door, but his head was pounding

so hard that even that seemed a bit too bright. He struggled to find his way to his feet, and began the short but arduous walk down the street and back to his bed. Almost as soon as his head hit the pillow, he passed out again, not even managing to get the covers over his body, other than a small corner he pulled tightly around his torso.

Precisely at ten Will was again awoken, this time by the sound of his doorbell being rung repeatedly. He was quite surprised to hear the chime echo through his house a second time. By the fifth time, he managed to coax his lithe figure out of the bed and down the stairs to his front door. He was even more surprised to find the two ladies who he had spent the previous evening with standing in his doorway.

“Took you long enough,” Ruby said dryly, tapping her foot impatiently on the pavement.

“Don’t mind her,” Molly said. “I told her it was rude to knock before ten, and wouldn’t you know it, we’ve been standing outside with her staring at the clock on her phone since nine fifty-five. It’s hard to get Ruby to focus on anything else, once something has her interest.”

“That may be true, but that’s also why we have a thriving business,” countered Ruby, playfully sticking out her tongue. “So are you going to invite us in or what?” Not waiting for an answer she stepped into his foyer and started snooping around.

“Why have I got your interest?” Will murmured, rubbing the sleep from his eyes.

“You’re not gonna murder us, and use our bodies to make some kind of home decor, are you?” Ruby asked, pushing up her sunglasses.

“What?... No!” Will shouted, confused as ever.

Molly, stifling a chortle, stepped through the threshold and interjected, “What I think she’s trying to say is, it’s rather strange for a teenage boy to show up unannounced with cookies for the new neighbors... At least in this day and age. We barely learned anything about you before you passed out last night, and then you were gone this morning.”

“I’m only a teen for another couple of months,” Will fumed, only to realize how childish it sounded, after the words exited his lips.

“I gotta say, all of this furniture covered in plastic vibe, isn’t really doing a lot to help with the whole serial killer thing.” Ruby said, poking her head through the living room door.

“My grandma always said the living room was for hosting, and that the furniture should remain covered so it’s ready for when you plan to do so.”

“Does your grandma live here?” Molly asked.

The boy’s face dropped, and he sullenly said, “No, she passed away last year.”

“Oh, I’m so sorry for your loss,” Molly said, gently placing her hand on his arm. “What about your parents?”

“Well, I never knew my dad, and my mom left when I was four years old. I lived with my grandma for my entire life, and she left me the house, and her estate. I mean it wasn’t like a billion dollars or anything, but the house is paid for, so it’s not a lot to keep up with really. I’ll have full access to the trust on my twenty-first birthday, so with my current budget it’s not like anything will change that drastically. I mean, I mostly just play video games, and watch tv. I do like to cook too, I guess...” He paused for a moment. “That’s way more information than you asked for. Sorry, I babble when I get nervous,” he said, his voice starting to well up, and his eyes showing the faintest hint of tears.

“That’s okay sweetie!” Molly said, pulling Will in tightly for a hug. “You don’t have anything to apologize for.”

“Well, if you’re not a psycho, I’d suggest doing something about the whole sterile vibe. It’s pretty creepy,” Ruby said, awkwardly patting him on the back.

“Anyway...” Molly started, shooting a glare at Ruby, before returning her attention to the quivering youth. “We’re still unpacking, but why don’t you come over, and hang out while we work. I’d like to get to know my new neighbor without him falling asleep within the hour.”

Ruby added, “Fair warning though, if you pass out again, this time we’re gonna add some curls to your ‘do.”

Will went to anxiously run his fingers through his hair, and noticed that it felt like it was tied in knots. “What’s this?” he asked, turning to look in a nearby mirror door. It was then that he realized his hair was plaited tight against his head down both sides, and then tied off with pink hair ribbons, tied into bows, and spilling out into two loose pigtails down his back. It was the exact same style as that worn by Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*. “I can’t believe you let me walk around like this!”

“I can’t believe it took you so long to notice,” chuckled Ruby.

“Yeah, at first I was trying to stifle my laughter, but you wear it so well that for a moment, I completely forgot that anything was out of the ordinary.” said Molly through a cheshire grin. “When you fell asleep last night in my lap, you were just so cute, and I couldn’t help myself. You really didn’t notice anything strange?”

“My head has felt pretty weird since the first time I woke up at your house this morning. I’ve never really drank like that before. I’ve never even really drank at all before if I’m being honest, now can you please tell me what you’ve done, so I can undo it?” Will replied, fumbling with his hair gracelessly.

“I’ll help you take it down,” Molly said, before suggesting, “You might want to brush your teeth first though.”



After cleaning himself up a little, Will found himself sitting at the coffee table on a plastic covered armchair while Molly sorted his hair out, and Ruby, not so subtly, gave him the third degree. Ruby grilled, “So, what possessed you to darken our doorstep yesterday, Will... if that is in fact your real name? That’s a pretty weird thing for a little boy to do, bringing cookies and all.”

“Maybe you can tell me what’s normal for old ladies to do then, because I guess I just didn’t know,” Will replied snarkily, causing Molly to fumble with the ribbon in Will’s hair, while she let out an involuntary chortle. The sarcasm in Will’s tone surprised even him, and it showed in his aghast expression. Turn-

ing his gaze back to the wood grained surface in front of him, he mumbled, “I mean, if it was so weird, then why did you welcome me in so readily?”

“Well for starters, cookies, but also, we were pretty fucked up, and you just looked so pathetic, it was hard to be scared of you.”

“Ruby, be nice!” Molly admonished, while running a brush through Will’s recently freed locks. “I didn’t think you looked pathetic. Just cute and harmless.” She didn’t realize this wasn’t as much of a comfort to Will as she was intending. “Anyway, your hair is back to normal. A little more wave, perhaps, but still pretty normal.” She looked around the high ceilings of the old house. “How about the dime tour?”

Will led them around the house starting in the living room. The furniture underneath all the plastic was mid-century modern, composed mostly of dark, shiny glossed woods, with little patches of upholstery decorated with buttons and tassels. There was a plethora of different pieces, from tables to chairs, to stools — none of which looked particularly comfortable. They were all arranged in a circle, around the coffee table, which Will’s grandmother thought was best suited for conversation. Every surface was topped by several magazines, ashtrays, and vintage table lighters. On a side table sat an antique wooden radio, and what looked like a vintage record player, which Molly had guessed was probably from the seventies. Underneath the side table, were a couple of crates, stuffed with old records. In the back corner there was an in-house bar, with two low backed, upholstered bar stools tucked in front under the ledge of the countertop. Behind it was a series of mirror-backed shelves and cabinets, stocked with several different varieties of fine spirits, and cocktail glasses for every occasion. “My grandma used to host her book club here,” Will said, generally gesturing clumsily toward the room.

“Well, I can see you’ve never had a career in real estate,” Ruby joked. She walked over to the table, reaching under the plastic, and lit the little silver oil lamp shaped lighter. She then used it to light the Virginia Slim she’d placed between her lips.

“Ruby! I can’t believe you, you should ask first before lighting up in someone else’s house!” admonished Molly, in a rare display, crossing her arms and fuming.

Will quickly jumped in to diffuse the situation, “No she’s totally okay. My grandma smoked like a freight train. They did an appraisal when she passed, to settle the estate, and they told me I’d have to fumigate, replace all the wallpaper, replace all the floorboards, and re-popcorn the ceiling if I was ever going to sell the place. Otherwise, I’d never get rid of the smoke smell, and nicotine stains.”

“Still though...” Molly trailed off, shooting daggers with her eyes at Ruby one more time, before continuing “... It’s a lovely room.”

The dining room was much the same in decor — and amount of plastic coverage — with just a china cabinet containing a vintage Noritake pattern standing tall in the back by the window. However, off to its side, the kitchen was the first room in the house that showed signs of being alive and well. There was no dust to be found, and all the tile was freshly cleaned and wiped down, with the hand-washed pots sitting in the dish drainer being the only thing that even looked remotely out of place. The large block cutting board sitting on the kitchen island showed signs of rigorous use, but was well maintained, and oiled regularly. On top of it sat a knife, and off to its side was a home assistant speaker screen. The cabinets and tile floors all looked like something straight out of a nineteen-fifties issue of *Home and Bazaar*, but all of the appliances were relatively new. Will said, “My grandma and I used to cook meals together every night. I still cook for myself, but I find it’s hard to just prepare a meal for just one person, and not wind up throwing away a lot. I thought about trying those meal delivery kits, but I’m afraid her ghost would rise from the grave, and terrorize me for the next fifty years.”

“Oh my god! Is this yours?” squealed ruby, lifting a white waist apron from its hook in the front of the pantry. It had lace accents around the seam, and a large pocket to the side with a little pink bow.

“No, I just left it there... in umm... in memory of my grandma.” Will stammered, while his face began to flush crimson. “I don’t even really wear an apron when I cook.”

“I’m sure,” Ruby replied, through a tight grin. “And this fresh ketchup stain is here because of some kind of quantum tunneling situation, I’m guessing...” she taunted.

“Okay fine, you got me,” Will said, before swinging the pantry door open, revealing a laundry basket full of kitchen towels, aprons, and dozens of cloth dinner napkins. “I use every apron in the house to death before I wash them... I mean I really, really, really hate doing laundry.”

Looking into the basket, both girls couldn’t help but guffaw at the sight before them. Even Molly was cracking up, her hand over her mouth, which did little to hide the obvious glee in her expression. She noticed Will’s embarrassment, and quickly tried to comfort him. “It’s cute though,” she said, but the damage had been done. Mortified, but trying to salvage any scrap of dignity he could manage, Will found a seat at the small kitchen table in front of the bay window that looked out over the back yard. Gazing upon the scene Molly thought, “This place is almost a Norman Rockwell painting.” After regaining their composure, the trio made their way up the stairs.

The next room was the master bedroom. It was much larger than the girls expected, and both couldn’t help but fantasize about what they’d do with it if they ever found themselves in possession of such a suite. The room itself was quite large, with a large oak bed in the middle of the back wall. On the opposite side

of the room from the door was a sitting area around a small coffee table, all around a small turn dial box tv on the floor. The only somewhat modern piece of technology in the room was the adapter box, so her antennae could pick up digital signals, and convert them into something the ancient machine could understand.

Right by the entryway was a vanity filled with so many perfumes and powders of such fine quality, it would have made Solomon blush, as well as enough vintage hair care equipment to fully arm a midcentury beauty salon. To the right of the vanity was a small hallway that housed his and hers sinks complete with brass faucets, and parlor mirrors. On the opposite side from them was a large walk-in closet with mirror doors, packed to the gills with the entirety of his grandpa's garments, and some of his grandmother's as well.

Finally, at the end of the small hallway was the bathing area. There was a commode with some old magazines on the back right by the door, a glass-doored shower against the wall, but the star of the show was right in the middle of the floor. The sunken jacuzzi bathtub was easily the most expensive fixture in the house. Large enough to fit four people, it was the nicest tub either of the girls have ever seen. "I'll be right back with my bubble bath," joked Molly, while Ruby stood by with her chin nearly on the floor. "This must be your favorite part of the house."

"Actually, I've never used it. My grandma was set in her ways, and didn't like it when people messed with her things."

Will then lead him back out into the hallway with Ruby closely following behind. They came to the next room, which was supposed to be Will's grandma's sewing room, but perhaps a more accurate name for it was a second walk in closet. There were racks and racks of vintage dresses, skirts, and blouses in various styles, ranging from the forties, all the way up to the early seventies. In the corner was an antique sewing machine, and an adjustable dress form across from a large table covered in various fabrics, zippers, buttons, scissors, and the like.

The room smelled somewhat of mothballs, but that did nothing to detour the two young ladies from rummaging through the racks, garment to garment, squealing at the absolute buffet of vintage pieces before them. It didn't take too long before Ruby hung her head and cried, "Your grandma was one of those tiny bitches from back in the day! Women back then were always starvin' themselves, and they were all so much shorter. That's why it's hard for curvy girls like me, and tall girls like Molly to buy actual vintage pieces, instead of just reproductions. Most women back then were closer to your size..." she said before realizing she might have hit a sore spot with the short boy in front of her, "... but you're still growing, I'm sure... Oooh! This sewing machine is wonderful!" She quickly turned her attention to the hand crafted piece of machinery.

It was one of the older models that folded up into the table, and in lieu of an engine, had a pedal mechanism to manually power the device.

While that captured all of Ruby's attention, Molly found herself entranced by a large black and white photo of a woman hanging on the wall. Her hair was in an updo, fronted by two asymmetrical victory rolls, and her makeup was immaculate. She was wearing black pumps, and a short silk slip, covered strategically by a fur coat in just the right places to send the intended signals. Molly read the bottom of the photo before asking, "Who is Billie Jean Monroe?"

"That was my grandmother," said Will, matter of factly. "That's actually the real reason I introduced myself to you guys. It was the first time I'd ever seen any other real life human person with a similar style to hers. I guess she was a model when she was young."

Ruby peered over her shoulder, caught sight of the photo, and said, "Bullshit. Your grandma was a pin-up."

"What's the difference?" Will asked.

"There isn't much of one," answered Molly, her attention still rapt on the photo. Every other photo of this woman in the house showed a person who maybe dressed in an outmoded though stylish fashion, but looked nothing like the vampish beauty that was on display in this picture.

"I'm sorry if it's weird, but I've just been kind of lonely since she's been gone, and you just felt weirdly approachable. I really wasn't trying to be creepy or anything."

Molly's instinct to nurture kicked in again, and she pulled him in tightly and said, "Not creepy at all darling."

After a few more moments, Ruby broke the silence, and said, "I feel like we must have seen this whole house already, and we still haven't seen your room. Do you live under the stairs like Harry Potter or something?"

Will replied, "No, but my room is pretty boring. There's not a lot to it." He led the two towards the last door in the hallway, and opened it. To say the room was small was an understatement. His grandma's wardrobe wouldn't have fit in there. There was a bed, a dresser, and a desk with a computer. That was it. The walls were bare. The floor was bare. Everything was bare.

"I'd say 'boring' is an understatement," Ruby joked while she and Molly took in the whole situation. There were some jeans balled up on the floor, and the room didn't have the layer of dust that seemed to permeate the rest of the house. Molly wasn't one hundred percent apprised of the entire situation here, but she knew this was no way for a person to live.

She asked, "So you have this entire house to yourself, and you spend all of your time in this room or the kitchen?"

"I mean, I use the hall bathroom too," Will joked back, trying to diffuse the awkwardness that suddenly filled the room.

Ruby chortled, then commented, "Seriously though, I don't know how you do it. If I was your age, and had a house like this, my friends would be over all the time, and this place would be trashed. I'm surprised this isn't *the* hangout spot for the neighborhood."

Will answered solemnly, "I don't really have friends. I never really have."

"That's surely not true," said Molly in disbelief. "You're just so sweet."

Will had to think for a moment before opening up. "I mean, it makes a certain amount of sense. Being raised by my grandma, I guess she didn't really have any friends with kids, and on the rare occasion one of her book club, or tea time companions would drop by with a grandchild, they were usually mean, or indifferent, or whatever, and we didn't really play together." The young man sighed. "She also insisted on homeschooling me through elementary school because she didn't want to haul me across town every day. I begged to go to public middle school and she finally relented, though I regretted it when the day finally came." Will smirked, wryly. "At that point, I found it hard to connect with the other kids. The boys were all pretty mean, and they made fun of me for being so small. They would regularly use an F word I found repugnant. Before it was all over, I didn't really want to know any of them anyway."

He paused for a moment, with an introspective expression before continuing. "A few girls on the other hand were more tolerant, and I think they tried to include me with their group at first, but they just kept going on and on about whatever kpop trend, makeup trend, or whatever was in, and by high school, we'd just stopped talking altogether. Like, I didn't even know a quarter of the bands they brought up. My favorite musicians are Wanda Jackson, and Johnny Burnette."

"No way!" exclaimed Ruby, "Wanda Jackson is my favorite too!" She threw her hand up for a high-five, and Will unskillfully complied. You could tell he had not given many in his nineteen years.

Molly's heart swelled for this child. She knew she wasn't that much older than him, but he was so naive and inexperienced, and she could tell he'd been taken care of for all his life. She didn't ask, but at this point assumed his grandma was the one to cut his hair, and that's why it was in its current unkempt state. He was eating enough, and he was clean, but outside of that, this kid was hanging on by a thread. Once again she wrapped her arms around the boy, hugging him firmly from behind, before saying "You can't say you haven't got friends anymore, because you have two right here."

Ruby was less convinced of the purity of the youth before them, but held her tongue. "I'm curious, what is it that you do again? I asked you last night, but by that point you were pretty sloshed, and I didn't understand a word you said. Something about computers?"

“Oh, I’m a social media manager,” Will said, much to both of their surprise. “I also dabble in graphic design. I mostly create banners, and icons. Occasionally I do a thumbnail for a youtube video, but a lot of the time those are just still frames. Other than that, I schedule posts, type up video summaries, respond to DMs, and handle all of the other minutiae that comes with having a social media presence.”

“I gotta say, I did not see that coming,” said a shocked Ruby.

“I might not have a ton of experience with people on a personal level, but I have spent a ton of time on the internet. I guess I have enough talent for understanding the aesthetic and language that my clients are trying to curate, and how to fold that into the cultural zeitgeist that’s happening on the internet. That plus google analytics usually gets me at least some increase in my clients social media traffic.”

“That’s so interesting. Do you make a lot of money?” asked Molly.

“Not a ton,” he said, pausing to figure out how to respond. His grandma had always drilled in that antiquated idea of not talking about money because it was gauche. He continued, “I mean I don’t have a ton of clients. Mostly streamers, but I am managing all the social media accounts for a small online thrift store based out of Oregon. The house is paid for already, the bills get paid, I get my groceries delivered, I pay for my internet and streaming services, and every now and then I can afford to buy a new game, or upgrade my PC. It’s not perfect, but I’m getting by.”

“That’s pretty impressive for someone your age. You’re kind of making me feel bad about myself,” joked Molly.

Standing, Ruby said, “Seriously though, we could probably use some help in that department. We’ve mostly grown our business by word of mouth, but maybe we could do more with social media. We can talk about it tomorrow when we come over, and take you out to lunch. You definitely need to get out of this house more. For today however, we must sadly take our leave. We’ve got a gig up in Los Feliz, and we need to get going.”

“She’s right,” Molly said forlornly, before squeezing Will one last time, and then kissing him gently on the forehead. “We’ve got bills to pay too, but we will be back tomorrow. You’re not getting rid of us that easily.” As they walked away from the house, they waved their goodbyes, and Will returned inside with a skip in his step.



Over the next several weeks, Ruby, Molly, and Will found themselves hanging out more and more often until it was every day. The girls had made good on their promise to take him to lunch, and several times since the trio enjoyed a

meal together. With every outing, Will was finding it easier and easier to get out of the house. He'd started working on their social media presence as well, and engagement was up significantly. Since then there had been a noticeable uptick in requests for Ruby and Molly's services all across the state of California and beyond. Things were definitely on an upward trajectory for everyone involved.

The girls had learned a lot about Will. His grandmother had taught him many skills. Obviously, he was an excellent cook, but she'd also educated him in both ballroom, and jazz dancing with such vigor, that he was an expert at both leading and following. His grandmother said it was so he would have an understanding of what his partner was doing, and that way he could anticipate their needs as they moved across the dance floor.

She also taught him a lot about color pallets, and how to use them when dressing or decorating; a skill he found quite useful once he'd started dabbling in graphic design.

Through story after story, they started to see the whole picture, though. Will's grandma obviously loved her grandchild, and she wanted nothing but the best for him, but she'd failed in several ways.

One could assume it was due to her shortcomings in raising her daughter. Letting Will's mother grow up care-free, had taught her nothing about responsibility and had left her mother with another baby to raise; a child who couldn't help but shake a feeling of disposability, his whole life. Through constant micro-managing, Will's grandmother raised a person whose entire life was wrapped around hers.

His taste was her taste. His opinions were her opinions. She was his best friend, and he was hers. That was how, with the best of intentions, she'd left the poor child unable to function once she was gone. He didn't really know how to connect with his peers, and he struggled with making decisions for himself.

Eventually, Molly felt comfortable enough to encourage Will to move on with his life. She tried to gently nudge Will out of his comfort zone regularly, and every little bit was helping, though the two biggest contributors to loosening him up turned out to be Mary Jane and Jose Cuervo.



One afternoon, Will was sitting in the girls living room, smoking a bowl with newly acquired expertise. A few puffs later, Will went to pass the pipe, and he noticed his friends had both nodded off in their chairs. Ruby and Molly had been running themselves ragged for the previous few weeks since their bookings had gone up, and both of them were well on their way to dreamland. Deciding to let them rest, he stood up, and started to make his way towards the door, but just as he was leaving, he glanced over to the mess in front of their

washing machine, and noticed a colorful, floral patterned bundle of cloth on the floor. In his stupor, he picked it up to discover it was a pair of Molly's floral print panties. Molly had probably intended to wash them, but they never made it into the machine, and Will was all too aware of her scent as it lingered on the undergarment.

Molly saw Will as a cute little boy to be taken care of, but in reality, he was a young man, and the desires of a young man were present, even if he was far too meek to act on them. His infatuation with her had kept him coming back, but he'd probably never get the courage to do anything useful about it. His current inebriation however did plenty to tear down the impulse control that would have normally stopped him from sticking those panties in his pocket and sneaking quietly out of the door. If only he'd known that one of the four eyes he'd thought was closed was in fact, wide open.

That next morning, Will awoke to the very same knock that had startled him to consciousness that first morning after meeting the girls. He didn't even have time to say hello, before the five foot bulldozer named Ruby barged into his foyer uninvited. "We need to talk!" she stated firmly, marching into his living room and lighting a cigarette.

"Good morning to you too, Ruby," Will said groggily, before asking, "Where's Molly?"

"She's still asleep. I figured, for now, it'd be best if our conversation was one on one. Sit!" she said firmly, pointing at the armchair. Fearfully, he complied, though he was still pretty confused about what this was all about. "You know, I actually got to a point where I didn't think you were secretly a perv, but you had to go and prove me right. I told Molly that teenage boys are all only interested in one thing, but she didn't believe me, but here we are."

"What are you talking about, Ruby?" He asked, genuinely puzzled.

"Seriously, you're gonna pretend that you didn't slip Molly's unmentionables in your pocket before you snuck out last night?"

When this interaction had started, Will truly didn't recall much of the final hours of the previous evening, but as soon as the words escaped Ruby's lips, he knew what he'd done. "Oh my god Ruby, I'm so sorry!" he cried, hanging his head in shame. "I don't know what came over me. I swear, I've never done anything like this before. Please don't tell Molly." Tears poured down his face through sloppy sobs to the point that Ruby couldn't help but feel a little pity for him.

"Don't worry, I ain't telling her shit," she spit back, still glaring down at him. "Now, pull yourself together. I believe you. I sincerely doubt you've been running some scheme to get to know your neighbors just to steal their underpants. If that was the case, I doubt you'd be so fucking terrible at it. Also, honestly, we've been making a lot of extra money since you've started handling our socials, and I'm not trying to fuck that up either. Molly is too emotional to prop-

erly separate business from everything else. If I'm being honest, I don't think you're the vile scum of the earth, but I also truly believe that if I don't step in here, you're gonna wind up as another one of those incel weirdos who shoots up a shopping mall, and I'm not fucking having it."

That was a lot to unload on the poor boy, and all he could do was just to ask the most obvious question. "So what now?"

"Well, you for sure need to know that this was fucked up, and you're gonna have to pay some kind of price, so you learn your lesson."

"I promise I'll never do it again, Ruby. I'll do anything." Will truly did feel sorry, but was also terrified at the thought of being so completely and totally alone again. When he said anything he meant it.

"You're damn right you'll do anything," Ruby said, tapping her foot on the floor with her arms crossed tightly. "First off you're going to be helping us around the house for the next while. We still have a lot of work left to do before our pad is set up, and an extra set of hands could help us get caught up a lot quicker. You better get used to doing that laundry you hate doing so much, because you're going to be doing quite a bit. Most of our costumes are hand-wash only. In fact, to pour some salt on that wound, you're gonna be wearing one of those pretty aprons you've got stashed away while we do it, capiche?" Will just nodded his head silently, waiting for the other shoe to drop. Another person might have stopped there, seeing the genuine remorse on the young man's face, but she had been working herself up into red-hot rage, and wasn't going to stop. "Also, for the next few months, you're going to graciously wave your fee, because, as far as Molly is concerned, you really want to help us get our business going strong. As far as the rest, I'm not sure yet, but mark my words, you're gonna wish you hadn't played the perverted panty thief. Do you understand?"

Will nodded his head, tearfully. "I need to hear you say it, darlin'," Ruby added coldly, without an ounce of sympathy.

"I understand," he squeaked.

"Good. Now if you can get through your probation, we can go back to how things were, and we're good. Molly will be none the wiser, and you and I will be great friends, who can let bygones be bygones, but if you screw up, and act on your pervy impulses again, I'll come back over here, and I'll take one of your balls." She let that statement sink in for a beat. "After that, I'll tell Molly. She may be unreasonably sweet, but I guarantee you, once she hears about all this, she'll be back over here to take the other. Now go get her undies so I can sneak them back into her laundry before she wakes up." Shamefully, Will scurried off to comply with her orders, mortified at the thought of Ruby's threats. From there on out the humiliated boy was definitely going to be on his best behavior.



One day, about a month later, Will was making lunch for everyone. He was doing this not at Ruby's request, but because he genuinely enjoyed feeding people. The inevitable praise was one of the few things he'd ever really allow himself to be prideful of. Still, he was wearing his frilliest bib apron while he handled his veggie prep since he didn't want to give Ruby any reason to come down on him. Things had been going well lately, and he was getting the feeling that he was very close to being out of the doghouse.

Meanwhile, the girls sat at the kitchen table, scrolling away on their phones. "Holy shit!" screamed Ruby, with her eyes locked firmly on her device. "Reverend Horton Heat is playing a secret show tonight at some club in the hills."

"I don't know Ruby... that sounds like bullshit." Molly said flatly, pulling herself up from the table and looking over Ruby's shoulder.

"I know, I know... that was my first thought, but this information came through on our business' facebook page, and the message is coming from their official account as well."

"No shit! Why? How?... I mean, what time?" Molly was flummoxed. She could still barely believe the good news. "What exactly does the message say?"

"Tonight, starting at nine, Reverend Horton Heat will be playing a secret show at Alley Cats, just outside Beverly Hills. They're playing a small venue, because they're shooting a music video, and they want to get footage of people dancing, drinking, and carrying on." It's a free show to anyone in the know, but to make sure they get the aesthetic they're going for, they're inviting a bunch of models, like us. They're saying every girl we bring will get one hundred dollars in cash for their trouble."

"That's amazing!" squealed Molly, jumping up and down, before continuing, "We should reach out to everyone in our contacts. It's always good for women to help each other out, and maybe they'll think of us in the future."

Will continued to work quietly, glancing back and forth at the two young women, typing in a flurry on their smartphones. He was amazed that they could display such skill, even in those long artificial nails they wore. A few minutes later, Molly set down her phone, and then looked up, as though suddenly struck with an epiphany. "We need to figure out what we're wearing," she said, standing up and approaching the nearby dress rack stood next to Ruby's sewing station.

"None of those, now." Ruby scolded. "Most of those still need fitting. They're for Vegas in a few days, Honey. We've got plenty of outfits."

"Oh, all right." Molly replied, stomping her foot in a playful manner. "Well, we've got all day until we need to start getting ready..." she started, before turning her attention to Will and continuing, "... so how about that french



onion soup?"



An hour later, the group was seated at the kitchen table enjoying their soup cups, and some cold-cut sandwiches, when Molly asked, "So what are you gonna wear tonight, Will?"

"Wear to what?" Will replied, confused.

"To the show... You *are* coming aren't you? I know you mostly listen to the classics, but this should be right up your alley. I guarantee you'll – at the very least — enjoy the music."

Ruby nodded, swallowing her last bite quickly, before jumping in, "Yeah, psychobilly is fucking awesome and you're not gonna see us for like, a whole week. We're booked at Viva Las Vegas this weekend and we're leaving Thursday morning. You'll need to get your fill of us before we're gone."

"... and you might make some friends besides me and Ruby. That's always a good thing. I mean, you're definitely coming." Molly said, sweetly, but firmly.

"I don't know, guys. I'm probably not even old enough to get in anyway," Will peeped.

"Nonsense!" said Ruby, placing her hands on her hips. "I seriously doubt this is that kind of show — and what are you so scared of, anyway? You've been out with us several times since we've met, and you've been doing just fine. This is just the next step in becoming a fully fledged human being. Besides, we're not gonna know anybody, except a few of the other models, and some of our friends. We'll totally be there to support you."

Will paused for a minute, staring at his plate, before saying meekly, "I mean, I guess it wouldn't be that big of a deal, but I don't have a clue what I'd wear. I pretty much just own like four of the same outfit." He wasn't exaggerating. It couldn't exactly be called a uniform, but his current attire of a pair of khaki trousers, and a white polo shirt weren't exactly what one would call distinct.

Molly patted him gently on top of the head, before saying, "What are you talking about? You've got all that stuff of your grandpa's in the closet. In fact, that's exactly the kind of outfit you should wear to this thing." She glanced at Ruby, her eyes lit up, and asked, "Are you thinking what I'm thinking?"

Ruby's face at first, bore a confused gaze, until her face shifted slowly to match the excitement of her friend's, and suddenly the duo exclaimed in unison, "Makeover!"

The next thing Will knew he was standing in front of the mirror door to his grandparent's closet. Ruby was brushing dust off the shoulders of the suit jacket, while Molly was tightening the tie before stepping back to take a look at the

whole picture. She started positively, "If I do say so myself, you look..." before trailing off.

"Terrible," Ruby said bluntly, pulling the jacket tight, and shaking the excess fabric. "This really doesn't suit you. It's way too big. I guess I didn't expect your grandpa to be this large. With your grandma having been so small, and you not being any bigger yourself, I guess I just assumed."

"That's okay guys," Will said, taking off the tie, and unbuttoning the much too large shirt. Holding up the much too large pants, he took a seat in the nearby vanity chair. It was the first time the girls noticed just how small his frame was. From what Ruby could tell, his ribcage was nowhere near as wide as hers, and his shoulders were barely any wider, almost totally even with his hips, which were somewhat wide for his size, but matched well with his plump, bubble butt. He continued, "It's too bad, I'm not a girl. I mean, my grandma and I were about the same size, and she left enough clothes in the house to dress the neighborhood."

Behind his back, both girls' eyes met, and mouthing half whispers to each other, they formed a mischievous plan. They had spoken privately about how pretty he was several times since they had met the youth, Molly often lamenting the waste of such wonderful eyelashes on a boy, and here he had just provided them with the perfect opportunity. Will saw Molly approaching from behind in the mirror, but was too slow to react. The next thing he knew, she had him trapped, furiously tickling him, leaving him with no chance to respond. Meanwhile, Ruby had found two pink chiffon scarves, and was tying his wrist firmly to the armrest. She then located a stretchy, wide belt, which she proceeded to affix around the back of the chair, and around his biceps, just under his shoulders, firmly pinning him to the seat. He was embarrassed at his predicament, but grateful that Molly had finally stopped torturing him. "Very funny, guys," he said. "You got me. Can you let me go now?"

Much to his surprise, Molly took a lipstick and mascara from the vanity, and straddled him, looking deep into his eye, and with a wicked grin, she said, "Nope. This is happening. You might as well not struggle." before uncapping the applicator, and drawing a perfectly overdrawn cupid's bow across hip plump lips. Next she took the mascara wand, and just as she proffered it to his eyes, he began compulsively blinking. She returned it to his container, and leaned in whispering in his ear, "Do you trust me?"

"That's a bold question to ask, when you've got me bound like this," he joked.

"Seriously, do you trust me? I promise, I will never hurt you... at least, not on purpose. So, again, do you trust me?"

He paused for a moment, thinking about the question, and everything it implied, and realized he did. He sat quietly, while she went back to work, coating his lashes in the thick black substance. Once finished, she stood up, and grabbed a hair brush. While she went to work, pulling all of his hair tightly on



top of the back of his head, Ruby came out of the closet, holding a strapless, baby blue dress that she could only assume was a bridesmaids dress. She slid the opening over Will's pants, and pulled it up to his torso. Molly, having gathered all the flyaways, wound a hair elastic from her wrist around the base of the newly created ponytail. Afterwards, she removed both chiffon scarves, tying one around the hair elastic, and tying the other, jauntily around his neck. After she undid the belt, Will let them finish zipping up the dress, and walked over with them to the mirror to see how their prank turned out.

“Is that me?” he asked no one in a voice befitting a mouse. With minimal effort, he had been transformed from a very young looking boy to a cute, albeit disheveled girl. The eyebrows were a mess, and the outfit was strange, but his face read only as female. At that very moment, as though the universe itself had a sense of humor, the oversized pants fell down beneath the hem of the tea length skirt. Ruby, and Molly were huddled together, laughing so hard, they were crying for five minutes straight. They’d regain their composure for just a second or two, and then someone would crack up again, pulling the other back in. All the while, Will was frantically reaching for the zipper behind his back, and hoping the floor would open up and swallow him whole. Finally, after it started to hurt, they pulled themselves together, and returned to observing Will in the mirror, though this time it was almost academic. Molly was cleaning her glasses in preparation, like a paleontologist, ready to examine a fossil for the first time.

It was Will who finally spoke first. “C’mon guys. Help me out of this getup. Enough is enough. I didn’t think it would be so easy to make me look like a girl.”

“I would’ve,” Ruby said, sizing him up. Will’s face betrayed a slightly bruised ego.

Molly, trying to defuse the situation, said, “What she means is, you’re just so young. Your face hasn’t had time to develop any masculine traits yet.” It was true. Will’s soft pale skin, his cute turned up nose, and his high cheekbones did little to convey a sense of masculinity. It would be safe to assume that the reason he was usually read as male, was solely because of how he carried himself. His voice was quite androgynous even, sounding something like a tomboy sidekick in a nineties kids movie. “Think about it this way,” Molly said, putting her arm around his shoulder, and standing beside him gazing at their reflection, “In fifteen years when we’re both old and ugly, you’ll still be killing it.”

“Yeah, I guess so,” he said with a sigh, still mortified by his own reflection.

“I can’t help but wonder how good you would have looked if I’d spent more than five minutes on your makeup,” Molly said, fussing with his ponytail, still doing nothing to remove Will’s dress.

Will’s eyes met Ruby’s in the mirror, where she was doing nothing to hide her mischievous grins. “No, no, no, absolutely not,” he said, awkwardly giggling, while Molly continued to paw at him like a cat.

“Pretty pretty please,” Molly begged sweetly, with mock sad eyes, looking up at him pleadingly, from behind her hands.

Ruby joined in, prodding, “C’mon darlin’. You’ve pretty much decided you’re not going anywhere tonight, and as a matter of fact, you don’t go anywhere without us anyway. Who’s gonna see ya? We’ve got about five hours to burn before we gotta start getting ready. Let us have some fun... *pleeeeeeaaasse.*”

Her voice asked nicely, but Will could tell from her expression that this was not a request.

With her hand over her mouth, feigning shock, Molly made an exaggerated gasp. "This must be serious. Ruby said please," she joked.

Will tried to look away from both his pesterers, but no matter where he set his gaze, they moved their eyes to meet his. "Fine!" he said, hanging his head in defeat, then pleading, "But only if you don't do anything permanent. Deal?"

"Deal!" the girls said in unison, before setting to task with singleness of purpose. They immediately began taking inventory of their surroundings.

"I found some Nair under the sink," Ruby said, holding up the bottle.

"Great!" Molly replied. "It looks like Mrs. Billie Jean was about the same shade as Will here, and she had a ton of unopened Clinique foundation, as well as some unopened blushes. Most everything else is kind of dated, and from what I've seen of that mascara so far, it's well past its prime. It took all the effort I could muster to stop that last application from winding up a clumpy mess. Also, most of the lipsticks here are that old greasy stuff. Your grandma had style, Will, but she wasn't up to date on modern makeup materials." Taking a moment to push up her glasses, she paused and collected her thoughts. "Okay, I'm gonna get my kit from the house. Show him how to use that stuff, and start thinking of a look. We're gonna need a better outfit, for sure."

By the time Molly was out the door, Ruby and Will were standing alone in the bathroom. With a wicked expression, Ruby giddily said, "I've been struggling to come up with a fitting punishment for months now, but nothing. Then, Bam!" she shouted, clapping her hands together in excitement. "Serendipity, right?"

"So this is it, then?" Will asked hopefully, his face lighting up.

"We'll see. In the meantime I'd suggest you stop whining, and take it like a man." That last comment stung Will sharply, but he thought it better to just keep his mouth shut, and do as he was told. "Just strip, and rub yourself all over with that cream. Wait three minutes, then get in the shower, and wash it all off down the drain, and hang tight. Molly will be right back to help you with the rest."

Will did as instructed. While spreading the thick, noxious smelling goo across this skin, he realized that in spite of how weird this whole situation was, he definitely wasn't bored. Right about when he was rinsing the last of the cream down the drain, there was a knock at the door. "Is it safe for me to enter?" asked Molly, barely poking her head through the cracked opening.

"Yeah, I'm in the shower. Come on in." Will replied.

"I'm not looking," she squeaked, shoving several products blindly behind the curtain. "Wash your hair with this shampoo, and then leave in the conditioner, while you wash that makeup off your face. That face wash has makeup remover in it, so you should be good to go. After that, wash off with this body wash. Your

skin will probably be pretty sensitive, so use the spongy loofah, and not a washcloth. Pat yourself dry when you're done, and wrap yourself in a towel. By then we should be ready for you. I passed Ruby on the way back here, and she was going to grab some foundation garments. If I know her, she'll be trying to carry way too much back in one trip. I'm gonna go help."

Twenty minutes later, Will was walking out of the bathroom with the towel wrapped around his waist, and his damp hair hanging limply. Molly was sitting at the vanity, arranging her makeup, and sipping on a daiquiri. Behind her, on the nearby dresser, the pitcher sat, mostly full, on a towel with two more glasses. Ruby was unzipping suitcases with an unlit joint hanging between her lips, and a Virginia Slim behind her ear. Finally, noticing Will, she examined his figure. "We haven't even done your makeup yet, and that's almost indecent," she joked, gesturing to his chest. Embarrassed, he instinctively put his hands over his nipples, as though there was something to cover. "Don't worry darlin'. I'll help you protect your modesty," she said, lighting the joint.

She took his hand and led him over to the suitcase, offering him a pair of high waisted white panties, with a little pink bow accent, just at the top of each leg opening on the side. "Do you know how to tuck?" she asked, while he just looked on, dumbfounded. "I'll take that as a no." Opening youtube, she found a demonstration video that got the idea across, and sent him back to the bathroom.

A few minutes later, he poked his head through the bathroom door, and said shyly, "I think I did it right."

"Come one out, then." Ruby said, offering the joint in his direction.

"I don't know... It's pretty embarrassing."

"It's nothing we haven't seen before hun. It's just us girls here." Molly said gently, hoping to coax him back out, but simultaneously burying another knife in his chest. Sullenly, he opened the door, with his flat front on full display.

"I'm not even sure why I have to wear these," he said defiantly.

"Sugar, you look great. It's necessary for the whole effect. You promised, remember. There's nothing to be ashamed of."

"It's not like this is the first time you've seen a pair of *panties*, is it?" Ruby asked with particular emphasis on the word *panties*, then offered him the joint.

With that statement, he thought it best to just keep his mouth shut. He took the joint from Ruby, and took a nice, long toke. Almost as soon as he'd exhaled, he found himself more relaxed. He passed the joint to Molly, and sat back down on the bed. Ruby handed him a longline bullet bra that matched his panties, and with a little assistance, he donned the garment. Ruby then padded out the cups with cone shaped inserts. After that, it was a group effort to get the white girdle in place over his hips, until it pressed firmly against his skin,

and everything was smooth and in place. She then rolled a pair of nude, seamed stockings up his legs, and affixed them to the attached garter tabs.

Finally, she helped him into a white, translucent dressing gown, trimmed in feathers that went all the way to the floor. To complete his ensemble, she sat him down, and placed his feet in four inch, clear plastic mules, with a one inch platform under the toes, topped by a matching white, feather covered toe strap. Offering her hand, she pulled him back up, and tried not to laugh when he stumbled a little. "Those are difficult shoes, with no ankle support to speak of. After a little bit of time in those, you'll be a pro with the real things. Just think of it like those weighted clothes they use to train in anime," Ruby said, simultaneously poking fun at his predicament, and his weeaboo interests.

He clumsily made his way over to the vanity seat, where Molly was waiting, holding a fresh daiquiri. She placed it in his hands, and with a mock french accent, said, "Welcome to ze salon, madame. I see you've made a reservation for ze works. Have a seat here, relax, and myself, and my assistant shall see to your every need."

"Why am I the assistant?" asked Ruby, leering at her.

Continuing with the accent, Molly said, "because you are just ze nail tech, but I do ze crowning glory." She lifted his damp hair, feeling the weight. Ruby then wrapped a protective cape around Will, snapping it at the back of his neck, and draping it, so as to save the beautiful dressing gown from being covered in product, before Molly let the hair fall down on top.

"Well, this nail tech better get to work, then." Ruby said, taking a seat next to Will's chair before setting to work, scuffing up the surface of each nail. Molly, meanwhile, had started running a wide toothed comb through his damp locks, and then dug out her shears. She turned back to assess the situation, and noticed the panicked look at Will's face.

"I haven't had my hair cut since my grandma last did it," he said, with trepidation. "Didn't you say you weren't going to do anything permanent?"

"I can tell it's been a while. I'm not going to do anything too crazy with it, but makeover or not, this needs to be done. It's gotten out of control. Remember, you said you trusted me, so trust me." Not giving him a chance to reply, she started by cutting off three inches straight across the back, removing all the split ends, while he winced. She patted him on the shoulder gently, and whispered in the ear, "We're committed now. Might as well see this through."

From there, she started clipping away deftly, as more and more hair fell down on the cape and floor around him. Fifteen minutes later, he asked, "Are you sure you're not taking off too much?"

"I'm positive," she reassured him. "I am just adding in some layers to give it body. I'm doing a classic cut, called a midi. It's just a bit shorter on the side, but it makes the hair very receptive to curls. There. All done." she stated plainly,

before putting down her scissors, and unboxing her roller set. Finally free to move his head, he looked down at his hands, and saw Ruby was gluing very long, white, paper extensions to the end of each of his scuffed up nails.

“Don’t worry, they won’t look anything like this when we’re done.” Ruby said, after noticing his gaze. “I’m not going to doll you up like trailer trash... unless that’s your thing” she kidded, then she returned all her focus to her task.

Next thing he knew, his head was being steered forward yet again by Molly’s firm but gentle grip. Quickly, before she trapped him in one position again, he took another sip of his frozen beverage, which had melted quite a bit at this point, and set it back on the vanity. He had to admit to himself that he could understand why women liked to get pampered so much. The attention was kind of nice.

Molly set to task, working on his damp hair, taking small sections one at a time, and rolling them up in a wire roller, backwards away from his face, before pinning them in place. She continued this process, until his entire scalp was covered in “rows of orderly soldiers” as Molly called them.

The whole time, he’d felt Ruby trimming the ends shorter on the paper glued to his nails, and coating them in a strong smelling solution. Then, she was forcing his fingertips, one finger at a time, into some kind of box. She’d moved to the other side, but still had a few left to finish, which was when he was finally free to move his neck again. He found himself enraptured by the whole process. The way the UV light in the little mirror box put off no heat itself, but that he could still feel the warmth of the chemicals hardening on his nail beds was fascinating. He used his right hand to reach for the glass of daiquiri one last time, nearly knocking it over, as he was unused to the extra length the squared french tips added. After finishing the last drop, he leaned back in his seat, and let the warm sensations wash over him. With his eyes closed, he felt the bonnet dryer being fitted over his curlers, but was rudely snapped back to reality once the device was switched on.

The loud whirring was the only thing he heard for the next thirty minutes. Still he rested his eyes once again, and left the girls to their task. Ruby had finished with his left hand, and he found himself compelled to tap his new on the wooden armrest of his chair. The sensation, though generally unremarkable, was like nothing he’d ever felt before, and much louder than he’d ever noticed when the same acrylics were on his grandma’s fingers. He then felt a pleasant warming sensation on both eyebrows, then a slight pressure, that rested until the substance on his face had cooled. Without warning, he was again snapped back to reality, as the two strips were ripped from his brow, leaving delicate, thin, well shaped arches on display.

“Really pushing that ‘nothing permanent’ rule, aren’t you?” he shouted, unaware of how loud he was talking from under the whirl of the dryer.

“They’ll grow back in a week,” Ruby mouthed, relieving some of the sting, as she wiped down his face with a toner, and then rubbed in a heavy moisturizing cream. Then, using the proper glue, and with the help of a little plastic applicator, she fastened a set of long, thick, false eyelashes to his eyelids, and then blended them together with his natural lashes, coating them all with a heavy coating of Too Faced mascara. After that, she disappeared, leaving Molly to finish the work.

Molly first applied a touch of concealer to a few problem spots, and then started finishing off his eyes. She applied shadow after shadow, blending them all together, and then carefully lining the eyes with an eyeliner marker, drawing out dramatic wings in a classic cat eye shape, and finishing the area with a strip of white down the waterline. Afterwards, she coated his face in a thin layer of ivory concealer, and using two sticks, one dark, and one white, drew lines all over his face in a skilled display of contouring, but what to Will just looked like chaos.

Using a big brush, and a pot of loose setting powder, she started furiously blending out his face, drawing large circles all the way down, until he didn’t recognize himself in the mirror anymore. His visage had been transformed before his very eyes, from gawky teen, to something between a girl next door and a smoldering temptress. She repeated the process with his lips as she had done before, but this time she used a lipliner, and an all day, glossy, cherry lipstick. She finished everything off with a little blush on each cheek, and upon closing the compact, was pleased as punch with a job well done.

Will had a couple of minutes to examine his reflection before Ruby came back into the room with her arms full of various garments. His brain couldn’t even process the change. Molly removed the bonnet dryer, and after a soft pat, proclaimed his hair dry. She took his hand, and led him back over to Ruby. The girls held dress after dress up against his body, before finally making a decision. First, they removed the dressing gown he was wearing, and replaced it with a dainty, white, silk slip. Then, they had him step into a dancing crinoline, finally allowing him to remove the mules, which he was surprised to realize that he had already forgotten he was wearing them. Once all the foundation garments were in place, they slowly worked the dress over his head, careful not to mess up his makeup. They zipped the bodice so it fit tightly, but perfectly around his waist, and finished it off, fastening a belt around his midsection.

He was led back over to the vanity, where he noticed that someone had placed a towel over the mirror. “Don’t want to spoil the big reveal,” Molly said, grinning while she removed roller after roller. After all the little coils had been unwound Will found himself again in a position where he couldn’t move his head. He felt tugging in every direction with a level of force alternating between pleasant and downright painful. While this was going on, Ruby had started guiding his feet into a pair of shoes, fastening straps at the ankles. Once he’d felt the hair resting in place on top of his crown, he then felt Molly brushing

back and forth furiously, on what he could best assume was some kind of ponytail again. He then felt the same sensation at the front of his hair, just above his forehead. Many times throughout this process the room filled with clouds of hairspray, thick enough that he could taste them. Finally, after a flurry of smoothing strokes, and one final spray of Aquanet, his hair was firmly cemented, and he felt a few ornaments being clipped into place.

Will was helped to stand, though he noticed that in the shorter heels, there was not really any struggle to maneuver. The girls had made him close his eyes, and led him back in front of the mirror door, where he opened them for the big reveal. Before, he looked like a girl, but after the hours of work he'd been subjected to, he was now a ravishing vixen. His makeup was more dramatic, but still very soft, in a style akin to Veronica Lake. He was wearing a pink, taffeta, knee length swing dress with cap sleeves, and a conservative sweetheart neckline. There were subtle pleats accenting the bust, and underneath those, at the waist, there was a wide, elasticized, white belt, with a large, ornate, circular, white buckle, and he stood, perched atop a pair of three-inch t-strap dancing heels with rounded toes.

His hair was pulled up tightly on the sides and in the back, and piled high on the crown of his head, spilling out in a large, fluffy, curly ponytail. The front of his hair was parted on the side, and teased high, before sweeping over and curling backwards on the side of his face, blending back into the rest of his hair. The icing on the cake was the single strand, pearl necklace, and matching pearl clip on studs of his grandmas, that adorned his neck and ears, and the pink, fabric bow, that perfectly matched the material of his dress, pinned in place at the top of the base of his ponytail. "So, what do you think of our blonde bombshell?" asked Molly. Will didn't respond. He just stood there, gawking at his own reflection in disbelief. "Will, are you still with us?"

Startled back to reality, Will finally responded, "Yeah, sorry. I was just floored. You two are... um... very good at this. It's like I'm looking at a stranger, but somehow, still very familiar."

"I know what you mean," said Ruby. "I had worn makeup countless times in my life, and I'm pretty sure I was no slouch, but the first time Molly here got ahold of me, I must have taken at least one-hundred selfies, and in every one, it's like I was wondering who the stranger in the photo was."

"It was like that for me too, guys," Molly said, crimson, over the unrelenting praise she was receiving. "I remember the first time Mama Evans 'beat my face' as she put it. When I took burlesque classes back in St. Cloud, she was my teacher. I was so nervous at my first show that my hands were shaking. In the sweetest way she could muster, she told me I was gonna have to get over my nerves, or quit. While I took some time to pull myself together, she did my makeup, and when she was done, I couldn't believe the difference. It was like... well, it was like I was still me, but somehow I felt more..." She paused briefly



and after a moment of contemplation, in a classic superhero pose, standing straight, triumphantly gazing into the distance, arms akimbo, she exclaimed, "Powerful!"

If someone had happened to be walking down the sidewalk, they would have thought the house was haunted, the way Ruby was cackling. After a period of hysterics, everyone calmed, and Will fumbled for the zipper of his dress, saying, "That was pretty funny. I guess you guys need to get going, since you've gotta get ready for your thing tonight. Do you think you could help me get this off before you leave? Also, how do I get this makeup off?"

"No way!" Molly nearly yelled, slapping Will's hand, much to the surprise of everyone in the room. "I didn't do all that hard work for nothing. I'm gonna need some pictures."

"Ohhh! Great idea!" squealed Ruby before continuing with mock smugness, "So good in fact, that it's given me a better one. We should go get ready for tonight, and all take pictures together."

"You're right! That is an even better idea," Molly said, grinning gleefully.

Shaking his head, Will said, "That's gonna take you guys at least an hour. What am I supposed to do in the meantime, bake cookies?"

"Actually, that's not a bad idea," Ruby said, placing her arm around his neck and over his shoulder. "We've already had a few drinks, and we'll probably have a few more tonight. Getting some food in our stomachs wouldn't be a terrible idea. You could be a sweetheart, and make us dinner."

"Abracadabra, you're dinner," Will said dryly, almost forgetting his predicament with Ruby. Her expression hardened at his lack of compliance, and Will began to panic, but was saved by Molly, draping her arm over his other shoulder to mirror her business partner, begging, "Pleeeeeeasse"

"Okay, okay," he relented, correcting course before he pissed off Ruby any further. "I guess I better get started." The group made their way down the stairs, and said their momentary goodbyes, before the girls hurried out the door, and Will made his way into the kitchen. He quickly took stock of his pantry, donned an apron, and started his task. At first, he'd hoped to make something halfway fancy, and settled on omurice, but he ran into an unexpected hurdle when he tried to chop an onion. With the half inch nails, he couldn't get the correct claw shape with his left hand, and his right hand was doing its best to hold the knife properly, but it was a struggle.

He sat down briefly to come up with a new plan, and to take off his heels. He'd gotten pretty proficient maneuvering around in them, but didn't like the way they forced his butt to wiggle in a come hither way, when he walked. Unfortunately for him, he couldn't get the little buckles undone, again thanks to the nails, so for the time being, he was stuck.

Resigned to his predicament, he returned to the fridge and settled on baked spaghetti, using sauce he had canned a few months prior. Aside from boiling the pasta, and grating the cheese, there wasn't a ton for him to do. When everything was in the oven, all that was left was to wait.

Unsure of what to do with himself, he wandered aimlessly around the kitchen, bouncing around in unfamiliar shoes in a manner similar to a child playing hopscotch. Quickly growing bored of that, he absentmindedly let his eyes wander the room, until he caught sight of his reflection in the microwave. Even though it wasn't the clearest image, you could plainly see the mountain of blonde hair, towering high above the back of his head.

More curious than he would have liked to admit, he found himself drawn back up the stairs, appraising his reflection in the giant mirrored door. He was definitely beautiful. This fact did not go unnoticed, however, it instilled conflicting feelings of both shame, and pride. Here he stood, pretty as a picture, looking like a blonde version of his grandma, and he found himself almost infatuated. He'd seen the girls dressed in a similar manner several times up to this point, but without their tattoos, he found his appearance somewhat anachronistic, the apron doing little to help with that. It wasn't even really very girly compared to some of the others his grandma had left. It was a solid white bib apron, with no frills to speak of; just a large, red, cherry print. However, combined with the outfit, it epitomized the fetishized idea of a housewife that was prevalent in modern society.

Will spent so long analyzing his reflection, that he completely lost track of time. Suddenly, he was pulled from his reverie by the sound of a repeatedly ringing doorbell, and the smell of marinara wafting through the house. Hurriedly, he bolted down the stairs, wildly swung the door open, and ran to the kitchen to save the dish before it burned. Oven mitts on, he stood up, holding the pyrex between his hands, and turned to say hello to his friends, where he was startled by a sudden, bright flash.

"You look like a deer in headlights, little miss homemaker," said Ruby, eyeing the display on her DSLR camera. "Let's do it again, but this time smile." After a few seconds, Will's eyes adjusted well enough that he could see the two well dressed beauties in front of him. Molly was there, with a bottle of wine, as stunning as ever. She was wearing a green, rayon, off the shoulder, knee length wiggle dress, with three-quarter length sleeves that ended in a small ruffle, and a pair of matching, four inch, spike heeled, strappy sandals. Her hair was teased up into a half beehive, with the bottom half pulled into a low ponytail, perfectly waved. It hung down over her shoulder, with her matching green hoop earrings dangling underneath her perfectly coiffed 'do. For the occasion, she had decided to forego glasses in lieu of contacts, to better show off her bold makeup, highlighted by pencil thin, perfectly arched eyebrows, dark, smokey eye makeup, and a bright coral lipstick. She let her matching, barrel shaped

handbag drape over her forearm, as she stood, almost posed, with her hand facing up to the ceiling.

Beside her, was Ruby, dolled up in an expert blend of pretty and tough. She wore a sleeveless, red sheath, covered by a black, studded, leather jacket, and stood five inches taller, in her leopard print, platform pumps. Her dark, unruly hair was tamed down into a style not dissimilar from Bettie Page, waving down to her collar bone, and fronted by severe, straight cut bangs. However, her coiffure was softened by the large red flower pinned on the side, just above her ear. Her eye makeup was still done in her signature style, but her lips were done up in a deep magenta, and she had drawn a beauty mark, just above the corner of her mouth. Her only accessory that evening was a leather clutch Will could see stuffed into the oversized pocket of her camera bag, that was draped over her shoulder.

“You know, you might have had better luck if you had warned me first,” Will said flatly, setting the baking dish down on top of the oven. He crossed his arms, tapped his foot up and down, and then mumbled to himself, “Don’t think I didn’t hear the little miss homemaker crack, either.”

“Ohhh!!!! Give me more of that,” Ruby said, snapping picture after picture, the whirl of the film, and shutter audible across the kitchen. “I’m loving this, ‘if I don’t eat my vegetables, you’re gonna ground me,’ energy you’re giving off... Miss Homemaker. Will held the pose, but groaned in a manner that would have done Marge Simpson proud. “Okay, what is your pinup name, then?”

“Pinup name?” he said, basically repeating the question back.

“You know... like mine.”

“Your name isn’t Ruby?”

“Okay... Molly Rogers, I get, but you thought my actual name was Ruby Velvet? That’s too funny. Like, my parents were preparing me for the pole, from birth.” she said, cackling.

Molly also thought that was one of the funniest things she’d ever heard before, but trying to be nice, said, “It’s one of those things that serves a purpose, but is also a right of passage. Like, it definitely helps with the shameless self promotion. Nobody cares too much about Megan Flaherty’s instagram, but Molly Rogers sounds like a busty pirate lady or something. People eat it up.”

“I’d check out Megan Flaherty’s instagram,” Will said, demurely, gazing at his feet.

“Of course you would, because you’re a pure, sweet angel. Nobody has called me that for years though, not even my parents. It’s not really who I am anymore. I’m Molly. When I started posting pictures online, it was my mother who said, Flaherty will get you nowhere.”

“Wow, your mom sounds like a hoot.”

“She is. She really is.”

“Yeah yeah yeah,” Ruby interjected. “We get it. It’s a tradition. Molly’s mom is a goober. Blah blah blah. You still need a name. Now, what should it be?”

Will thought about it for a bit, but came back from his mind palace empty handed. “I don’t know. It’s not really something I would have needed to think about before.”

“Hmmm...” Molly hummed, stroking her chin. “Your grandma was Billie Jean Monroe. Maybe something like that?”

“But, that was her real name, though.”

“No way!” cackled Ruby. “That’s such a stage name. I mean everyone back then used stage names. She might have changed it legally. It wasn’t uncommon.”

“Where did Knox come from?” asked Molly.

Will replied, “It was supposedly my dad’s. I’m not really sure. I’ve never met the guy.”

“Monroe sounds like a good place to start then,” Ruby said. “Maybe two first names also? Jamie Lynn, Kathy Lee... Jennifer love?”

“Those are all washed up celebrities,” Molly said with a laugh. “What about Bettie Jo? Bettie is always a classic, and it makes me think of that show, Petticoat Junction. You’d have the same initials as your grandma. Like a nice tribute for the next hour or so, until we stop torturing you. Thanks for letting us torture you, by the way.”

“Bettie Jo Monroe. I like that,” Ruby said enthusiastically. “It’s perfect.”

Will’s cheeks burned a shade of crimson that could be seen brightly through the thin layer of makeup spread across his porcelain skin. He normally wasn’t burdened with an excess of masculine pride, but the thought of being called by such a feminine name was extremely embarrassing. The more he thought about it though, the more he couldn’t figure out why. If anything, it was definitely a better label for the dainty creature he’d been enthralled with, than Will Knox. He definitely didn’t want to offend, or alienate Molly, and he definitely didn’t want to piss off Ruby by somehow insinuating that feminine things were beneath him, but the small amount of toxic masculinity he’d internalized had his mind racing with a thousand thoughts a second. Unable to find a good enough reason to complain, he came up with no solution, but to meekly agree. “I suppose I could be called worse things.”

“Bettie Jo it is.” said Ruby, snapping a few candid photos discreetly, while they stood there talking. She then strolled up next to him, and playfully slapped his ass, asking, “So, what’s for dinner, Bettie Jo?”

Molly chimed in, “That’s what I’m wondering, too. It smells delicious.”

“Nothing too fancy tonight. I went with baked spaghetti. I was going to make Japanese food, but I ran into some technical issues at the cutting board.” Will said, eyeing the length of his fingers, from his delicate knuckles, to the white tips of his french manicure.

“Just like Mom used to make,” said Ruby, smirking.

Molly, grinning more than she intended, added, “Those things definitely take some getting used to, but you’ll have them down pretty soon I’d imagine. Just look how quick you got used to those heels.”

Summoning up the last shred of masculine pride he could find, Will replied, “I don’t plan on keeping them for too much longer.” Will fumbled through the drawer for a serving spoon, and after planting one in the pasta, carried it over to the table, and placed it on a trivet in the center. The three took their seats and enjoyed every bite of the meal in near silence, as they were all very hungry, and had had more to drink than to eat, up to that point in the day. Before the first bite, Molly advised that he take smaller bites leaned over the plate, like they did, so they wouldn’t have to spend so much time repairing their makeup.

Once the meal was finished, the girls profusely praised Will’s cooking, and helped clear the table. Suddenly, there was a buzzing sound that called everyone’s attention to Molly’s phone, vibrating across the countertop. “Johnny and his friends will be here to pick us up in thirty,” she announced, after opening her phone, and reading the message. “Apparently, he’s been trying to text you, but you never responded.”

“I must’ve left my phone on silent. It’s buried in my purse, in my camera bag,” she said, digging out her device, and dismissing the dozen or so missed notifications. “I’m telling him we’re over here, and to text when he’s here, so we can meet him outside. Otherwise, his dumb ass will walk over there, and ring the doorbell a hundred times, like an idiot. I mean, I know it’s our thing to wear old clothes, but we live in the future now, and doorbells are for missionaries, and delivery folks.”

“I don’t know, I think it’s cute. Like, chivalrous, or something,” Molly said, giggling at her friend’s bluntness. Ruby and Johnny had been dating for a few months. They’d met at a concert and before the night was over, they were hooking up in a men’s bathroom stall, where he expertly helped Ruby and himself to completion. Ruby would often say that he wasn’t the sharpest tool in the shed, but he was definitely the plumpest dildo in the bedside table.

“That doesn’t leave us a lot of time. Let’s get this show on the road,” Ruby said emphatically. She removed object after object from her bag, and after fiddling with a few telescoping tripods, and screwing in a few devices, she’d created an impressive makeshift studio in the living room; ring light, camera, and all. She had Will and Molly sit together on the couch. After peering through the viewfinder, and adjusting some settings, she snapped a few test photos. She assessed the results, and decided on a course of action. “Molly, you’re wonder-

ful as always, but just squeeze your elbows in a little tighter, so we can see a little more bust. Bettie Jo, I'm needing... at the very least... a girl who doesn't know she's sexy, kind of thing. You're giving me... girl who just found a knife wielding maniac in her shower, while she's pooping. Could you maybe try to relax a little?"

Will felt like a fish out of water. The only photos that existed of him were all hung up around the house, and they all looked a little bit out of time. His grandmother had commissioned a photographer to come around several times, as he was growing up. He was photographed at different ages, but it was the same experience every time. His grandma would sit in the same chair, and he'd stand next to her, blank faced, instructed to assume the same pose. Neither of them ever looked happy about it. He always wondered why she forced the whole ritual to begin with. Every shot was in black and white. Given that the photographer was one of the oldest people that Will had ever met and the photos had an antique-like quality to them since they were so out of focus, definitely not up to the typical modern standards of even a hobby instagram account. They almost looked like they were so old that the subjects must have had to sit still for a minute, just to complete the exposure.

Unsure of what to do, he suddenly felt the comforting warmth of a hand on his knee, and he observed Molly, ever the professional, effortlessly serving the camera looks. He decided to just try to copy what she was doing. "That's more like it," Ruby said, snapping a few more photos, impressed by the boy's overblown confidence. "You're doing great, Molly. You're doing great too Bettie, but now I want to tell me you're doing something naughty, but you know you're going to get away with it."

Will's confidence grew exponentially, as Ruby snapped photo after photo of her friends. She then set a timer, and a burst shot, then took a seat on the opposite side of Molly, since she found it a better visual to keep the tallest girl in the middle. The camera went off a few dozen more times, until she stopped it, and pointed the setup at a wall, decorated with a nice flower painting, and an old sconce holding an unburned candle. The group got a few more photos, first as a group, and then a dozen or so for each individual.

A short while later, Ruby finally felt like she'd gotten enough, and plugged in her camera, uploaded the photos to her laptop, and started packing up her kit. In the kitchen, Molly and Will chit-chatted over a glass of water. Molly was effusive with her praise. "You did such a good job. I'm seriously impressed. Like, you were a little shaky at first, but you got it together pretty quick. We've done shoots with way more experienced girls who couldn't hold a candle to you. I just can't believe it."

Blushing, Will said, "Thanks." every time she paused for a moment, unsure of how to handle the barrage of compliments. He was pretty self conscious over the activity he was receiving praise for, but still a little proud nonetheless.



When the doorbell rang, he thought nothing of it as he shouted, "I'll get it!" before walking into the foyer and reaching for the doorknob. It only occurred to Will that anything was out of the ordinary once he set his eyes on three of the scariest men he'd ever seen.

Now, most people will agree that what makes a person scary is subjective. Ruby obviously thought the ring leader, with his backward ducktail hair, and leather jacket, basically covered in tattoos from head to toe except for the sparse few on his face, was a sexy man. If Will could have read Molly's mind, he would have known that she found the man in the trilby, and the bowling shirt, with a neck tattoo and van dyke, very attractive. Even he had to admit that the third fellow, with the high and tight haircut, wearing the button down shirt, matching gray vest and slacks, and buddy holly, horn rimmed glasses wouldn't normally be too threatening. However, given what he was wearing, these three, full grown, red blooded men couldn't be more terrifying.

"Johnny, you dumbass! I told you we were gonna meet you outside!" Ruby yelled, sashaying into the foyer, with a big grin on her face. "Can you seriously not follow one simple instruction?"

Waving his hand defensively, the leather clad individual apologized, "Sorry Babe. I just saw you say you were at the house across the street, you said you wanted to pregame, since you sent the address. Hank wanted to do some shots, too."

The boy in the trilby lifted a bottle of Gray Goose vodka in response, and said, "I got the good stuff, Ruru."

Everyone chalked this up to a miscommunication, except Will, who was pretty sure that the devilish smirk in the corner of Ruby's mouth was caused by a well thought out scheme of his recent tormenter.

"Hi Johnny," said Molly, coming around the corner, wrapping her arms around Johnny's neck and pulling him into a welcoming embrace. In mid hug, she turned her head to face Will, who was still frozen in place, and mouthed the words, "I'm so sorry."

"Hey there, Molly Cat. Looking good without the peepers." Johnny said, while returning the hug, before stepping back, and making introductions. "Ruby, you know Hank. Hank, this is Ruby's roommate Molly. She's the hippest thing this side of downtown."

"Nice to meet you, Mols." Hank said, politely extending his hand.

"I see you've got a thing for nicknames." Molly said, gingerly offering her fingers, allowing Hank to politely grasp them.

Johnny then turned his attention to the quiet boy standing in the doorway. "I'd like you both to meet my buddy, Melvin. He's shy at first but he'll warm up to you."

Melvin gave a little wave and simply said, "Hi."

As was inevitable from the start, everyone turned their attention toward Will, with Jonny saying playfully, “Now, I’ve got no idea who this Betty is. The name’s Johnny. Nice to meet you, sweetheart.” He held out his hand as one normally does, but Will stayed fixed in the same spot, with the slightest hint of quivering in his lower lip, clutching his hands together, and pressing them into his false bosom. Realizing the offered hand was unwelcome, Johnny lifted it into a conciliatory, dejected wave.

“Uhhh... her name is Bettie Jo,” Molly said, rushing to Will’s side, and putting her arm around him in a comforting manner. “She’s pretty shy too, and it takes her a little bit to warm up to people also.”

Will’s eyes darted around the room, examining the expressions of everyone else in the room in rapid succession. When he noticed Ruby’s and Molly’s faces, both of them nodding and smiling big fake toothy smiles, he knew they were doing their best to save him from shame, and through some miracle of fortitude, found the courage to speak.

He said, “Hi guys. Sorry, you all just caught me by surprise. This is the most people that have been in this house in over two years.” His pitch was his usual alto, and his tone remained much the same. He did, however, unconsciously push his vocal resonance high in his throat, which he often did when his nerves were shot. He made a concerted effort to mimic the cadence of Molly, in the hopes that his voice wouldn’t betray what was hidden away under his dainty, beribboned undergarments. Much to his benefit, all of this worked to great effect, with even his usual raspy vocal fry adding to the overall image he was hoping to cultivate in their minds.

He offered his hand in an unintentionally dainty manner, allowing each of the boys to grasp it, and give it a gentle shake. This also went a long way to reinforce the image of the feminine creature he appeared to be. “Nice to meet you, sweetheart,” Johnny repeated in a manner clearly demonstrating that their initial tense interaction was already long forgotten.

“Hey there, Jojo,” Hank said excitedly before immediately following with the question, “Do you have any shot glasses?”

“Uhh, I think there are some cordials in the bar,” Will said, glancing left through the living room door.

“On it!” Hank shouted, excitedly rushing to the maple fixture in the corner, with the other two boys falling closely behind.

Molly and Will met eyes, and she mouthed, “I’m sorry.”, before everyone in dresses slowly trailed behind the boys. Molly gently touched Will’s arms as a way to show silent support. While walking, Molly leaned over and whispered closely into his ear, “We’ll get them out of here as fast as possible. You’re doing such a good job. Just keep it together for a little longer, and everything will be okay.”

Hank stood behind the bar, doing his best impression of Tom Cruise in Cocktail, pouring six shots for himself, and the others standing in front of him. The boys were jovial, with Johnny trying to sing what Will could best assume was an attempt at an old Irish drinking song. Johnny obviously couldn't remember the lyrics, so what sprang out of his mouth was mostly nonsense, and names of adult beverages. After everyone had their glasses in hand, Hank raised his up, and said, "To the beginning of a wonderful night. Cheers!" Everyone raised their glasses in response, and touched them to the surface of the bar before downing them in one gulp, Will being just a couple of seconds behind the others since he was just copying what he'd seen everyone else doing. "Another!" shouted Hank, holding the glass in his fist above his head.

"Please don't smash my crystal, Thor," Will said dryly, feeling his stomach turn, after downing his first ever shot. Everyone else seemed to be feeling okay, as they were all chuckling at his joke, while Hank poured everyone another shot.

"A fellow nerd, I see," Hank said, pushing a refilled glass across the bar by the base of the stem.

Will took the glass with trepidation, and posed the question, "Is it really that nerdy, when it's the most watched movie series ever?"

Hank finished dispensing the spirits around the bar, and once again raised the glass above his head. "Excelsior!" he shouted, before downing the shot, and then everyone else followed suit.

After completing the ritual, Will discovered Hank was a decent houseguest when he collected everyone's empty glasses and cleaned them in the small sink in the back of the bar. "Let's get this show on the road, I guess," said Johnny, suddenly standing up straight and patting his pockets. Finding a cigarette, he placed it between his lips. He started to shuffle towards the door and the other guys followed behind.

Will turned to face the girls, trying to quickly come up with an excuse to stay, when he suddenly felt a cold sweat on his forehead, and his mouth felt both extremely wet, and very dry at the same time. He took a seat on the couch and his face flushed with a faint green pigment. Out of habit his legs started to spread apart in an immodest fashion, but Molly and Ruby were quick to sit by his side, and gently coaxed his knees together, and Molly checked his forehead with the back of her hand.

"You okay, baby?" Ruby asked, stroking his back.

Realizing a way out of their predicament, Molly asked, "Do you need to stay home tonight?" Then, turning to the boys, she explained, "She's only nineteen."

Will's stomach had started to settle, and he was definitely feeling a buzz from the two shots. The sensation of Ruby's nails digging firmly into his knee told him he better pull himself together. "I'm okay now. It's not a problem."

"You sure, Jojo?" asked Hank, in an elder-brotherly fashion.

"Yeah, I'm great," he replied, much to Molly's surprise. She gave him a ladder, but, from her perspective, he seemed perfectly content to keep digging.

"She says she's good," Johnny said, giving the thumbs up to Will encouragingly. "Don't worry Dollface, Melvin here just turned twenty-one a couple months ago, and on his birthday we went bar hopping. We ended the night cleaning puke off the side of my rocket."

"That's friendship." Hank said, putting his hands on Melvin's shoulders, and playfully giving him a shake, while the embarrassed boy tried to swat him off.

"I almost forgot he was here," Will said earnestly, eliciting peals of laughter from Johnny and Hank.

"The girl has got jokes!" Hank said, emphasizing each word.

"Don't let him fool you, Baby. He may be quiet, but the boy can get down," Johnny said, playing wingman.

"Shut up guys. She doesn't wanna hear all that," Melvin said, rubbing his hand on the back of his neck and blushing.

"Are you good to go, Bettie Jo?" Johnny asked one more time.

"I'm perfect. I already feel much better," Will replied.

"Alright then," Johnny said, trying to hype up the room. "Why don't you girls get your stuff together, and let's get out of here?"

"Alright, ladies..." Molly said with heavy emphasis on the word, ladies, "... let's finish getting ready, I guess. Did you still need help finding your purse upstairs Bettie?"

Taking the hint, Will responded, "Yes... yes, I do." Will and Molly went upstairs, while Ruby finished packing up her camera equipment, and the guys shuffled aimlessly around the living room.

Molly was darting around the bedroom, stuffing a white handbag with a silver ball clasp on top she'd found in the closet, with various bits of makeup and perfumes, while Will stood silently in the doorway, a little nauseous, and a lot tipsy. He was trying to retrace his steps to figure out just how he'd gotten himself into this predicament. Molly demonstrated how to carry the purse over your forearm, and then thrust it into his hand. She draped a diaphanous white shawl over his shoulders. "This doesn't do a lot, but it should help with the evening chill at least. Your walk is pretty good, but try to take shorter steps, and aside from that, I don't see any reason why we won't pull this off tonight. Let's go Bettie." She offered her arm in a gentlemanly manner, and escorted Will back down the stairs, and gathered her things. Will was still extremely nervous, but he found some comfort in the fact that Molly would be looking out for him.

Once the girls had all collected their effects, the group made their way out of the house. The restored '51 Cadillac might have been the most expensive car

he'd ever ridden in, but Will thought it more like a clown car, as he found himself stuck between Ruby and Molly in the back seat. His eyes watered at the thick smoke that filled the vehicle. Ruby, Johnny, and Hank had their windows cracked, but barely, since Ruby threatened death if they ruined everyone's hair.



When the group of six arrived at the club, the parking lot was already filled with concert goers, excited for the evening ahead. There were some people dressed rather plainly, in comfortable skirts or slacks and flat Keds, ready to dance. There were other people, dressed in typical punk rock gear, denim vests riddled with safety pins, spikes, and patches, sporting piercings, and bold hair colors. There were still other people who looked like they spent their Saturdays mowing their yard, or shopping at Ikea. Reverend Horton Heat fans definitely



weren't a monolith, but one group in particular captivated Will; the pinups and greasers.

Their crowd was a sea of petticoats, pencil skirts, polka dots and pomade. They wouldn't have looked out of place in an off Broadway production of grease except for the anachronistic tattoos, unorthodox prints, and bright bold hair colors. The boys seemed to either be extremely overdressed, or extremely underdressed, but the girls exclusively skewed in overdressed direction, with hair rolled, twisted, teased, curled and smoothed to perfection. Will didn't know whether to take comfort in the fact that he didn't look the slightest bit out of place, or to be utterly terrified by it.

The group moved through the crowd, saying hellos, sharing hugs, and exchanging pleasantries. Ever the politicians, Ruby and Molly spoke with person after person, complimenting outfits, and asking about upcoming gigs. Will trailed behind them like a terrified puppy, only occasionally being introduced to someone, and quietly saying hello. He blushed at the effusive compliments he'd receive over his look, trying to pass the praise to the girls for creating his aesthetic, but some people were unrelenting, attributing much of his appeal to his pretty face.

A few people carrying clipboards came out of the building, and went from person to person with a release form, getting signatures. A large man with a white beard had pulled Ruby aside, and she pointed out every girl who she'd brought. The man then went to each girl, and handed them a crisp hundred dollar bill. Will was surprised when the fellow approached him last, and handed him cash as well. "For me?" Will asked.

"Not bad for a couple hours of work, right?" the man said, laughing in a way Will imagined a bear would laugh if they could. When Will signed the form, he took his time, and carefully signed the name Bettie Jo Monroe, in perfect cursive with a little heart over the i. He'd played around with a few handwriting styles for work, but this was the first occasion he'd found to use the girlish script. He was feeling a little smug, as he beamed with pride over the quality of his ruse. It didn't go unnoticed by Molly, who had been peering over his shoulder.

A short time later, the doors opened and the crowd shuffled in. The venue was smaller than most, but large enough to accommodate the two-hundred excited attendees. The bar was awash in neon lights, and several bartenders were hurrying back and forth, making drinks for the swath of rabid customers ready to cut loose for the evening. The lighting was dim, and a blend of several colors, but with a few bright white spotlights pointed down at the hardwood dance floor in the middle of the venue. There was a large wooden stage, set off by a bright red curtain, not dissimilar from what you'd find in a high school auditorium. The walls were covered in dark paint, and accented by a design engineered to resemble roman style columns, from the floor all the way to the ceil-

ing. Gatherings began to form around the tables and booths, and a few people meandered around the dance floor, eager for the concert to begin. Perched high atop a couple of platforms in the back, were two studio cameras pointed at the stage, opposite to them beside the stage were two more pointed into the crowd. Moving throughout the crowd were several camera operators doing their best not to bump into anyone with their stabilizing rigs. In all the action, a contingent of people had already made their way to the restroom, and were primping and preening in the mirror, in anticipation of the night ahead. Ruby and Molly were in this group, so by default, Will was there too.

“Do you guys mind if I get some shots of everyone crowding around the mirror?” a camerawoman asked, peeking through the door. “Not at all,” echoed the answer from girl to girl. Molly turned to see Will’s confused face, and whispered in his ear. “Get your lipstick from your purse. Stay inside the lines and you’re good. Long smooth strokes. Act like you think you’re the sexiest thing putting it on, and that you’re thrilled by it.”

Will followed Molly’s instructions to the letter. Crammed in next to all the other girls he repaired his lips, and leaned back taking in the whole picture. As his eyes moved around his face, a proud smirk crept into the corner of his mouth, and his face found itself with a sexually charged expression. “Perfect,” Molly whispered, gently squeezing his thigh.

“Thanks ladies,” said the camerawoman before returning to the floor.

“Thank you!” came the chorused response.

“This is a hoot!” one girl said, excitedly. She was pressed beside Will in the mirror, and was now standing next to him as the cluster was breaking up. She was wearing a very low cut gray wiggle dress, and a black bolero sweater with matching pumps, that flattered her very full figure in just the right ways. Her aqua hair was done up in victory rolls in the front, and spilled down her back in the classic pageboy shape. Will could tell she was at least in her thirties, but her face was painted expertly, creating a timeless beauty. “Thanks again for passing along the word, Molly,” she said, over the top of Will’s head. “Is this your work?” she said, pointing down at the shy boy.

“How’d you know I did her makeup, Roxy?” Molly replied.

“Are you kidding? It’s dripping with your signature flair. Impressive as always kiddo.” She placed her hands on Will’s shoulders, turned him to face her, and stared deep into his eyes. Will was too dumbfounded by the forwardness of this woman, to even react. “What’s your name, little one?”

“B... Bettie Jo.” Will stuttered. Her gaze intensified. Will just knew that this woman was on to him, and was about to expose him as some kind of pervert in the ladies room.

“Bettie Jo, huh...” she said, trailing off for a second before continuing, “Bettie Jo, darlin’, I think you’re gonna give us all a run for our money, if you keep at it.

Roxanne Rockette; nice to meet you.” She leaned down and kissed the air on both sides of his cheeks.

“Roxy rocket? Like from the old Batman cartoon?” Will asked. “That’s the first time I’ve ever heard that name from anyone besides old nerds on the internet.”

“I’ll have you know, I am one of those old nerds on the internet,” Roxy said, feigning hurt feelings. “How do you even know about that show? You must’ve been a baby when it was on TV.”

“I wasn’t born yet actually,” he said, blushing, “I’m nineteen.”

“Well you can pass for older, but you really are just a baby though. Where did you find her, Molly?”

“She’s my neighbor,” Molly said, wrapping her arms around Will’s neck from behind. “She was gracious enough to let us give her a makeover today, and she got roped into coming tonight.”

“She’s just precious. What do you say, we go find a table?”

On the other side of the room, the men followed a similar ritual, preening in the mirror, much the same as the girls, but with less hairspray and eyeliner — instead there was more grease and mustache wax. “That Bettie is a real Betty,” Johnny said, more impressed with his wordplay than he should have been. He was combing through his hair with a switchblade comb, taking great care to leave the small twirl of hair hanging down, right at his widow’s peak. “Don’t get me wrong, I’m no pedo, but you should take a crack at that, Melvin.”

“I don’t know, Johnny,” Melvin replied. He took in his face in the mirror, and with a little product, evened the ends of his mustache. “She’s out of my league. I mean, I could try, I guess. What’s the worst she could say? No?”

“What did Wayne Gretsky say? Do or do not, there is no try.”

“That was Yoda.”

“Whatever, man. You’re a good guy. You’ve got talent, and stuff. Stop kicking yourself, and go for it.”

Will sat at a tall round table beside Molly and Ruby, while they waited for the crowd at the bar to thin out. “I think I’m ready to brave the mob,” Ruby said, grabbing her wallet. Almost as though on cue, Roxy snuck around from the side, and set four cocktails on a tray on the table.

“Treats from the management, ladies,” Roxy said, taking the last seat.

“How the hell’d you swing this?” Ruby asked, incredulously.

“You know I have my ways. Enjoy your Blue Hawaiian, and shut up,” Roxy said, placing a glass in front of Ruby.

“Ewww, I hate Blue Hawaiians,” Ruby said, making an exaggerated disgusted face.

Roxy reached for Ruby's cocktail, and said, "I guess I'll have to keep this one for myself."

"Free Blue Hawaiians are delicious though," Ruby said, playfully slapping Roxy's hand away much to the amusement of everyone at the table.

Roxy then set drinks in front of Molly and Will, and then, winking at Will with a finger tapping the side of her nose, said "Our little secret."

Johnny and Melvin walked up from the shadows. Johnny asked, "Has anyone seen Hank?"

"I saw him in the clusterfuck at the bar," Roxy answered.

"How'd you get drinks already?" he asked, noticing the half finished glasses.

"Roxy is magic," Molly replied.

Setting her empty glass on the table, Roxy said, "Looks like we're gonna need some refills. Abracadabra." She got up from the table, and walked around the crowd, and vanished.

Suddenly, the red curtains parted, revealing guitars, microphones, drums, various other instruments, and a single bald man, who tapped on the mic and said, "If I could have your attention please... Ladies and gentleman, if I could have your attention please." The audience quieted down, and save the folks now whispering to place their orders, everyone turned to face the stage. The man shouted, "*How's everybody doing tonight?*" Screams and whistles echoed through the crowd. He again shouted, "Who's excited to see *Reverend Horton Heat?*" This time louder, screams and whistles rang out. He continued, "I'd like to thank everyone for coming tonight. I'm the director. My name is Sam Willis. I'm the one in charge of this whole shindig. If your night turns out terrible, you can blame me, instead of the band. As you know, tonight we are going to record this live performance, and use it for the band's new music video. I've been informed everyone has already signed the release forms. Let me explain what we're looking for from you guys tonight.

"The main thing is, have fun. We want you to have fun. We only get good shots if you're having fun. Be respectful of each other. There doesn't need to be any fussing or fighting. We're all on team RHH. If you fancy yourself a good dancer, I insist you take the floor. If you think you're not a good dancer, well I'm gonna call you a liar. Again, thank you so much for coming, and have fun."

The crowd politely applauded as Sam Willis finished speaking, and a warm up band, consisting of a trio of ladies in matching brunette beehives, and blue, floral print shift dresses took to the stage, and started playing instrumental tunes. Their contribution was greatly appreciated by Will, who felt some of the tension leave the air, to be replaced by smooth guitar licks, and upbeat drums. Returning from her quest for more cocktails, Roxy was carrying the tray she'd somehow stolen with four fresh drinks. Behind her followed a very grateful Hank, who had finally managed to secure three bottles of beer for himself and

his friends. "I don't know how she did it, but with a single wink, that bartender was at her beck and call," Hank said, doling out his spoils. "I'm lucky she even noticed me."

Roxy said, "Oh, hush. I just asked nicely. That girl was far too young for me. She probably just took pity on an old crone." She was playing down her accomplishments. She then set the dainty bowl shaped glass with the long thin stem in front of Will's empty and asked, "Pink lady, for a pink lady?" Will's face flushed to match his outfit, and his drink.

"Now this is exactly what I'm talking about!" Ruby said, eagerly, before downing nearly half of her new beverage in one gulp. Everyone shared some idle chit chat, while they waited for the star attraction to begin. After some time, the guitarist from the trio took to the mic, thanked the audience, and the venue went dark.

A few shadowy figures could barely be made out, each taking their position on the stage. A B-flat major rang out from the electric organ, all through the dance floor, signaling that the trio would be joined by a keyboardist on this occasion. The swell of crescendoing drums filled in behind it, followed by a cacophony of bass runs, and guitar riffs. The lights went on, and the spot initially focused on an older gentleman, wearing a cowboy shirt, a black, western style necktie, and a bright red, glittery sport coat. To his left was a tall, dark haired man, with a pompadour that would have made Elvis himself blush, furiously plucking the upright bass. The drummer was a blonde man, with shaggy hair, wearing a t-shirt and shorts. He looked strangely out of place when compared to his more audacious counterparts. The keyboardist situated up on a platform in the back must have been twenty years younger than everyone else. The noise quieted, and the glistening man stepped to the microphone. With a subtle Texas twang, he said, "I'd like to thank all y'all for coming. This one's called Psychobilly Freakout." Without pause, the band started playing, and music rang out loudly through the building.

Before anyone could blink, Ruby was already halfway to the dance floor, dragging Johnny behind her by his leather jacket. Hank, in a most antiquated display, offered a hand to Molly, with the other tucked behind his back while he bowed his head. "Okay dork!" Molly shouted over the noise, giggling, and then taking his hand. Melvin stood off the side of the dance floor, watching the sea of gyrating bodies, and twirling skirts. The only two left at the table were Roxy and Will. Will sat there quietly, attempting not to make eye contact with anyone, and tried to just enjoy the music. He found that the disharmonic chords behind the song were different from anything he'd listened to before, but they still had the same spirit, and he really liked it. Unconsciously, he tapped his toe underneath his crossed legs, and bobbed his head, while subtly twisting his shoulder back and forth, as the warm buzz from the drinks washed over him.

Members of the group would occasionally take a break from dancing, but almost as quickly as they returned to the table, they were back at it. A few random people stopped and talked to Roxy briefly before moving on, and it went on for about twenty-five minutes, when Roxy suddenly shouted, "I'm about to go get another drink. Do you want something?"

"I could go for an iced tea," Will shouted back.

"Okay..." she replied, with a puzzled expression. "You need to hydrate too. I'm gonna get you a water as well." A few minutes later, she returned with a few more glasses, and passed the dark colored one, and the clear one to Will.

"Drink the water first. I'll be less worried," she ordered. Will complied, realizing just how parched he was, and drank the whole thing in about ten seconds, even more impressively, through a straw. "Oh my god, little one! Your boyfriend must be thrilled!"

"I don't have a boyfriend," Will responded, completely missing the innuendo. He reached for the other glass, and started the same feat, drinking about two thirds of it before he noticed the strong taste of liquor. "What was in that?" he asked, while his face stretched tight at the sour flavor.

"Didn't you say you wanted an LIT?"

"What's an LIT?"

"A Long Island Iced Tea."

"Wouldn't that be an L.I.I.T.? Like, I didn't even taste any tea in that."

Roxy couldn't help but cackle. Through her laughter, she managed to say, "That's because there isn't any. There's like, four different shots of liquor, triple sec and a splash of coke."

"Oh no," Will mouthed quietly, as his head started swimming. The last time he felt like that was the first night he had met the girls. His head started to nod, and he was mere moments from resting his forehead on the table, like a ninth grader sleeping at their desk in first period.

"Nope nope nope. We can't have that," Roxy said, shaking his shoulders. "We don't want to ruin that lovely makeup, do we? I've got just the cure for that." She pulled a large locket from deep in her cleavage, set it on the table flat, and opened it, revealing a white powder.

"What's that?" Will asked, with his head still wobbling, and his ponytail swaying back and forth.

"It's cocaine," she replied, as though nothing was out of the ordinary.

"Isn't that stuff dangerous?"

"Yes, it's very dangerous. That's why you must only ever do free cocaine." She scooped up a bump with her long pinky nail, and held it up to his nostril. "Big sniff, Honey."

Will complied, and was almost instantly snapped back to reality. He was very much still drunk, but the idea of sleep was a distant memory. Roxy then helped herself to her wares, and then held one more bump out for the intoxicated youth. Without thinking, he thanked her, and up his nose it disappeared. He was now well past awake, and felt like he was more than capable of running a very sloppy marathon. Will found himself talking non-stop about everything from movies, to comic books, to video games, and he even spent a lengthy time rambling about what he liked about the different outfits he saw around the bar. All the while, the reserved toe tapping had ballooned into outright dancing along, despite being seated. Roxy sat quietly, grinning ear to ear at the sudden and extreme change in demeanor.

Around this time, Melvin was finishing another beverage, and for the hundredth time tonight he snuck a glance over his shoulder to check out Bettie Jo, only this time, seeing her snapping her fingers, and having the time of her life. Summoning up all his courage he approached the table, and asked, "Would you like to dance with me?"

Will, who up to this point had been gabbing on, suddenly went quiet, and froze. Roxy took the opportunity to answer for him. "She'd love to."

"What?" Will said, looking at her, less shocked by the response, but more looking for some kind of instruction.

"You've been over here, doing your thing all night. You might as well do it with a partner. You're young, and I'm assuming, unlike me, your back probably works right. Let me live vicariously through you for a minute. Go on. I'll watch your purse."

"Okay," he said shyly, then looked back up into the determined boy's eyes. His mind raced a thousand miles an hour, internalizing everything Roxy had just said. Then, almost as though he was possessed, he offered his hand and let Melvin pull him up from his seat. After standing, he remembered just how drunk he was, but found his sea legs, and followed his escort to the dance floor.

There was an awkward moment when, out of habit, Will went to place his right hand on Melvin's hip, before remembering that he was supposed to be the one following. The two comically swapped back and forth, until they both found themselves giggling together over just how harder they were making the situation than it needed to be. Will let Melvin place his right hand on his hip, and joined his right hand with Melvin's left. He then rested his left hand on the boy's shoulder, and the pair were off.

They started slowly, with a few steps barely more complex than a foxtrot. Will suddenly remembered he was wearing heels, and he stumbled for just a moment. He quickly recovered, and thought it better to just relax, and not think about the shoes. They sped up, and their feet started bouncing back and forth in unison. "Do you Lindy hop?" Melvin asked, surprised.

“I’ve dabbled,” Will replied, modestly. “My grandma taught me.” Suddenly, Will felt Melvin’s weight shift, and a flick of his wrist, and next thing he knew, he was being twirled out, where he reflexively struck a pose, throwing his left arm high, and kicking out his leg in a little jump. He was then expertly twirled back in, and carried the momentum, spinning around and around, while he circled three-hundred sixty degrees around his dance partner. Will was dipped and Melvin grasped him firmly on his hips, lifting him high in the air, spinning him around while he did his best to maintain his balance and remain upright. Will briefly panicked as he was dropped, but was quickly caught by Melvin, and the two locked eyes, and hands. They gazed deeply into each other’s eyes, as they twisted their hips and shook their shoulders.



At this point, neither of them noticed the circle of people forming around them, clapping along the beat. They also didn't notice the cameraman, moving across the floor with them, filming every move. They were in sync with each other, and the rest of the world didn't matter. The next few minutes, they were a living wave of steps, twirls, and dips, until the music began to speed up and get louder. As the song built to its epic conclusion, Melvin lifted Will's feet off the ground, and swung his legs from one side of his body to the other.

Now feeling a little cocky, on the last swing, he wrapped his right arm underneath Will's knees, and swung him by the legs behind his back, his ponytail swinging out like the moon orbiting the earth. Through some combination of instinct, and luck, Will tightened his abs correctly, and let Melvin catch him, cradling him like a new bride, before dropping his legs to the floor and lowering him into a deep dip and locking eyes again, just as the music stopped.

"Thank you everybody, and have a good night!" echoed around the building and the crowd went wild. Most people were cheering for the band, but a select few standing near Will and Melvin were enamored with the dance partners, and rightfully so. Will's heart was pounding, and sweat was dripping down his face, when Melvin pulled him back upright, and they both blushed at the attention they suddenly noticed they were receiving. Looking out into the crowd, Will saw Molly, and Ruby with their jaws nearly on the floor.

Johnny, standing beside them shouted, "I told you that boy could get down!"



As the small venue cleared out, a small group had conglomerated near Johnny's car, and were chatting about the amazing night. Compliments rained down on Melvin and Will. Will, firmly back in reality, blushed crimson as everyone praised his daintiness and grace. The chats turned to where the night was heading, and several ideas were floated. Someone suggested another bar, but Roxy shot it down. She said that for the rest of the night, she wanted to hear other people without them shouting in her ear. Molly suggested a diner, but no one could agree on where to eat.

"We could all go to Bettie Jo's house, and grab pizza on the way or something," Ruby said, as though it was hers to offer.

Trying to come to the rescue, Molly said, "Bettie Jo's a little drunk..."

"She's a grown woman. I know I just met her, but from what I can tell, she's anything but stupid," Roxy said, offering a counterpoint. "Let's ask her."

Ruby, direct as always, grabbed both of Will's hands, looked him in the eyes, and said, "You're good with partying at your place aren't you?" To everyone else this seemed like a reasonable question, but Will knew good and well that it was actually a firm command.

Will nodded, looking around at everybody, and after noticing Molly's worried eyes, quickly said, "Okay... but no one goes upstairs... I guess... except Molly and Ruby."

"Okay drunkie," Ruby said, smirking, and taking Will's hand and leading him back to Johnny's car. "Let's get going y'all. And one of you assholes is gonna have to buy the pizza... and someone needs to bring some more liquor. We're not gonna be dicks and drink all hers. I'll text everyone the address."

"She does have that kick-ass bar," Hank said, placing his hands on a very worried Molly's shoulders, trying to offer some kind of comfort.

A short while later, everyone was enjoying themselves in Will's living room, with Hank behind the bar, slinging drinks. It turned out Bettie Jo made one fine hostess. Will was scooting around the room, thanking everyone for coming, modestly playing down compliments on his house, and discreetly sliding coasters under every beverage, just as his grandmother's relentless etiquette training had taught him.

The plastic that usually wrapped the furnishings was now piled up in the corner. The record player was spinning, and the sounds of Brenda Lee hummed softly in the background. Conversations were abuzz, with a jolly mood in the air. Molly had had quite a bit to drink after they arrived, and was sitting on a bar stool, trying and failing to steal Hank's hat. Ruby and Johnny were making out on a loveseat, unaware of the happenings around them. It was almost like a scene from a sixties movie, with a dozen well dressed ladies, and a dozen intoxicated men, trying to impress them. The ashtrays were all filled with butts, as well as a few joint roaches, and a few guests had passed out where they sat.

Will was in the kitchen, consolidating pizza boxes, and picking up some stray trash when Roxy snuck up from behind, and gave him a big hug. She said, "I've got to go home. I only paid the sitter till one, and the Uber is almost here. It was lovely to meet you. Maybe we'll see each other again, at another show or something. I don't do the car show circuit too much anymore, but who knows? I'll follow you on instagram, and you can message me whenever. You're just so precious."

It just then occurred to Will, as he was sobering up a bit, that he'd just made a fun new friend, who didn't know him as anything other than Bettie Jo. He didn't want to disappear on her, but he didn't know what else to do. Getting a little anxious at the complicated feelings, he hugged her tightly, then poured two shots from a nearby bottle, and handed her one. They toasted, and he had another realization. "I'm actually not on instagram," he said, lowering the glass from his lips.

"That's funny, I thought I'd seen you on there before for some reason. Oh well." She gave Will one more hug, and just as quick as she showed up in his life, she was out the door. He couldn't help but feel a little sad. His eyes started

to well up, when Melvin turned the corner into the kitchen, and saw him there, looking pitiful.

“What’s wrong, beautiful?” he asked, gently touching Will’s elbow.

“It’s nothing really... don’t worry about it.” Will said through the little sobs.

“You can tell me whatever. I’m here to listen.”

Caught off guard by the earnestness of the boy in front of him, the words suddenly burst from Will as though a dam had broken. “I have had a very sheltered life, and I met Ruby and Molly a short while ago, and I never really had any friends before them, so having all these strangers in my house right now is the most exciting thing that’s ever happened to me, but now that I’ve met everyone and I’m picking up all these little snippets of what a normal life is supposed to look like, it’s messing with me. Like, I don’t think my grandma was intentionally abusive, but I’m starting to think she ruined me.”

“You’re not ruined though, you’re amazing,” Melvin said, placing his fingers on Will’s chin, and gently lifting it so that Will was looking up into his eyes. “Let’s grab a bottle, and go sit on your back porch, and we can talk all about it.” Unable to think of a better option, Will followed to the back porch, and drinking directly from the vodka bottle, the duo passed it back and forth. They talked about music, movies, jazz dance, and sharing harrowing tales of being awkward in high school. Their conversation started on the porch swing, but they’d taken several trips across the porch, each demonstrating their favorite dance moves, or just playfully maneuvering around each other, in the nervous way young people do, when they want to touch and be near each other, but are trying to gauge the other person’s reaction. Eventually they were both sitting in deck chairs, pushed right next to each other, when a gust came through from the fates themselves, and Will suddenly felt a shiver, and his teeth lightly chattered. “Are you cold?” Melvin asked.

“A little,” Will replied.

Melvin stood, and sat next to Will pulling him in tightly, and warmly rubbing his back. He went to lie on the deck chair, and firmly pulled Will down to join him. Unfortunately for Will, he didn’t have a life of experience detouring unwanted male advances, so he meekly complied, trying his best not to look Melvin in the face. Meanwhile, Melvin seemed to be interested in little else besides Bettie Jo. Mistaking Will’s silence for consent, his finger’s explored Will’s thigh, slowly edging closer and closer to his panties.

“Stop!” Will nearly screamed, but quieted to a whisper halfway through, realizing he might wake the neighbors, and he didn’t need them looking out the window right now. It was too late though. Before Melvin could react, his hand had made contact, and where he expected to feel a moist slit pressed against Will’s panties, he instead felt Will’s own flaccid member, smushed firmly in the tight undies.



“Holy fuck!” he yelled, definitely loud enough to wake up the block. He took a deep breath, and in a combination of whispering, and shouting, said, “Fuck, Bettie! I didn’t know you were trans!”

Will, mortified, with tears in his eyes, stood up, and rushed back into the house, and up the stairs, jumping into bed and pulling the covers over his head.



Not long after, there was a knock at the door. “Go away!” Will screamed.

“Honey, it’s me,” said a voice through the door Will recognized as Molly’s. “I’m coming in, babe. I heard a door slam, and it woke me up, then I saw you run past up the stairs, but you were gone before I could say anything. What’s going on? Whose ass do I need to kick?”

“Melvin found my penis,” he sobbed. “He freaked out. He’s gonna tell everyone. I’m never leaving this house again.”

She pulled him in tightly in one of her signature hugs, and stroked his head lovingly. “I know I just met him tonight, but he doesn’t seem the type to be so cruel. He was probably just surprised. That’s why I was so worried about everyone coming over tonight. I didn’t think you had thought the situation the whole way through. How’d he see it anyway? Did he walk in on you in the bathroom?”

Will’s tears subsided and he took a deep breath. “Not exactly,” he said, looking up at Molly, and blushing. “We were talking out back, and I think he got the wrong signals.”

“Bettie Jo, you tramp,” she scoffed, pretending to be appalled, though a shit eating grin. “I honestly don’t think you have anything to worry about with Melvin, but if you do, I’ll chop it off.”

“Please don’t do anything. I don’t want to talk about it anymore. I just want to go to bed, and pretend this never happened, and never speak of it, or see these people ever again.”

“Okay, so, we both need sleep, but we can’t sleep like this. Let’s get ready for bed.” She gently pushed him to move. “C’mon, get up. If we don’t wash off your makeup, you’ll look like a pock-faced monster in the morning.” Molly dragged Will to the vanity, and pulled off both of their eye lashes, and then rubbed makeup remover over both of their faces using cotton pads. She had him wash his face in one sink, while she did the same in the other. “Now, let’s get into something comfortable. Wait, why are you still in those shoes?” she asked, looking down at Will’s feet.

“I can’t get them off with these nails.” Will whined, spreading his fingers out wide, while Molly struggled not to laugh. She took pity on him, and helped him

undo the straps. Digging through the closet, she found a few comfort items, and handed Will some things, before stepping out back into the main bedroom. Will removed his dress, and foundation garments. Once clad in just his panties, too exhausted to put up any more of a fight, he slid the lavender babydoll nightgown over his head, and after fitting his arms through the little puffy short sleeves, let it fall to where it barely covered the bottoms of his butt cheeks. He put on the matching, sheer peignoir and tied the little decorative bow tie at the bust in front. When he returned to the bedroom, he saw Molly tying a chiffon scarf around her hair, firmly in place with a bow.

“I need to protect my hair, and I am too tired to get this much teasing out tonight,” she said. “Sit.” Molly was pointing to the chair in front of her. She removed the bow from Will’s hair, as well as the band, and started running a wide tooth comb through it. “Your hair isn’t as backcombed as mine, so I’ll have you sorted here in just a minute.” It took some doing, but she had his hair falling smoothly down his back in soft waves. Using a soft bristled brush, she gathered all the hair to the top of his head, and after twisting it around itself several times, pinned it down, forming a large bun. She fitted a silk chignon over it, letting the elastic contract at the base of her creation.

Will removed the peignoir, and the pair crawled into bed together. They snuggled up closely, with their limbs intertwined. “Where’d Hank go anyway?” Will asked.

“He was very sober, since he’d kept himself busy getting everyone else drunk. He said he didn’t want to take advantage of me,” Molly replied, running her fingernails down Will’s back. “I think I like him.”

It was after three hours of not sleeping that it was finally too much. “What have I done!?” The words could be heard all the way down on the sidewalk. They were definitely loud enough to rouse Molly from her slumber.

“What’s going on, honey?” she asked through squinted eyes, stroking Will’s side in an attempt to comfort him. He had woken up about an hour earlier, and went to the bathroom to throw up. His head was pounding, so he drank as much water as he could stomach from the bathroom sink, and crawled back into bed. He lay in a state between sleep, and consciousness, desperately wanting the bed to open up and swallow him.

His thoughts were split between the splitting headache with no end in sight, and wondering why he didn’t pee when he was in the bathroom. After about forty-five minutes of this, he pulled himself up from the sheets, and made his way to the toilet, collapsing onto the seat, and trying to pull down underpants that had already been removed. Heading back towards the bed, he caught sight of his reflection in the closet mirror, noticed the sheer lavender nightie he was wearing, and the events of the previous night came rushing back to him. He crawled back into bed, pulling the covers over his head, hoping that he’d go back to sleep, and when he woke up, it would all have been a dream. Unfortu-

nately for him, this didn't work, and panic set in, building and building until it exploded out in the scream.

Will turned to face Molly, with tears streaming down his cheeks, and sobbed, "Everyone's gonna know I was a boy in a dress."

Molly pulled Will tightly into a warm embrace, and shushed him, like a mother comforting a child with a skinned knee. "Nothing is for certain. He doesn't seem like the kind to..."

"Sup bitches!" Ruby shouted from the doorway, catching the other two totally off guard.

"How are you so chipper?" asked an exasperated Molly, rubbing her temples.

"Because I got dicked correctly last night," Ruby said, smirking. She was wearing sweats and a sports bra. In one hand, she held an iced coffee, waving the green straw around as she gestured, while she spoke. Draped over her other arm was a bag from Seven Eleven, and in her hand she was holding a drink tray, with what appeared to be two more coffees. "Be nice y'all, or Mama won't share her goodies. A coffee for you, and a coffee for you, and a sports drink for each of you as well." After she passed out the hangover remedies, she sat on the foot of the bed, taking a big slurp from her straw.

"Seriously," Molly continued consoling Will, "he seemed like a nice guy. He likely won't tell anyone. He's probably embarrassed more than anything."

"I don't want my whole life hanging on if a guy might keep my secret!" Will wailed.

"Try not to worry about it. Not much we can do anyway."

Ruby was intrigued by the display of emotions from Will. "So, what'd I miss after I left?"

"A bit." Molly quickly changed the subject, asking, "How about you? I don't even remember you leaving."

"We left about the same time Bettie Jo here snuck out back with the dork boy," she said plainly, as though nothing about the event was strange. Will's eyebrows shot up, but Ruby kept talking before he could get defensive. "We walked over to our place, and Johnny fucked me all over the living room, and in part of the kitchen."

"Part of the kitchen?" Molly asked, snickering.

"We stayed off the surfaces we cook on and eat off of. Anyway, he did such a good job that I took him to the bedroom, threw on my strap-on and returned the favor."

Will was genuinely shocked. He'd come up with an idea of the kind of guy Johnny was in his head, and being a bottom wasn't on the list.

Ruby couldn't stop herself from grinning. "I can't believe you just said fuck and dildo, Ms. potty mouth. When did you start using dirty words? I was starting to think you were raised by nuns or something. Also, of course he does. Most guys like getting pegged, but also, most guys are too afraid of their butt-holes turning them gay to try it and find out."

"Could you stop with the feminine names, please? I'm not a girl," Will said with a pout and a growl.

"You might want to reconsider that though. I've got some news," Ruby said, pulling out her phone, and opening her email. She read an email out loud, attempting a posh British accent, "Ruby. I enjoyed the photos you posted last night, and you and Molly look as lovely as always. I must say though, that new girl, Bettie Jo, is quite striking. I simply must have her on Saturday. I can only assume she's not a professional, since she doesn't seem to have much of an online presence. I understand it's a huge ask at the last minute, but I'd be willing to pay *two thousand dollars* for the day." She heavily emphasized the dollar amount. "Of course, I'd also raise both your and Molly's pay to match. Hell, if you show up with the blonde, the brunette, and the redhead, it'll be the full set. I'll even cover your travel expenses if you bring me receipts. I do hope this works out. Let me know by day's end. Either way, I look forward to seeing you bright and early Saturday morning. Best wishes, Gerald Hoover."

"That's a lot of money..." Molly said, imagining what she'd do with the extra cash.

"Isn't he just being a pervert?" Will asked, not entirely believing a person was willing to pay so much money for him to just sit there and look pretty. "Wait, what photos is he talking about?" Will grabbed his phone off the nightstand, and opened Ruby's Instagram account, to find several pictures of himself, and everyone else from the night before. There were the pictures Ruby had taken in the living room before everything got out of hand, but there were also tons of photos from the bar, and even a few featuring Will being spun around the room by Melvin, with Ruby and Molly barely visible in the background. Underneath all the photos were several names highlighted in blue, and in each one them a string of solitary black text that read, Bettie Jo Monroe, though in many different spellings. "I can't believe you posted all these pictures of me, Ruby," he said, annoyed.

Ruby threw up her hands defensively, and said, "Okay, so, I posted the first few, yes, because it's a business and I always need to be expanding my portfolio, but the rest of those are tagged photos of me. I just happen to be in them, but you were the star last night. Fuck, there are probably even more of them where I'm just not in them, or whatever. Check Molly's." Sure enough, there were several more shots of Bettie Jo, from many different angles, with many different facial expressions.

"I can't believe this," Will said, shaking his head.

Ruby crossed her arms, raised an eyebrow, and said, “One, I don’t think you know what grooming is, and two, I sure as hell don’t think Gerry is interested in any of us like that. We have too many tits. He collects cars, sure, but not in a midlife crisis dad sort of way. He’s much more into the aesthetic of it all. He kind of reminds me of John Waters actually.”

“I don’t have tits!” Will yelled, getting emotional again.

“He doesn’t know that!” Ruby yelled back. She thought Will was being dumb. “Seriously, he’s got money, and he wants to spend it on our services. It’s good money, and you get to go to the convention. I think you should take the job. Think of all you could do with the money. You could get some new games. Maybe you could even get a car.”

Will was as angry as he’d ever been. “I don’t want a car! I don’t want to pose for photos! I’m not a girl, I’m sure as hell not a *pin-up* girl, and I want to live my own life!”

The two women stared in silence from the uncharacteristic outburst. They looked at each other for a moment.

“I’ll take the bathroom first,” Molly said, getting up, and leaving the scene as quickly as possible. The room was eerily silent when she left. Will glanced up at Ruby who hadn’t moved a millimeter.

“What do you want?” Will said to Ruby, seething in anger.

“What I want is for you to remember who’s in control here, peaches,” Ruby said with a wicked smile. “Mama’s in charge here. And you *are* going to do the shoot.”

“No. This ends here.” He was trying his best to stand up to the intimidating woman. “Tell Molly about the panties. Tell her everything. I make my own decisions!”

“Ha!” Ruby said, genuinely amused. “Listen, you don’t seem to realize that you now have photos of you in a skimpy outfit frolicking around like a magical little pixie! I had a little blackmail material before, but now I have a treasure chest full of it!” She pointed to the coffee. “Drink up. You have a long day ahead of you. We’re going to start pin-up boot camp to get you ready. And we’re also going to get a wardrobe fit for our favorite new pin-up star. And-and we need to get you some physical enhancements — girl.”



It was an hour later, and Will found himself in the back of Ruby’s old red Chrysler LeBaron. Molly was riding shotgun, and making a list of the things Will would need for their trip. “As far as outfits for the dance, and going out, you’re covered. If any of the other girls had known what you had upstairs last

night, you might have been robbed,” she joked. “Seriously though, you’re gonna need your own underwear, some jeans probably, tennis shoes for sure, and we definitely need to get you some comfortable shirts that actually fit.”

Ruby was still wearing casual gray sweats, and white sports bra. She wasn’t obese by any means, but she was on the thick side, and her exposed belly didn’t have the same set of washboard abs that Molly’s did, but she didn’t care in the slightest. She was proud of her curves and didn’t care who saw them. She was the kind of girl who could leave the house without a speck of makeup on, as she had on this occasion. Her hair, still greasy from the night before, was pulled back off her face by a wide elasticized hair band, and a pair of large, red, circular sunglasses sat on the bridge of her nose. Ruby wasn’t put together as well as girls who felt comfortable leaving the house attired in sweats, but she wore it so well that nothing looked out of place. She was blessed with the ability to make her shabby appearance somehow sexy.

By contrast, Molly was not the type to go out with even a single hair out of place. She was wearing a casual outfit, sure, but a great amount of thought and intention went into it. She wore a red gingham button-down shirt, with the two tails at the bottom tied perfectly symmetrical above her navel, leaving a thin strip of skin exposed. Underneath that she wore a pair of high waisted jeans, ending at a capri length, with the cuffs folded up. She wore a pair of high-top Chuck Taylors that were the same red as her lips. Those lips were the only standout feature with her current makeup, since even though great detail went into her foundation, blush, and mascara, all was engineered to look as though nothing was there. It was all topped by a pair of red, winged, cat eye glasses. She let her hair hang naturally, parted on the left side, decorated only by the clip in bow situated over her ear, pinning back the short side of the part. She knew she was beautiful without all the polish, but was still beholden to the ritual, much the same as how a gambler might wear the same underwear to the track every day, even though it didn’t really matter in the grand scheme of things. She felt confident, and that’s all she cared about.

The girl’s outfits definitely fit them not just dimensionally, but also their personality. Will on the other hand looked anything but comfortable. He wore a pair of torn up old jeans Ruby had from when she was younger, and he’d borrowed one of her t-shirts as well. “I’m not familiar with very many new bands,” Will said, pulling the shirt tight to read. “Who’s Black Flag?”

“Oh my god Bettie Jo, if I didn’t know better, I’d say someone used a time machine to kidnap you, and bring you to the future,” Ruby said, laughing hysterically.

Hearing the name Bettie Jo caused Will to cringe. He hated that name and was growing to hate it even more every minute Ruby forced him to use it.

“They were a punk band back in the nineteen-eighties. Henry Rollins was their singer,” Molly said, snickering a little to herself.

“The voice actor?” Will asked, to both of their amusements. The shirt was definitely too large, and when Ruby normally wore it, she would let the cut out neckline hang off of one shoulder asymmetrically. If Will was to do that, his nipple would be on display for the whole world to see. On his feet he wore a pair of black flip flops that looked like they came from the dollar store. On his face though, he wore subtle makeup, similar to Molly’s but without any lip color. His blond hair was pulled back off his face by a navy bandana, tied on top of his head, with two tails cutely sticking out, and the rest of his locks still tied tightly up in the same bun he went to bed in. Will found it funny how he was so done up the night before, but this was the most he felt like he was wearing a costume.

Molly caught Will appraising his outfit while she checked her appearance in the visor mirror, and noted his apparent disapproval. She said, “Don’t worry honey, you only have to wear that a little longer. We’re almost there.”

“Where is ‘there,’ exactly?” he asked, gazing out at the freeway.

“We’re going to Boutique Erotica,” Molly replied.

“Why are we going to a sex shop?” Will asked, incredulously.

“Because you’re pretty and all — but if you’re gonna be a pinup sweetheart, you’re gonna need titties,” Ruby said, crassly. “It’s not like a porn store, but more like a place that facilitates alternative sexual lifestyles. Just trust me when I say, you’re nothing out of the ordinary there.” The car went silent for a few minutes, till Ruby, realizing she was being slighted, angrily asked, “Wait, what’s wrong with my clothes?” causing everyone to crack up.



Will wasn’t naive enough to think that he’d be having major surgery or anything, but he was still very nervous. Sitting in the dark sketchy waiting room, in the back of a store filled with a variety of sex toys and lewd outfits certainly didn’t help. He’d seen shops like this in movies, usually a stop along the hero’s journey, while they combed through some dystopian city’s seedy underbelly. The main difference he found was that instead of the store being filled with a bunch of deviant scoundrels, it instead was populated by a bunch of friendly nerds. Will couldn’t decide if this was a good thing, or if it somehow made the whole situation creepier. Ruby obviously didn’t share his sentiment, since she moved from display to display with childlike wonder. Molly was the concerned parent, thumbing through a magazine, and occasionally stroking Will’s knee to comfort him when his foot started tapping rapidly.

After what to Will felt like days, but was closer to fifteen minutes, the door opened, and a goth girl clad in black from her pigtails and blunt cut bangs to her lace dress which went all the way down to her silver buckled knee high

boots. "We're ready for you Bettie Jo," she said, smiling broadly, and waving him to the door.

"We'll be right out here, if you need us," Molly said, patting him on the back as he stood up, and shuffled through the door.

"I hope you're doing well today," the goth girl said sweetly, closing the door behind them, and gesturing to the black cushioned table in the center of the room. "My name is Eris, and I handle body work here."

"Body work?" Will asked, confused.

"Some people want to be someone else when they do the grown-up with their partner. That can range from the fantastical, like aliens or fairies or whatever. Some people have animal kinks, and they want to be a cat person, or something."

"So like, special effects makeup?"

"Depends. Specifically, we facilitate fantasy services, usually of a sexual nature. The room next door is where our clients film themselves, and their partners, if their fantasy involves one. Sorry, I just assumed you knew what you were doing here."

"I know that I'm here because I need breasts. I just don't fully understand what all that entails."

"I see. Well, you're here for our newest package. We're going to give you those breasts you need."

Eris had Will take his shirt off and lie back in a chair. She gave him a set of headphones, so he could listen to music while she worked, inadvertently giving him some time to ponder just how terrified he was. His eyes darted around the room, being reminded of visits to the orthodontist when he was younger. He tried to focus on anything, but a blinding light was shining down on him from above, and found he was unable to. So he settled on closing his eyes, and trying to relax.

He felt a slight abrasion as his stomach was swabbed by a cotton pad soaked in alcohol, followed by the cooling sensation of the alcohol rapidly evaporating off his skin. He peeked for just a moment, and that's when he saw the needle. The very big needle.

"What?" Will said, abruptly interrupting his relaxed mood by nearly leaping out of the chair. "Needles?"

"Oh. I thought you knew," Eris said. "Sorry. Um... So we're going to use needles."

"Yeah, I can see that!"

"We'll be taking fat from your stomach and then putting it in your chest. That's how we do this."

“That’s gonna hurt!”

“Not that much. Some pinches here and there, but it’s really worth it. There’s no better way to get realistic breasts.”

“What if..”

“Everything okay in there?” Ruby yelled from outside. “Someone made a noise!”

“We... We’re fine,” Will said.

“What’s that?”

“I said we're fine!” Will yelled back.

A few minutes later, his eyes closed shut, he felt a numbing sensation spread across his across his chest and stomach, and then Eris’s latex-gloved hands pressing on his tummy. A sharp pain followed, but not nearly as bad as he was expecting. A second or two later, another sharp pain was felt, this one right under his nipple, and it was much more painful than he was expecting. After several minutes of this — and a dozen needles piercing his skin — Eris fitted Will with a compression garment for his chest. She lifted a headphone off his ear, and said, “You’re gonna have to lie still for about ten minutes. Unless this building catches on fire, don’t move, unless you want to lose a boob.”

A short time later, Eris pulled off Will’s headphones. “We’re almost done,” she said, “but since you’re going to be leaving with these babies today, you’re gonna need to keep this on for about three or four days. They’re going to mold that fat into a breast shape as it heals.” She then wheeled over a mirror, giving him a full view of his new bosom.

They looked real, at least the part that wasn't covered by the compression garment. “We’ve got you an A cup, maybe a B. Depends on how much your body keeps around. Anything larger on your tiny body, frankly, would be ridiculous.”

They already looked plenty ridiculous to Will.

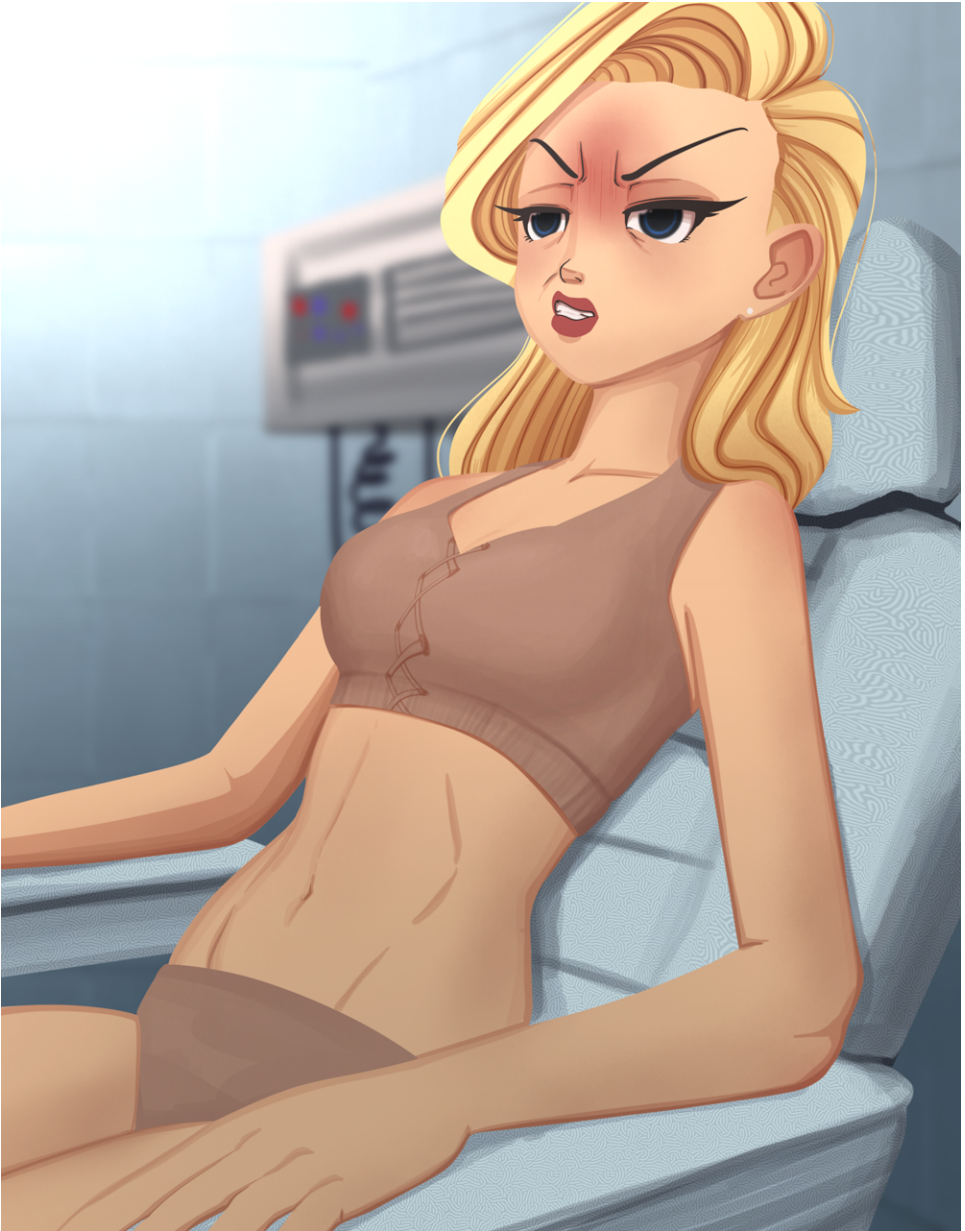
“Just don't sleep on your stomach, and keep the garment on 24 hours a day. After a week, you won't need it anymore. It also might be a bit sore for a day or two, but like I said, after three days, check and see how solid everything feels. Keep using the compression until they settle.”

“How long is this going to last?”

“Three months, usually. It varies. Any more questions for me?”

Will’s eyes went wide at the mention of three months, but it was a little late to do anything about it now.

“Not really, no,” Will said, pulling his shirt back on, noting the tenting it was now forced to do, and hopping off the table.



She handed him a bag containing a second compression garment and said, “I threw a gaff in the bag, on the house. It should help you keep everything downstairs, tucked away, nice and secure.” She almost smiled, but her stoic personality resisted. “Most of the time, there’s no complications. But if there’s infections, come back right away. My number will be on the receipt. Call me if you need anything.”

Back in the lobby, much to Will's surprise, Ruby paid the \$400 bill. She simply called it a business expense, and the group got back in the car. It was time to go shopping.

After a quick stop for some necessary underthings, the group entered a non-descript storefront. Once inside, Will realized he had entered an old-timey beauty salon. It was the first time he'd been in one since he was a child. He recalled going with his grandma when she had her hair appointments, and being relegated to the waiting area while she was being worked on. He remembered flipping through all the magazines, and looking at all the styles pictured on the pages, wondering how they got them to freeze in place. He chuckled to himself, realizing he was now much more acquainted with the process.

"Hi there, girls," an older woman said sweetly, walking through the beaded curtain in the back. She was wearing a pair of tan slacks, wedge sandals, and a pink smock, with black script above the breast pocket that read, "Lulubelle's." In spite of her age, her permed hair stood a couple of inches above her scalp, and was dyed a vivid seafoam green.

"Hey, Lulu!" Molly said, air kissing both cheeks, and giving her one of her signature warm hugs. "We scheduled that appointment for our friend here. She's getting into pinup fashion, and she needs all new makeup. Bettie Jo Monroe?"

"Right, right," Lulu said, air kissing Ruby, and then doing the same with Will. "Belinda took down the appointment this morning. If I'd have known it was your friend, I'd have scheduled it for you myself. Sorry for the inconvenient time. I know it's pretty late in the day."

"Not a problem," Molly said. "We had a lot of errands to run today, so this was perfect. Serendipitous even."

"So what are we doing this evening?" Lulu asked, appraising Will's face.

"Bettie Jo here is getting a facial and a makeover, and she'll be buying whatever you suggest." Ruby said, answering for Will, who had become extremely nervous at the scrutiny being given to his features.

"What are you thinking, Bettie Jo?" Lulu asked, turning his face side to side by his chin.

"Ummm... I'm not sure. I know I need something bold and vintage, like Molly and Ruby, but outside of that, I'm not sure. I'm sorry but don't really have a ton of experience with these kinds of things."

"She was a bit of a tomboy before all this," Ruby interjected, coming to his aid.

"I see, I see," Lulu said. "Such a waste. With a face as pretty as yours, it's begging for some warpaint."

"This is what I did last night," Molly said, showing Lulu the pictures on her phone.

“Great job, sweetie,” Lulu said. “I’m gonna do something similar, but I think I’m going to try and go lighter on the eyeshadow, so the eyeliner really pops. Also I see here that you used a darker lip liner, but she’s so pale, I don’t think that’s necessary. Tonight, we’re going to go with a more similar shade, so that it doesn’t contrast so much.”

For the next hour, Will sat in a reclined chair in the back of the salon, while Lulu scrubbed the makeup from his face, and then added, and removed several creams, and treatments. When the process was finished, his skin was the smoothest it had ever been, if only a little raw. In what felt like an instant to Will, she’d painted his features, similar to how Molly had the night before, but with that extra bit of polish, and expertise that comes from decades of practice. Bold red lips, and striking eyeliner set off his expertly contoured foundation. Even without the false eyelashes, his own now looked incredibly long, and full. She then seized the opportunity, and pulled out his bandana, and undid his hair piled up high on his head. She let it all fall back down around his shoulders, flowing dramatically.

“You know, you’d look really good with some color,” she said, dreaming of the possibilities of his luxurious locks.

“I’ll think about it,” he said politely, grateful he actually had a say in the matter. Lulu sighed dejectedly, and set to work twisting his hair back into a french twist, and pinning it into place. Using the end of a rat tail comb, she lifted the front, leaving the hair to raise just an inch or so at his hairline, and she pinned a little red ribbon bow at the seam of the roll. They checked out at the front, where he left with new foundation, concealer, eyeliner, mascara, contour, highlight, blusher, and an eyeshadow palette. She also threw in several lipsticks that she thought would suit him, to go with any outfit under the rainbow.

“It was a pleasure working on you, dear, and if you ever want to go pink, you better come back and see me,” Lulu jokingly threatened while ringing them out.



The next day, boot camp began. Will found himself standing in Ruby and Molly’s living room, carrying a heavy book on his head, wearing a white halter neck top, with a white collar decorated with large lapels. It dipped into a deep V neckline, showing off his new cleavage in a fairly classy way. He also wore a tight, black, calf-length pencil skirt and black, four inch, strappy, spike-heeled sandals. He was told if he could move around freely in the restrictive outfit, then he would be able to get around well in anything. His hair was pulled back into a smooth ponytail that he had done himself, several times, until Ruby was fully satisfied with his efforts. The elastic was covered by a wound strand of hair, and it ended in a cute curl at the bottom.

Ruby was wearing a white button down blouse with a pussy bow jabot sewn into the high round neckline, and short puff sleeves. She also wore a pair of dark gray dress slacks, and a pair of black, pointed-toe dress flats. Her hair was parted on the side, slicked back tightly, tucked and pinned snug to the back of her head. She wasn't wearing a lot of makeup, but she did have on large, thick, black, plastic glasses frames without lenses in them. She also had a riding crop that she would smack loudly against the nearby coffee table at any excuse she could find, from Will dropping the book, to him not swinging his hips enough, or even just announcing she had to go to the bathroom.

Molly, walking out of her bedroom, took one look at Ruby, and said incredulously, "I know you've got an outfit for every occasion, but I didn't think being a dominatrix was one of those occasions."

"I'm a governess, I'll have you know, and I'll make a lady outta this one, yet?" Ruby said, smacking the table again, and cackling like a mad woman, causing Will to drop the book for the thirtieth time. "My dominatrix outfit is way sluttier than this, and it's made of vinyl."

"Well, I'm not sure your methods are very effective, Ms. Governess. Your pupil over there looks terrified, and she's fucking up standing still with a book on her head." Molly walked over to Will, and picked up the book, he was struggling to squat, and reach in the constricting clothing. "The other night, you were hammered, and you moved with grace and poise, even when Melvin was swinging you around like a rag doll. What happened to that bitch?"

"I don't know," Will said, collapsing into the couch behind him. "I was very drunk."

"What was different, though? Like, what felt different?"

"For one thing, there was a lot less weight on my chest," he said, waving his hands theatrically around his new breasts.

"I don't know, my boobs came in over one summer. They were a little bigger than yours, and they didn't turn me into a klutzy doofus. What's really going on?"

"I don't know. I mean... I guess I wasn't thinking so much about me, you know? Like I wasn't thinking about my hair or my makeup, or my outfit, or what people might think of me, or how I might screw it up, or anything really. I was just there, fucked up, enjoying the music, and it wasn't any more complicated than that."

"I think I understand. You were too drunk to get in your own way."

"Easy solution then," Ruby interrupted, plopping down next to Will.

"We can't keep her drunk the entire trip, Ruby," Molly said dryly. Taking Will's hands, and looking deep into his eyes while smiling warmly, said, "You were a theater kid, right? You've got to become Bettie Jo Monroe."

“Sure, I was a theater kid, but I mostly just had ensemble parts. I think they only ever tolerated me because I could dance.”

“I didn’t think it was possible to be bullied by Drama nerds,” Ruby said. Molly shot her a stern look, and slapped her on the knee.

“Are you kidding me?” Will said, wide eyed. “Drama kids are nerds, but they’re ruthless nerds. Well, not most of them, but if they think they’re the star of the show, then they’ll make your life a living hell, and not think twice about it. The others just fall in line.”

“Who knew?” Ruby said, genuinely shocked.

“Whatever...” said Molly, shaking Will’s hands firmly, bringing his attention out of his pity party, and back to her. “You don’t have to be the best actor ever. Bettie Jo is you. You’re already her. You just have to remind yourself what she’s capable of. Like a mantra. Bettie Jo is smart. Bettie Jo is fun. Bettie Jo is graceful. Bettie Jo is the life of the party. Bettie Jo is sexy. Whenever you feel unsure of yourself, close your eyes, and tell yourself what you need to hear, until you believe it.”

“I can’t...” he started, but Molly quickly cut him off.

“I don’t want to hear it,” Molly said, the most commanding he’d ever heard her use. “I want to hear what Bettie Jo is... what she can do. Now close your eyes, and tell yourself that Bettie Jo is graceful, and walk across the fucking room like you own the place, book on your head, be damned.” Will took a deep breath, closed his eyes, and started whispering to himself for a few moments. He then stood, and placed the volume on his crown, and sashayed confidently across the room and back, intentionally swinging his hips in a suggestive manner. He finished his short stroll, and posed in front of Molly with his knees bent slightly while pressing them firmly together, and one hand on his hip, with the other resting on the nape of his neck, and held the pose for a minute, only to drop the book when he flinched at the sound of the riding crop hitting the table yet again.

Ruby gleefully shouted, “I think she’s got it!” Will quickly squatted down, and retrieved the book, and popped back up with minimal effort, returning to the pose, but this time saluting his tutors, while they lit up with pride.

For the rest of the day, they taught Will different poses to use when people requested a picture, and gave him the rundown of what was expected of him during the show — heavily emphasizing the need to always be smiling. After returning to his house, and eating dinner, they combed through his grandmother’s outfits, figuring out what he needed for every possible occasion, and packed two full suitcases and a hat box for the trip. Molly spent the rest of the night, trying out different hairstyles, and dressing him in different outfits, while Ruby snapped photo after photo on his phone, posting several of them to the new instagram account of Bettie Jo Monroe.





It was morning, four days later, and the three had packed the trunk of Ruby's car. They were just about to leave when Will came downstairs, wearing high waisted jean shorts, checkered Chuck Taylor's and black camisole top with a built in bra. After his first try, his makeup was immaculate, and that lifted his mood more than he cared to admit.

His breasts had finally healed in place, and although he was something in between and A and B cup, a master class in padding from Molly had given him the breasts of a C-Cup girl — and the enticing cleavage to match.

When he got to the car, Ruby said, "My air conditioning sucks, so we're losing the rag top." The convertible roof slowly collapsed back into itself, the motor whirring just slightly louder just before it stopped, and Ruby snapped the fabric down, securing it firmly into place. Molly wrapped a pink driving scarf around Will's hair, crossed the tails under his chin, and pulled them around behind his neck, tying them securely.

"Gotta protect your hair from the wind," she said, before she did the same for herself, and Ruby followed suit. Ruby and Molly then put on cheap, red cat-eye sunglasses, and Molly slid a pair on Will, resting them securely and booping his nose affectionately. They all climbed in the car, and the trio was on their way.

The trip flew by, with Molly playing DJ, and Ruby, speeding like a maniac, hurtling the car down the two lane highway into Nevada. The wasteland started to blend together, as Will got lost in his phone. He tried to distract himself from what Ruby had in store for him, knowing he couldn't fight back. He was completely at her mercy. He could only hope that she was wasn't as heartless as she appeared to be. He continued to scroll through instagram to take his mind off things, and around five pm, he looked up and saw a giant ornate sign with big neon letters that read, "Welcome to Las Vegas." Off in the distance he could see the sprawling metropolis, surrounded by nothing, in the middle of nowhere, growing larger and larger by the mile.



The Orleans Hotel isn't clustered in the mess of the Las Vegas strip, but it isn't anything to sneeze at either. It's a large building, taking up nearly an entire city block, but only stands about ten stories tall. The architecture is reminiscent of its namesake, the city of New Orleans, Louisiana. The walls are painted in small, block sections of vivid yellow or pastel pink. All of this is accented by green shutters and dozens of sconces all along the side of the structure. In the

center, tall glass windows rose high above the six entryway doors, showing off the casino inside, bustling with activity. Will was enthralled by the sheer immensity of the facility, gawking like the tourist he was. Ruby put her car in park and popped her trunk.

Once out of the car, Will went to retrieve his bags, but found two bellhops already loading everything onto a brass bell cart. Ruby handed off her keys to the valet, and took her claim ticket. "If Captain Moneybags is paying for everything, we're living it up this weekend, ladies. Let's go get checked in."

The lobby was enormous, trimmed in luxurious bunting, decorated in reds and violets with gold accents. It could have almost been described as regal, if not for the blinking strip lights flashing throughout. Ruby approached one of the dozen desk attendants, and quickly returned with three room keys, and a stack of pamphlets and papers. A short elevator ride later, and the bellhop was holding open the door to their suite.

Once inside, he stacked their luggage neatly, and said "Welcome to The Orleans, ladies. I do hope you enjoy your stay." He stood in attention until Ruby handed him a bill, and he gracefully exited, closing the door behind him. The mustard yellow carpet, printed with a geometric pattern, didn't quite match the wallpaper striped in white and canary yellow. The brown furniture in the sitting area wasn't quite the same shade of brown as the writing desk by the mirror. The brass bed frame wasn't quite the same as the brass lamps littered throughout the room, and the white bedding, with the royal blue bed skirt stuck out like a sore thumb, but somehow, in spite of itself, the whole arrangement worked. Everything was new, from the furniture, to the stock paintings of bourbon street, but it all had a timeless quality to it.

Will dropped his bag on the nightstand, spread his arms wide, and fell backwards onto the king size bed, sinking into the memory foam. "Just one bed?" he asked.

"I know, I box in my sleep," Ruby said. "This thing is big enough to park a jet in though, so I think we'll be okay. Just hang a bra on the door if you're fucking and we should be good."

"I don't think I'll have to worry about that, but if you guys have a date or whatever, I'm sure I can keep myself occupied."

"You'd be surprised, sugar," Ruby said, throwing a pillow at him playfully. "This weekend can get crazy."

A few hours later, the door to the room swung open. There was no longer any sign of the three sweaty girls who'd arrived that afternoon, but three well dressed ladies exited in their stead, and descended upon the resort. Most people wouldn't arrive until Friday, so they decided to explore the hotel, and check out some of the bands that were playing that night.

Ruby had quickly teased, twisted, and pinned her hair up in her signature beehive, and she wore a sleeveless, knee length wiggle dress, with a floral print on a black background. She was almost as tall as Molly in her strappy platform heels. Her makeup was smokey and bold, featuring well defined lines, and a fuschia lip. The entire outfit was highlighted by two salmon bangles clicking together on her wrist, and a matching salmon clutch she carried tightly in her long talons with pink tips.

Molly settled on a high ponytail, loosely curled with a curling iron, decorated with a chiffon scarf tied around her crown in a large bow on top, fronted by a little pompadour. Her eye makeup was fairly basic, since tonight she wore her purple glasses with the strip of leopard print running along the top of the angled frames, and she wore a dark crimson matte lip. She was wearing a black and white polka dot halter top and tight capris, with the smallest slice of tummy showing between them. Her cork wedges, black vinyl handbag and onyx dangle earrings tied it all together, intentionally spitting in the face of the expression, "Less is more."

At Ruby's insistence, Will was the most overdone of the group. His makeup from that morning was in relatively good shape, but he had to fix the damage sweating through a four hour car ride caused. He used a powder foundation to get rid of the shine that had built up, and touched up his lips and mascara. He had arranged his hair in a fairly conservative style, parted on the side, and twisted and tucked tightly against the back of his head. He wore a powder blue dress with floral embroidering, and a sheer layer of chiffon over the skirt. It nipped tight at the waist, spilling out over a red petticoat that hung down below the knee length hem in a flirty manner. His white four inch pumps matched his white floral clip on earrings, and sheer lace wrist length gloves. His dark black glossy box purse, dangled over his forearm, by its painted bamboo handle, completing the June Cleaver aesthetic.

"This place has everything," Will said, amazed at the sheer spectacle of a Las Vegas hotel. "There's a spa, and a movie theater. They've even got a bowling alley."

"They've also got about a dozen bars," Ruby said as she laughed. The bell chimed as the elevator door opened, and they got onto the lift.

Once the door closed, Molly started whispering the plan. "So, just like back home, we'll get your drinks for you. You look old enough, and we've got passes for the convention, but I think it'd probably be best if you didn't give them a reason to card you. No ordering for yourself, no gambling, and definitely *no* cocaine."

"What about free cocaine?" Will asked, smirking.

"Especially free cocaine," Molly said, slapping him playfully on his limp hand.

"Okay, I'll be good," he said, sticking his tongue out at her.

The first bar they wandered into was The Bourbon Street Lounge. There weren't too many people there, but that also meant that there was no line at the bar. Ruby snuck off to order, while Will and Molly found seating at a nearby horseshoe booth. Ruby returned with her hands full of daiquiris and managed to set the triangle formation on the table without spilling a drop. They joked back and forth for a little while, and then people started entering the bar little by little, until a decent crowd had coalesced.

Will was starting to feel a little buzzed, and for the first time in several days could actually relax. To him, it was starting to almost feel like when he first met the girls again, without all of the shame, and stress. "I've got to go to the bathroom," he said. He pushed on Ruby and she gleefully pretended he didn't exist, sitting like a stone. "Seriously, move, or I'm gonna pee on the both of us."

"Okay, okay!" Ruby said, standing from the booth, and throwing her hands in the air. "Don't get your panties in a twist."

It was on the way to the bathroom where Will noticed just how many people had arrived at the bar, and also just how many of those patrons were Men doing very little to hide their appetites. As he passed by the tables, he could hear the whispers and snickers of the men, their eyes following his every move. He felt their unwanted attention like a physical weight on his shoulders, but tried to ignore it as he kept walking, his pace steadily accelerating. He was practically sober when he reached the bathroom and closed the door behind him, breathing a sigh of relief.

It was only then that Will noticed the urinals lined across the wall. Out of habit, he'd walked straight into the men's room. Just as quickly as he slammed the door behind him, he scurried back out, and into the ladies' room across the hall. Inside, Will found a young woman repairing her lipstick in the mirror. "It's a zoo out there, isn't it?" she asked, turning to face him in the reflection. Will silently nodded, and then quickly stepped into the closest stall, shutting the door, and collapsing down onto the toilet.

Once Will was certain that the bathroom was empty, he finally relieved himself. After washing his hands, he stood in the mirror for a moment searching for any flaw in his disguise, but found none. His new boobs, he had to admit, were perfect. Even at his most anxious, he couldn't find the slightest fault in his presentation. Everything about the person in the mirror staring back at him screamed girl, from her gorgeous style, to the way she carried herself.

"If we can keep our shit together, we might get through this weekend," Will said, psyching himself up for the short walk back to the booth. He summoned all the courage he could muster, and swung open the door, only to plow straight into a person walking into the bathroom.

At the end of the tumble, Will found himself lying on his back, looking up into the eyes of the handsome man on top of him. The man looked mortified. It was then that Will looked down, and saw the man's hand on top of his temporary

breasts. Nervously, the man squeezed down, and Will nearly died right there. "Get off of me you perv!" Will squealed, as he slapped the man across the face. "Why would you squeeze my boob?"

The man quickly stood up, with his hands held out defensively in front of him, blushing profusely. "I'm sorry about that, miss," the man said. "I swear it wasn't intentional. You wouldn't know it to look at me, but I'm kind of a spaz."

He offered his hand down to Will, only to have it swatted away. No more than an hour into being in public with boobs and he'd already been groped. Will leapt up back to his feet as fast as he could, overwhelmed by silence of the nearby tables watching the spectacle unfolding before them. After hurriedly checking for his purse, he disappeared in a flash, leaving the man standing there slack-jawed. Back at the booth, he found that they had been joined by a familiar face.

"Fancy seeing you here," Hank said as he and Molly stood from the booth to let Will back in. He was wearing black slacks, some band's t-shirt, and a denim jacket, easily the most casual person in the room. "I didn't know you were bald under that hat," Ruby said bluntly, and took a loud sip of her frozen concoction.

Unflapped, Hank rubbed his hand across his naked scalp, and down the back of his neck smiling, and said, "To quote a great man, it's a choice, and a damn good one too. You're just in time Jojo. I was just about to introduce everybody. Ladies, this is Rajesh. Raj and me went to high school together. Amos too, wherever he went." Sitting beside Ruby, there was a man with a dusky complexion, striking features, and a pompadour that would put Elvis to shame.

"He had to use the little boys room," Raj explained. "He should find us here in a minute."

"How about now?" Just then, the man Will encountered at the bathroom grabbed a chair, and set it down in front of their booth, causing Will to let out a gasp he was grateful no one else seemed to notice. It was here Will finally got a good look at the guy. He was a tall muscular fellow with suntanned skin, dirty blonde hair cropped short, and a slightly darker beard that only let through a hint of his model good looks.

"... and this is Amos." Hanks said, shaking his friend's hand.

"They made the trip down from NorCal. Guys, this is Ruby, Bettie Jo, and Molly," Hank said, gesturing to each girl.

"Humboldt county baby!" Raj said, throwing up a devil salute, without a care as to how dorky he looked.

"Oh, me and Bettie Jo here have met." Amos said with a sly grin. "She and I had a head on collision when she was coming out of the bathroom. Sorry about that, by the way."

"And what were you doing going into the women's bathroom?" Will asked suspiciously. It seemed obvious not to trust the first person who ever groped him.

"I'd been waiting for a while on the Men's room, and no one came out of the ladies' so I figured it was empty. You were in there for a while."

"There was nobody in the Men's room when I went in there," Will said, seizing his gotcha moment.

"What were you doing in the Men's room?" Amos asked, his grin still plastered across his face.

"Well, I..." Will started, but his voice trailed off as he couldn't come up with a satisfactory reply. His face flushed red, and he averted his gaze, awkwardly.

"I had no idea you were coming," Molly said, quickly changing the subject, and excitedly hugging Hank again, this time leaving her hands clasped behind his neck.

"Yeah you did. I told you the other night. I knew you were drunk, but damn Mols," he chuckled.

"Yeah, I totally don't remember. Thanks for not being an asshole, by the way."

"Of course. You look absolutely beautiful," he said, melting into her green eyes, before glancing over and seeing the rest of the table who clearly found this interaction very amusing. "Uh... Umm... I mean you all do, of course," he stuttered, finally breaking the hug. "I'm surprised to see you here, Ruby, with it being the singles meetup and all."

"First of all, I go where I want, and I fuck who I want. I just happen to mostly wanna fuck Johnny right now. Second of all... singles night?" she said, shrugging.

"Yeah, we had no idea," Molly explained. "We're just bar hopping."

"Well, Raj here was pretty insistent we check it out, but I'm not attached to the place."

"Who's single, and ready to mingle?" Raj asked the table.

"And here I thought you were the dorky hype man," Molly said, playfully elbowing Hank in the ribs.

"We're all dorky, baby. You're looking at the most exciting D&D group in Ferndale, California," Raj said. "How about y'all? You three jump out of an old Archie comic, or what?"

"I'll have you know, Betty and Veronica don't got shit on us," Ruby said, eliciting laughter from the table.

"How about you, cutie?" Amos asked, looking at Will. "You're awfully quiet over there."

"She just takes a minute to warm up to people, Amos," Hank said, jumping to Will's defense. "You should see Jojo here dance. She's really something else. She's like, a real pro, you know."

"Is that right?" Amos said, placing a toothpick between his teeth. "You gonna show me some moves this weekend?"

"I wouldn't say pro," Will said, blushing profusely, unable to meet eyes with the man gazing so intently on his. "Pro implies I get paid, and that sure as hell hasn't happened yet."

"Didn't you get paid for that shoot the other night?" Hank asked.

"Yeah, I guess so," Will replied sheepishly.

"See? A pro," Hank said, while Will, still blushing, smiled tightly, betraying a flicker of pride.

"So what do you all wanna do tonight, anyway? They're gonna shut this shit down at eight I think." Raj asked, prompting the group to pull up the event schedule on their phones.

"Oh oh *ohh!*" Molly shouted, showing her phone to the table. "I don't care about later, but after this, we have to go to Burlesque Bingo."

"Sounds sexy," Raj said. "I'm in."

"It's a good show, from what I've heard," Ruby said in agreement.

"I'm on board too," Hank said. "How about you two?"

"That depends on Bettie Jo here," Amos said, oozing cockiness with his expression, while he awaited Will's response.

"Sure, sounds fun, I guess," Will said, forcing all of his stress into his toes hidden away in his heels. He wasn't sure if this guy had figured out his secret, or if he was interested in something else, but one thing was certain. Will had Amos' full attention. He'd hardly taken his eyes off of him since the two had been introduced.

"To Burlesque Bingo!" Raj yelled, quickly standing from the booth. The others slowly followed, and after collecting all their belongings, Amos paid the tab.

"Thanks for the drinks. Will said, trying to break the ice. He didn't realize just how much taller Amos was, but even in his heels, he had to crane his neck back, just to face the handsome man.

"Not a problem, dollface," Amos said kindly, then he placed his mammoth hand across the small of Will's back, and guided him through the crowd towards the door, while Will held back the impulse to scream.



Will had frequented bingo nights with his grandmother before he was old enough to stay home by himself. He didn't expect this to be the same, but to say he was shocked when he went to find his seat would be an understatement. The seating faced inward, split by a runway covered in numbers. On the stage

there was a large, light up display board, showing all the bingo numbers surrounded by a sparkling pink frame. In front of the board, there she stood, surrounded by her bingo girls, all clad in pink, the master of ceremonies herself, Audrey Deluxe. She was waiting for everyone to take their seats. Amos found one next to Will, and whispered closely, "This is a trip, right? Have you ever been to one of these things?"

"I have not," Will replied, trying not to shudder at the feeling of Amos' gentle, warm breath blowing across his ear. He was clutching his purse tightly in his lap with one hand, and his bingo card, writing tray, and marker in the other.

"You know, you can set your purse on the ground. In the unlikely event anyone tries to steal it, I'll chase them down."

"I'm fine."

"You gotta relax, sweetie. We're here to have fun."

"I'm not your sweetie."

"Not yet," Amos said with a wink, and then turned his attention back to the stage. Will continued to hold his purse for what he thought was just long enough that Amos wouldn't think he was winning, though he wasn't even sure what game they were even playing. Once he was sure, Amos wasn't looking, he set it on the floor.

Audrey gave her opening spiel, welcoming everyone, and hyping them up for the fun times ahead, while the bingo girls posed provocatively, and flirted with the audience. The game started out, much the same as any other, with the hostess calling out numbers, and players marking them down. Between games, a girl would come out, and perform her routine, then she'd slowly strip tease as a new game would start, and numbers were called. When someone finally shouted bingo, she'd perform her big reveal. Slowly but surely, the crowd grew more raucous, partially because the game was wild and enthralling, but also because the patrons had become more and more intoxicated as the show progressed.

It was time for a skit, and they needed volunteers, though not necessarily willing ones. The bingo girls walked down the runway looking for the most reluctant people they could find. Will was blushing furiously, and trying to sink into his seat, while Amos pointed both fingers down at him from above his head, and whistled. Of course they picked Will, but he took some pleasure in the fact that they picked Amos as well, and both of them were led up to the stage.

"What's your name Darlin'?" Audrey asked Will, holding the mic to his lips.

"Umm... Bettie Jo," he replied, quietly.

"How about you, Mr. Muscles?" she asked Amos, running her fingernail across his firm abdomen.

"Amos," he said, smirking, and flexing his chest, causing his pecs to bounce up and down. Audrey turned to face the audience with her hand over her mouth, and a naughty expression on her face.

"Alright Amos. I see you're not lacking in confidence," she said, eyeing him up and down. "Is this your girlfriend?"

"Absolutely not," Will shouted, inciting a collective "Ohhhhh..." from the audience.

"Is that right?" said Audrey, snickering. "Then, why are you picking on her, Amos?"

He just shrugged and said, "Because she's cute, I guess?"

"Was that a question? Sounds like you've been a naughty boy, Amos. You might need to be punished. What do you all think?" she said, turning to the audience. "Does Amos need to be punished?" The crowd erupted into cheers and whistles, loudly affirming their opinion. "Alright, Amos, the jury has spoken. I'm gonna need you to lean over on the table here." She gestured to a small pink box, painted like casino dice, and trimmed in marabou feathers. Amos, still smiling, but starting to blush, complied. "Okay, Bettie Jo, it's your time to shine. I'm the judge, the jury has spoken, and you're the executioner."

"I'm sorry?" Will said, very confused.

"I think twenty-five ought to do it."

"Twenty-five what?"

"Why, spankings of course. Amos here has been a naughty boy, and naughty boys get spanked."

Will, caught between the embarrassment, and being entertained by the absurdity of the whole situation, took his position with wide eyes and red cheeks. He pulled his hand back and hesitantly swung it down, lightly making contact with Amos' buttocks. "That was one, but barely. You can do better than that." Will swung down again, this time with some actual force. "Much better. That's number two. Alright ladies and gentleman, count along with her." Will struck again, harder still. Growing excited by the overwhelming spectacle of everything, and letting the buzz from all the drinks wash over him, he immediately followed it with another spanking. This continued on and on, the crowd counting along with every slap, laughter filling the arena. Completely swept up, Will found himself counting along all the way to twenty-five, while Amos turned beet red from embarrassment, though he was clearly having a great time. "I don't know which one of you enjoyed that more," Audrey said, clapping along with the audience, who were practically losing their minds. "Ladies and gentlemen, let's hear it!"

Thoroughly amused, Will slowly walked back to his seat, deciding to enjoy the attention for once. He took his seat next to Amos, and whispered in his ear, "That'll teach you to fuck with me." His face was very close to Amos', and they

were both very aware of it, Will's warm breath caressing his neck. Will soon remembered himself though, so he pulled himself away, and did his best to return his focus to the game, leaving Amos to try and find a way to sit that hid his growing erection. Strangely, it was the most powerful Will had ever felt.

After the show, a man in a green plaid jacket with a pink pocket square, and a pencil thin mustache walked up to the group as they were leaving. He was holding a mostly empty martini glass in one hand, and an unlit Benson and Hedges cigarette in the other. "Hey all!" he lisped sweetly, with an exaggerated wave to the girls.

"*Gerry!*" Molly squealed, hugging the man. "We didn't know you were already here. We'd have come to see you first thing when we arrived."

"Nonsense. I'm glad the young got to be young. Ruby, a pleasure as always," he said, with a pleasant smile. "Still not taking anyone's shit, I hope?"

"Especially not yours," Ruby said. They air kissed each other's cheeks. "Thanks for the gig, Gerry. It's always a pleasure doing business with ya. How's Rodrigo?"

"He's wonderful, thank you for asking. He's got work, but he should be here Saturday in time for the ball." He turned to face Will, and said, "This must be the famous Bettie Jo Monroe. I must say, honey, you are the most precious little thing. I could just eat you up. You must be beating the boys off with a stick."

"Nice to meet you," Will said, shyly. The two shook hands limply, Will trying not to knock the cigarette from Gerry's hand.

"Anywho, I just wanted to say hello, and invite you to a little get-together in my suite. I'm having a few folks over for cocktails, and chitchat. Are you interested, Ruby?"

"I've still got gas in the tank," Ruby said. "What about you, Molly?" She turned behind her, but Molly was nowhere to be seen. Neither was Hank. "Where'd she go?"

"Oh they snuck off a few minutes ago when we were hugging."

"That bitch! Well, it better be some good dick."

"He's got that friendly guy energy, so I'm gonna assume it probably is. What about you Ms. Monroe? What are your plans?"

"I'm pretty tired actually. I think I'm going to head to bed," Will said, stretching his arms and purse over his head, and yawning.

"What about you, fellas?" Gerry asked.

"I'm getting pretty tired too, actually," Amos said, stealing a glance at Will.

"I'm in," Raj interjected, raising his hand. "No sleep till Brooklyn."

Gerry put the cigarette in his mouth, and letting it hang from his lips, said, "Well you better get some coffee, because we're in the middle of the fucking

desert. Let's get this show on the road, children. I need to smoke this before I get any drunker, and lose it."

"Amen to that," Ruby said, retrieving a smoke from her purse, and the three walked out the door.

"I'm gonna make sure you get to your room safely," Amos said, once he and Will were alone.

"Are you going to protect me from the rogue Bellhops, or are you afraid I'll get lost, and have to subside on the discarded room service trays I find in the hallway?" Will asked facetiously.

"No need for sarcasm," Amos said, throwing up his hands in surrender. "I don't think you're stupid or weak or whatever. I'm just trying to be a gentleman."

Will sighed, decided to relent, and with a shrug said, "Alright, fine. Walk me."



"Are you fucking kidding me?" Will cursed softly, upon seeing a certain undergarment dangling from the door handle of his hotel room

Amos chuckled to himself, as guys do when their friends get lucky. "So, that's where they ran off to."

"This sucks," Will was visibly pouting. The buzz from the alcohol was quickly fading, and exhaustion from the long day of traveling was taking over.

Amos stood in front of Will and squatted down to meet his eye-line. "Your friend is enjoying the company of a guy she likes. Don't you think you should be happy for her? Sometimes you have to take one for the team, you know."

Will raised an eyebrow, and crossed his arms tightly under his bosom. "Of all the ways you could have finished that, and you went with, sports metaphor. You actually thought, this girl totally looks like a sports metaphor is the way to get through to her. I'm so good at this."

"It's funny. Hank said you'd warm up to me, but it seems to me like you've just gotten meaner. If I didn't know better, I'd think you didn't like me."

"You might be one of those guys who's got a heart of gold buried very, very, very, very deep beneath all the egotistical bullshit, but that aside, I just hate your stupid cocky face."

Amos clutched his chest, and fell backwards onto the floor sprawled out, with his tongue hanging out of his mouth, while he stared off into the distance. Will, in spite of his whiney mood, couldn't help but smile at the goofy display. After a minute, he started nudging Amos with his foot, and asked, "Will you stop being dead if I take back the cocky face comment?"

"Yeah, that'll do the trick," Amos said, hopping back up quickly.

Will then remembered that he was still stuck, and frowning said, "She likes Hank. I get it. I'm happy for her, but I just don't understand why they couldn't go to Hank's room.

"I'm afraid that's my fault actually," Amos murmured, rubbing the back of his neck, and avoiding eye contact.

"Why's that exactly?"

"Because I haven't got our keys yet. Me and Raj got here like, right before we met up with you all. The room's in my name, and I haven't been here to check in."

"Uh-huh."

"Oops... Sorry... "

This time, it was Will searching for Amos' eye-line. "I'll forgive you this time, but you've got to keep me busy till they finish up, or I'm going to pass out in the hallway."

"What do you want to do?" Amos said, not even trying to hide his glee.

"I want you to get your room first, so Hank will have somewhere to go, that isn't where I'm trying to sleep."

"Yeah, that makes sense. Let's do that, and then kill some time at another bar."

"As long as it's not singles night."

After a short stop at the front desk, Will and Amos found themselves in a different hotel bar, this one much less crowded. They found two stools side by side, and Amos ordered himself an IPA and, without asking, ordered Will one of the fruitiest cocktails they had on the menu. The two sat in silence, sipping at their beverages, one occasionally stealing a glance at the other. This went on until Amos finished his entire beer, and stood up from his stool.

"I need to hit the head."

"Didn't you just do that?" Will asked incredulously.

"What can I say?" Amos shrugged. "It goes right through me. I'm surprised your tiny ass hasn't had to pee six times since then."

"Whatever." Will said, turning away, and back to his drink, hoping no one would ask the young girl sitting alone at the bar for ID.

Not even a minute later, bored out of his mind, Will spun his seat around to face out into the bar room. He was shocked to find so many lustful eyes shamelessly resting on him. In the short time he'd been wearing dresses, he was starting to get used to them, but all of that went out the window at that exact moment. Suddenly, he was very aware that the only thing standing between him and everyone else in the bar was a few layers of flimsy, lacey fabric that couldn't even be washed on the delicate cycle, lest it fall apart to threads.

Just then, one of the many young men with greased back hair and a leather jacket seized the opportunity and approached him. “Hey, Pretty lady.” he said, oozing sleaze. He leaned in close, placing both hands on the bar, one on each side of Will. “What’s your name?”

“... Umm... I... I’m waiting on somebody.” Will said, practically shaking with fear. He tried to spin himself back around, but couldn’t find the room. The guy was so drunk Will could taste the cloud of alcohol coming off of him.

“I don’t see anybody here.” the guy said, theatrically looking around the bar. “A pretty thing like you should be with a real man anyway, and not that Dudley Do-right looking mother fucker.”



“He doesn’t look anything like Dudley Do-right.” Will replied, befuddled at the absurdity of the guy’s insult. “If you see my friend, tell him I stepped outside, please.” Will was terrified, but determined not to let it show. He grabbed his purse, and like a rabbit, ducked under the guy’s arms, only to have the drunk catch him by the wrist. A million scenarios ran through Will’s mind as he frantically searched his brain for a positive outcome, but he could find none.

Will almost screamed, but froze at the sound of Amos’ voice booming across the bar room floor. “I think the lady isn’t interested, bud!”

The drunk let go of Will, and turned back to face Amos, seething with rage. “Is there a problem, pretty boy?”

Amos maintained his composure, but it was hard to miss the vein bulging out of his forehead. “No, no problem. I get it. It’s a fun weekend, and we’re all here to have a good time, and maybe you had one too many drinks. The way I see it, this situation can go one of two ways. We can start hitting each other, and since everyone in this bar is already staring at the scene we’re making, it probably won’t be too long before the cops get here, and then you and I both won’t get to enjoy the rest of the weekend. Otherwise, we could just not do that, you could respect the lady’s wishes, and get on out of here, and we let bygones be bygones. What do you think?”

The guy looked around the bar and saw the slew of smartphone cameras pointed his way, as well as the bartender holding the old fashioned wall phone, ready to dial 911 at a moment's notice. After an instant that probably felt like an eternity to all involved. The guy spit at Amos’ feet, and turned and left the bar, followed closely by a few of his friends.

“Enjoy the convention!” Amos shouted after him, then he joined Will sitting at the bar in shock. Will was hyperventilating, so Amos took both his hands, met eyes with him, and asked, “Do you smoke?”

Will, still shaken, rambled, “I like the way tobacco smells, but I’m afraid of the whole dying thing, so...”

Amos interrupted, “My bad. I should have been more clear. Do you smoke weed?”

“Yes. Yes I do. Are you offering or requesting?”

“I am ‘requesting’ you to join me, while I go to my rental, and get our suitcases. We can be hooligans while we’re out there, and then I’ll check in, and text the guys. Does that sound like a good plan?”

All too happy to be anywhere besides where he was, Will replied, “That sounds like a great plan.”

In the parking garage, Amos opened the trunk revealing three bags; a tall garment bag, a suitcase, and a beat up duffel bag. “That’s it?” Will asked, mentally comparing them to the trunk full they barely crammed into the car for the journey. “Boys really do have it easier.”

"We absolutely do," Amos agreed. He dug through the pouch on the side of the duffle bag, and pulled out a plastic tube, opening it, and sliding out a cone shaped, pre-rolled joint. "We hit a dispensary on the way from the airport."

"So that's why you were late. It's good to know your priorities are in order," Will said, sardonically. "Do you really have everything you need for the trip in that sack?"

"Fuck no," Amos said, looking offended. "This is Raj's bag. The other two are mine."

"I would have thought he would have brought a suit."

"He did," Amos said, lighting the joint, and taking a puff. He continued in a throaty whisper. "He's going to be so fucking wrinkly." He started to laugh, but this quickly devolved into coughing.

"Easy there, killer," Will said, as if he was some kind of old pro, ignoring that just a few weeks ago, he'd have nearly died if he'd tried to inhale that much smoke at once. He took the joint from Amos' fingers, and after a nice long drag, slowly exhaled, and then handed it back to Amos. "Tell me about you."

"What do you want to know?"

"You're from NorCal right? What do you do there?"

"I'm a mechanic. Occasionally I get to fix up classic cars, but it's mostly just fixing the door locks on some lesbian mom's Outback, or oil changes or whatever. It's not really that interesting."

"I think it's cool. Have you ever wanted to do anything else?"

"Not really. I did want to live somewhere else, once. I always thought my problem was my home town, so I decided I wasn't going to be a big fish in a small pond anymore. I moved to New York to start over." Amos took another hit, and passed it back to Will.

"Reinvention huh? I guess I'm learning about that too."

"Yeah, I started going to a gym, and got a job in Brooklyn. I was in hipster paradise, and people started noticing me. I started dressing differently, and tried to pretend like the old me never existed, but..." He trailed off, and took the joint back from Will, who was now held rapt by the story. "I thought, fuck it, whatever, I like me."

"I know you do, cocky boy," Will said, taking one last hit off the joint, and passing it back. "I think I'm good on that, by the way."

"Me too." Amos expertly rolled the joint sideways on the bottom of his shoe, knocking the cherry off, and then stuffed it back in Raj's bag. "Anyway, I realized I hated New York, and that I missed my family, and friends, so I packed up my shit, and went back home. I've been content ever since."

“Sounds like quite a journey.” Will’s and Amos’ eyes met again, and the two smiled in silence. It wasn’t at all awkward, but intimate. Finally Will broke the silence. “I’m having a hard time picturing you as a high school nerd though.”

“Hold onto your hat, little lady, because you’re in for quite the surprise.” Amos reached into his back pocket, and pulled out his phone, and after a little scrolling, turned the phone to Will. The boy in the picture looked familiar, but not at all the same. He appeared to be one-hundred pounds soaking wet, had an un-ironic mullet, coke bottle glasses, acne, braces, a neck beard and was wearing a tri-force t-shirt.

“What a dork,” Will said, cracking himself up.

“Okay Miss High and Mighty, let’s see you in high school.” Amos started playfully grabbing for Will’s purse, causing Will to clutch it tightly to his chest.

“F-f-first off, high school was last year,” Will stuttered, pushing Amos. “Second, I was definitely dorkier than you. Third, there aren’t really any pictures of me from before I met Ruby and Molly.”

“Is that because you were a boy back then?”

“No... I...” Will couldn’t believe the casualness with which Amos had hurled the accusation. Tears started to flow down his cheeks, as his greatest fear was being realized.

“Calm down, babydoll.” Amos said, pulling Will’s face tightly into his chest. “No need for tears. I never would have known, if not for our little collision earlier. You should learn to tuck that sausage away when anyone bumping into you could feel it.”

“Oh my god!” Will said, covering his mouth with his cupped hands. He had decided not to use the gaff today, because he was only going to be hanging around with friends. “Oh my God. Please don’t tell anybody.” Will was begging. “If I ruin this trip, Ruby will literally kill me.”

“Seriously, don’t worry. Your secret is safe with me. I actually used to hook up with a girl like you back home.” Will examined Amos’ expression, searching for any hint of dishonesty. Since his time spent in dresses, he was finding it harder and harder to trust people. “Seriously though, it’s dangerous for a girl like you, being as pretty as you are. You’re bound to attract male attention. If that’s not something you’re wanting to deal with, then I can play blocker for you.”

“Again with the sports metaphors.” Will moaned, wondering just what Amos meant by, a girl like you. “You just want to get in my pants.”

Amos held up three fingers, and said, “Scouts honor, I’ll be a gentleman. I’d be lying if I said I didn’t think you were absolutely beautiful, but if you’re not feeling it, I can respect that. I was just thinking it might be easier for you if someone won’t leave you alone, you can point to me and say that’s my boyfriend.”

Will thought about it for a moment, weighing his options. On the one hand, Amos obviously wanted something more, whether he said it out loud or not, but on the other hand, he wasn't sure if he could deal with any more encounters like the one at the bar. Perhaps using Amos as a hunky meat shield wouldn't be the worst idea. "Okay, I'll take you up on that. For the rest of the trip, you can be my boyfriend... my platonic boyfriend."

"Okay then. We should probably get back inside," Amos said, stacking the bags on the suitcase, and pulling up the roller handle. "Shall we, Milady?"

"If you call me Milady again, I'm going to buy you a fedora, neckbeard."

"I'm really going to regret showing you that picture, aren't I?"

"Yes. Very much so."

Amos texted Raj and Hank. "Hank said he'll meet me at our room in five, so I'm assuming your bed is waiting for you. We're a couple floors above you, so I can walk you the rest of the way." They found their way onto the elevator, and stood in silence till the door opened on Will's floor. "I guess this is it," Will said, waving awkwardly, and stepping out. The door started to close behind him, but Amos' large arm shot through, causing it to open back up.

"Wait, wait..." Amos said, when Will turned back to face him. "I don't know what you girls have going on tomorrow, but we're doing the bowling tournament at noon. You're supposed to have four for a team. The plan was to grab a straggler, but maybe, if you want, you could be our fourth."

"I might just do that."

"That's a yes, then?"

"That's a maybe, and I'll let you know in the morning. Good night, stupid, cocky face," Will said, smiling, and turning to walk back down the hallway.

He heard Amos shout behind him, "That's stupid, cocky, sexy face, ma'am," just before the elevator door closed. He was relieved to see the bra was no longer hanging on the door, so he slid his keycard in the slot, and turned the handle slowly, so as not to wake anyone. Inside, Molly was already passed out on the bed, with her legs spread out in all directions. She was wearing a tank top, but nothing on bottom, with her privates on full display. It looked like a war zone, with cushions and blankets all over the floor surrounding her. Will brushed his hair, and pulled it back high on his head. Then, he washed off his makeup, and moisturized just as Molly had shown him. Once that was done, he peed for what felt like forever, and threw on his babydoll nightie. Completely exhausted, he set an alarm on his phone, and crawled into the bed, shoving Molly's limbs out of the way, and was asleep almost as soon as his head hit the pillow.



The next morning, Molly and Ruby awoke to the smell of coffee and bacon. “Looks like someone got up early.” Ruby said gruffly, opening one bloodshot eye to see Will, with a towel wrapped around his torso, and his wet hair up in wire rollers.

“That’s because someone punched me in the back of the head an hour before my alarm was supposed to go off,” Will said.

“Boo-hoo.” She sat up straight, and grabbed a piece of bacon, taking a loud crunchy bite.

Molly stretched her arms out, shaking off the sleep, and then grabbed the sheets, and pulled them up over her face, and started laughing in much the same way a child would when you told them they were going to Disney World. “Oh my god! You guys would not believe the sex I had last night!”

“That good, huh?” Ruby mumbled, mouth full.

“It was wild. This whole fucking bed is soaked.”

“I noticed. It was a pretty easy choice between sleeping scooted up to Miss Priss over here, or your sloppy ass. What time is it, anyway?”

“It’s about ten thirty,” Will said, before taking his last bite of pancakes. He set his plate on the tray, and started digging through his suitcases, till he found the bonnet hair dryer. He plugged it in the bathroom, and then grabbed his make-up bag. “I figured you both would want to get up, since you were talking about going to that fashion show at noon. You better hurry.” He slipped a pair of red high waisted panties on, up under his towel, and then, after adjusting and securing his tuck, let the towel fall. He added a red brassier, wrapping it firmly around the two mounds on his chest, added some gel inserts, and fixed the clasp behind his back. The sight of the mounds on his chest was still alarming. He figured he’d feel the same way, every day, until they went away in three months.

“Shit, you’re right,” Ruby said, getting out of bed, and revealing she was wearing nothing at all. She walked shamelessly past Will, and started the shower. “Hope you don’t mind sharing the bathroom.”

“What’s left to hide, at this point?” Will replied. Ruby could do very little to surprise him. The room was a flurry of activity, with everyone pulling garment after garment from their bags, and maneuvering around each other, trying to get ready. Eventually, Will had managed to cobble together a look, and seemed pleased with it. “Does this outfit work?” he asked the room.

“I’ll say it does,” Molly said, then drove home her point with a wolf whistle.

Ruby added, “You might want a sweater though. They keep it cold as hell in that ballroom.”

"I'm not going to the fashion show though," Will said, grabbing his bag, and heading towards the doorway. "I've got other plans this morning. I'll see you later," he said, quickly closing the door behind him, before they could ask any questions. He had barely made it to the elevator, when his phone buzzed. It was a text from Molly. He opened it to read, "Tell Amos we said hi :)"

A short time later Hank, Raj, and Amos were walking up to the service desk of The Orleans bowling alley. "I'm telling you guys, it was nuts," Raj could be heard saying. "I told her we could buy beer twenty-four seven in Vegas, but she still insisted on grabbing the case, and running out the door. She threw the exact change at the counter on the way out, like someone was gonna stop her. That chick is fucking crazy."

"Well, that's a bit reductive, Raj," came a voice from behind them. The boys all turned to see a lovely blond creature, smirking, peeking over a pair of cheap, black, plastic, cat-eyed sunglasses. Her hair swept high off her forehead, and back down into a mass of soft curls, held off her face by a red chiffon scarf tied in a small bow asymmetrically on top of her head. She was wearing a square neck, sleeveless baby blue dress, with thin straps, covered in a red cherry print. It fell to mid thigh, with an inch of frothy red petticoat spilling out underneath it. Amos' face lit up when he saw her.

"I don't know if they'll let you play without socks though," Amos said, pointing down to her pale white feet with bright red toenails, poking out through the open-toed seafoam pumps, with little bows across the toes that she was wearing.

She opened her large, red, vinyl handbag with the gold clasp on top, and pulled out a balled up pair of red bobby socks. "Will these do?"

"Perfect," Amos replied, smiling ear to ear, and pulling her in for a welcoming hug.

Hank followed suit. "Sorry about last night, Jojo," he said, releasing the embrace.

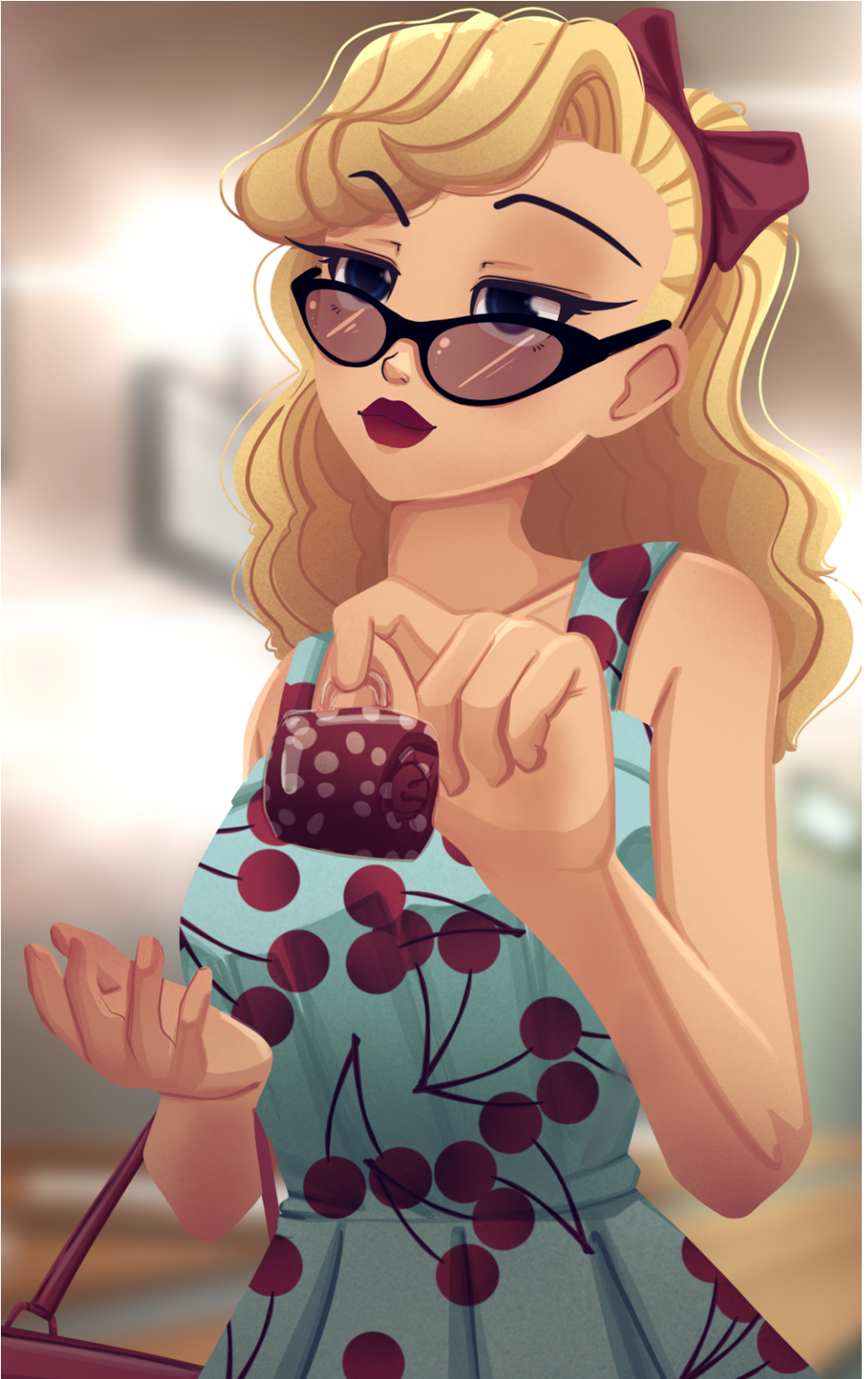
"It's okay, Hank. I heard you had fun," Will said knowingly.

"You're not going to tell Ruby what I said, are you, Bettie?" Raj pleaded.

"Now, why would I do that?" Will said, winking at Raj, who now looked more worried than ever. "On an unrelated note, Raj, would you get me a soda, please?"

"Of course, of course," Raj replied before bolting to the concession stand, leaving everyone standing there laughing.

Their team got registered, and Hank added everyone's names to the computer. "Ladies first." Hank said, nodding to Will. After a moment looking around for a lady, he recalled his situation and got up. Will picked up a glossy black ball, his arms visibly straining. He slipped his digits in the holes, noticing just how loose they were around his lithe fingers. He stepped up to the lane, and swung the



ball backwards, only to drop it at its apex, and have it fall down behind him with a loud thud. He turned to face the guys who were trying their best not to laugh, but were pretty obviously amused nonetheless, and his porcelain skin flushed crimson with embarrassment.

Amos quickly jumped from his seat, and rushed to comfort Will. "You've never bowled before, have you?"

"I think you already know the answer to that," Will said, taking a deep breath, and stifling tears. Amos picked up the black ball, and was surprised by its tremendous weight.

"This is a fifteen pound ball. I roll a sixteen pound ball," he said, pointing at the number right above the finger holes.

"I know. I just figured that the more weight, the more force imparted to the pins."

"That is true, Ms. Smartypants, but you actually have to get the ball down there for that to work. Hang on just a second." He returned with a glossy, sky blue ball similar in color to Will's dress. "This one is eight pounds. Slip your fingers in here, and let's see if they fit." Will complied and sure enough, it was just about right. "Try it again."

Will approached the lane again, and threw the ball down the lane — though, right before the end, it rolled into the gutter. "I'm awful," he whined.

"It's okay, sweetie. No need for tears. You just cry at the drop of a hat, don't you? Let's not ruin that pretty makeup you're wearing. I don't know anybody who was any good at anything the first time they did it." Amos grabbed the ball from the ball return, and had Will slip his fingers in again. He walked Will up to the lane, and showed him how to line up his throw. He placed his left hand on Will's left hip, and held Will's right hand and the bowling ball in his other hand. He guided Will's arm, whispering, "Straight back, straight forward, just like this," close to his ear. Just let go before you swing your arm all the way forward, and don't go too fast. Smooth is better than hard."

"Do you guys want some privacy?" Raj heckled, causing Amos to shoot him a death glare, quickly shutting him up.

"Ignore him. Are you ready to try again?" Will nodded his head, and he readied for his next turn, trying to follow all of Amos' instructions. He approached the lane, and leaned over. He swung his arm straight back, and straight forward, and let go of the ball. It slowly rolled down the lane and wobbled off its path, ever so slightly at the end of the lane, but still managed to knock over five pins. Will was so ecstatic that he started jumping up and down with glee, clapping his hands together in front of his chest.

"I did it!" he squealed proudly.

"You did!" Amos said, just before Will surprised him, by wrapping his arms around his neck, still jumping up and down.

“Way to go Jojo!” Hank cheered.

Raj joined in the celebration. “You’re killing it, girl!” Next, Raj took his turn knocking over nine pins on his first roll, but failed to pick up the spare. Hank was after him, and he managed to knock over seven with both his rolls. Amos was the last to go, lining up on the left side of the lane. He swung his arm back and forward, releasing the ball to the right, spinning his arm as he let go. It spun halfway down the lane before finding traction, and rolling back towards the center, and meeting its mark, causing the pins to explode, and leaving nothing left standing. Will’s jaw was on the floor. “Nice strike, bud,” Raj said, high-fiving his friend, before he took his seat.

“That was fucking amazing,” Will said, thoroughly impressed by Amos’ skill.

“It’s just a strike. Getting twelve of them in a row would be amazing.” Will started running his fingers up and down Amos’ back and neck, as though he was searching for something. “What exactly are you doing, goofball?”

“You actually showed humility. I’m looking for the zipper, so we can figure out who you really are.”

“I’d have gotten away with it too, if it wasn’t for you meddling kids. Seriously though, it’s your turn, pretty lady.” Will went back to the lane, and again tried to remember Amos’ lessons. He reached straight back and straight forward, letting the ball go, and watched it roll right up the center of the lane, making perfect contact with the head pin. He started to get excited, but disappointingly, when everything settled, the two on the outside were left standing.

“What the fuck was that?” he asked incredulously.

“That’s the dreaded seven-ten split,” Amos explained. “If you hit the head pin dead on, that’s going to happen. You have to hit the pocket between the head-pin, and the two or three to get a strike.”

“So, that’s why you do the spinny thingy, huh?”

“Exactly.”

“Well then, how do I fix it?”

“Please don’t be insulted when I say this, but you’re just not strong enough, baby. Just try to get one of them, and be proud of yourself. Even with the split, you were right on target.”

Will lined up his throw, and released the ball. It rolled across the lane, and picked up the seven. “There you go!” Amos said, proudly. “You’re a natural.”

The boys all took their turns, Amos getting another strike, and it was back to Will’s turn. “Remember to aim for the pocket.” Amos said, encouragingly. “Try lining up on the right side, and rolling across at it.”

Will lined up his shot, following Amos’ advice, and once again after swinging his arm straight back and straight forward, released the ball, and sent it rolling down the lane. It stayed on its path, and made contact with the pocket, just as

he intended, and the pins exploded, knocking all of them down. “A strike! I got a strike!”

Hank started chanting, “Jo jo! Jo jo! Jo jo!” and the others quickly joined in. Things settled down, and Hank and Raj took their turns. After that, Amos was up again. “He’s going for a turkey,” Hank whispered, trying not to psyche Amos out.

“They give you a turkey if you get three strikes?” Will asked earnestly. Raj’s laughter could be heard throughout the alley, prompting Amos to glare back at his teammates.

“That’s just what they call three strikes, Jojo. You don’t actually get a turkey,” Hank said. He mused to himself that this girl was incredibly smart, but sometimes could also be very stupid. Amos took his turn, hitting close to the pocket, and the pins exploded, but sadly the number ten was left standing when the action settled.

“That’s a bummer,” Amos said, slumping over.

“That was amazing though,” Will said, trying to cheer him up. “You were so close.”

“You’re sweet,” Amos said, winking. He grabbed his ball from the ball return, and expertly picked up his spare. The rest of the game was more of the same, and then the tournament started for real. Several games were played, with everyone having a great time, joking and kidding around. The final scores were posted for the afternoon, and the prizes were handed out. They didn’t win anything, but they didn’t come in last either, and to Will that felt like a huge victory.

“So, what now?” Raj asked the group. “What else is going on today?”

“I’m not sure,” Will answered. “Let me text Ruby, and Molly to see what they’re doing.”



Will might have struggled with his square tipped nails the first night, but you wouldn’t know it at this point. He’d quickly acclimated to the loss of use of his finger tips, and was even starting to prefer the tactile clicking sound the nails made when they tapped against the glass while he typed using the side of his thumb. “So, Molly is going to the burlesque show, and Ruby is meeting up with Gerry. They’re shopping the booths on the convention floor, and Ruby’s thinking about getting another tattoo.”

“Where’s she going to put it?” Raj joked.

Joining in, Hank said, “I’m sure she’s got room in there somewhere.”

Will quizzically gawked at the goofy boys, then realized they were being lewd. He admonished them, saying, "Shut up, guys. If she wants to tattoo her privates, let her." This only caused them to laugh even harder. "They're planning on meeting up later at the pool. Some band called The Televisionaries is playing and Ruby wants to check them out."

"I don't know about you, but I'm getting pretty hungry," Amos said. "Have you eaten, Bettie Jo?"

Will's stomach rumbled, answering the question for him. "I guess so. I had breakfast, but that was almost five hours ago. What are you thinking?"

Raj interjected, "I haven't had sushi in a while."

"Raj, don't you remember, we've gotta go to that thing," Hank said, putting his arm around Raj's shoulder.

"What are you talking about?"

"You know... The thing at the place."

"The thing at the..." He finally realized what Hank was getting at, and nodded in agreement.

None of this escaped Will. "Are you sure you can't come guys?" he asked nervously. He'd been alone with Amos before, but somehow now, it was different, and he knew it.

Raj said, "Oh. Yeah, the thing. Bettie Jo, Amos, we'll catch up with you later." The two awkwardly exited the bowling alley, leaving Amos standing, red-faced.

Will took pity on the boy, and filled the silence. "I could go for Sushi."

The place they settled on was a quiet little sushi place. They sat at the oval bar with two chefs zipping back and forth around each other in the center while a conveyor belt circled around the outside. "So you just grab whatever you want?" Amos asked, slightly confused by the whole operation.

"Yeah, just stack up your plates when you're done. They're color coded for price," said Will, demonstrating his expertise. "They'll total them up when we cash out." Will selected a couple of plates, and removed his chopsticks from their paper slip, and after applying a tiny dot of wasabi, ate the fish and rice in one bite. "You know, it's practically never real wasabi in the US. It's normally horseradish, and food coloring. Importing real wasabi is cost prohibitive, but it's not a terrible substitute, so most people don't care."

"Right," Amos said, visibly confused. He was holding his chopsticks clumsily. Try as he might, despite his giant muscles, he found himself unable to pick up any food. In his frustration, he set the chopsticks down, and picked up the piece of tuna, and stuffed it into his mouth. Will covered his lips to prevent his food from flying back out onto the sneeze guard, while he chuckled.

"Let me help you with that," Will said, after he managed to finally swallow. He grabbed a hair-tie from his purse. Using it, and the rolled up paper slip, he

fashioned the chopsticks into a spring loaded configuration that functioned like a pair of tweezers.

“Thanks,” Amos said, finding it much easier to enjoy his meal. “You’re pretty handy, aren’t you?”

Will couldn’t resist the opportunity to tease his lunch-mate. “That’s how they give them to little kids that haven’t learned how to use them properly yet.”

“Ha. Ha.” Amos emphasized each syllable with a large pause between.

“I do love food though. Cooking is one of my favorite pastimes.”

“I can tell. I’m more of a simple meat and potatoes guy, myself.”

“Next time you’re in LA, I’ll have to cook you a steak, then.”

“Is that an invitation?” Amos asked, causing Will to blush. “So what else do you like to do, aside from cooking, and pinup stuff?”

“Actually the pinup thing started this week, when Ruby conscripted me for a modeling gig, and that spun off into this weekend. I’m not normally this... uhh... flashy. Usually, I play a lot of video games, and I watch a lot of movies and TV. I’m pretty boring, if I’m being honest.”

“You’re anything but boring Bettie Jo. You’ve really never modeled before? You’re a natural, then.”

“My grandma was actually a pinup, and she left me a house with a plethora of clothes. I’m finally getting to put them to good use, I guess.”

“Nineteen years old, and a homeowner? That’s impressive.”

“I didn’t really do anything though. If my grandma was still alive, I’d just be another shut in, with more friends on Tumblr than in real life, and no credit history.”

“Yeah, but you’re handling the windfall maturely. If someone gave me a house when I was nineteen, I would have immediately sold it, and bought a jet ski or something. Hell, I probably would have crashed the thing into something expensive, and wound up worse off than when I started.”

“Listen, Amos,” Will said, his tone becoming more serious. “I never properly said thank you for last night. So, thank you. You have my gratitude. I guess you really do have a heart of gold buried deep deep down beneath all that bluster.”

“Why don’t we keep that a secret between us,” Amos joked, smiling warmly at the compliment.

Their conversation continued on for an hour, their plates were stacked neatly, and the check had long been resting on its little tray. Suddenly, Will’s phone started blowing up, getting notification, after notification. “Oh shit!” he said, swiping through the flurry of messages. “One of my client’s videos was scheduled to post today on youtube, and for some reason, it only uploaded the first

fifteen seconds, and then it just cuts to black apparently. I've got to go deal with this. I'm so sorry."

"It's not a problem, pretty lady," Amos said, reaching for the check. "Go handle your business."

"Are you sure? Let me see if I have some cash."

"I might not be able to eat this stuff correctly, but I can probably manage swiping a card. Go. We'll catch up after."

"You're sweet," Will said, planting a soft kiss on Amos' cheek, surprising both of them. "I'll uh... I'll meet you at the pool later." Will hurried out the door wondering just where the hell that came from.



There was merriment abound at The Orleans Hotel pool. It was a sea of bright colors, and island prints. Paper parasols dotted the horizon. People were drinking, people were dancing, and people were posing, but there were very few people in the actual pool. The few women who had actually braved the water dared not go in below the waist. A DJ was spinning records, filling the air with the sounds of classic rockabilly music. You could tell the party was winding down, but there were still a couple of hours left, and you'd have been hard pressed to find a frown on anyone's face.

Ruby and Molly were lounging by the pool, looking their best. Ruby wore a leopard print, high-waisted, two piece swimsuit, her hair was up in the same beehive she went to bed in, but hid the damage expertly with a white head scarf. Molly was wearing a strapless, navy swimsuit, with flirty short pants on the bottom, that was decorated with white piping. Her hair was pulled back on one side, pinned up with a large pansy, leaving the rest spilling down to her shoulders in perfectly arranged curls. Both their makeup jobs were immaculate. Hank, wearing swim trunks, a Hawaiian shirt, and his usual trilby, had just returned from the bar with drinks for the girls. Nearby, in the pool, Amos and Raj were being typical twenty something boys, sloshing around in the water, trying to drown each other for fun.

Ruby had just sat up to take a sip of her strawberry daiquiri when water splashed her legs which stretched out on the lounge chair. "So help me god, Raj, if you fuck up my hair or makeup, I will shove my foot so far up your ass, you'll be picking nail polish out of your teeth."

"I don't think your leg is long enough," Raj said, just before Amos tackled him from behind, pushing him under water.

"Sorry, Ruby."

"You're good, Amos," said Ruby. "How much longer did Bettie Jo say she'd be?"

"She didn't. Just said she had a work crisis." He then released Raj, who came up gasping for air, water dripping down his face.

"Not cool, bro!" he huffed.

"Speak of the Devil," Molly said, waving to the delicate creature approaching their sitting area. She was wearing a pair of red mules with wooden heels and glossy toe straps, and a white cover up she clutched tightly together in front with one hand. She carried a large paper parasol in the other. "Did you get everything handled?"

"I did," Will said. "I have no clue what happened. Your guess is as good as mine, but the video is posted now, and I don't have to think about it anymore."

"Why don't you take off your coat, and stay a while?" joked Molly, patting the chair next to her.

"I didn't get a chance to put sunscreen on my back," Will said, pulling his cover up even tighter.

Amos couldn't get out of the pool fast enough. "I'll help with that."

"Umm... You don't have to. I'm fine," Will said, doe eyed.

"I insist," Amos slipped the coverup off of Will's shoulders, letting it crumple down on the chair, revealing a red, one-piece, halter neck swimsuit, bunched in the middle right beneath Will's cleavage. Molly knew that Will was less concerned about sunburn, and was more worried about being in public wearing such a revealing outfit.

She squeezed his hand gently, trying to discreetly comfort him, when Ruby, who just saw Will in his swimsuit shouted, "Damn, Bitch! Are you trying to make the rest of us feel like shit about ourselves?" Will blushed, and waved her off, but his brief happy expression wasn't missed by either of the girls. He shivered for a moment when Amos squirted cold sunscreen on his back, but not for too long. It was quickly warmed by Amos' firm muscular hands, rubbing it in. This went on for about thirty seconds but quickly transitioned into Amos massaging Will's shoulders. He was pressing hard to work out a few knots, and Will had become putty in his hands. His posture slowly changed, as he became more and more relaxed, leaning back into Amos, and crossing his legs in front.

Around that time, a girl in a pineapple print bikini walked onto the stage, and announced the band. "It's about time for the last band at the Viva Las Vegas Tiki Pool Party. Guys, and Gals, please give a warm welcome to... The Televisionaries." A red haired singer with a baby face took to the mic, guitar in hand, and the show started. The volume increased to the point where people could barely hear each other, and folks started congregating near the stage.

"I want to dance," Will said suddenly.



“What?” Amos yelled over the crowd noise.

Will turned to face him, and shouted back. “I want to dance!”

Amos blushed, and grimaced at the idea. “I don’t really dance!”

“Pretty please!” Will begged, batting his eyelashes just as he’d seen Molly do to Hank a hundred times already this weekend.

Amos appeared disappointed to disappoint, but repeated himself. "I don't dance!"

"Your loss," Will got up spitefully, and walked off, not wanting to admit to himself just how much that hurt him. He stepped into the crowd, and started a solo jive routine, while everyone else watched on. It wasn't long after that that a cute little old man tapped him on the shoulder, and extended his hand. Soon he was leading Will all around the blacktop, to the raucous approval of an older crowd, clapping along.

Ruby sat up, put her hand on Amos' shoulder, and said, "You're a buffoon."

"Yeah, bro, that was dumb," Hank added, handing him a conciliatory beer.

A little while later, the pool party was winding down, and Will was saying goodbye to his dance partner. He rejoined his friends to find Amos in the pool sulking, while Raj was currently engaged in a splash battle with some kids. Molly was lying back in Hank's arms on the lounge chair, and Ruby was fixing her lipstick in her compact. "Is everyone ready to go?"

"I think so," Ruby said, closing her compact. "How 'bout y'all?"

"Sounds good to me." Molly said, pulling herself up. "We can go get ready, and then, are we thinking dinner?"

"A perfect plan, baby," Hank said. The two then pecked lips sweetly, while Ruby pretended to vomit. "Hey guys, I think we're gonna head upstairs, and get ready!" Amos got out of the pool, and started drying himself off, staring at Will disappointed whenever he wasn't looking.

Raj came up a few minutes later. "What are we doing, guys?"

"We're going to get ready, and then we're getting dinner," Hank replied.

"Oooh! *Awesome!* Just one more Cannonball!" Raj jumped into the pool, creating a huge splash, drenching everyone waiting on him.

A droning whistle from the lifeguard rang out, but what was actually terrifying was Ruby, with her hair soaked flat against her scalp, and with water streaming down her face. She said, "Mark my words, Rajesh. You will pay for this later." Her words were so cold, the hair on the back of his neck stood up.



A short while later, Raj, Hank, and Amos were in the Lobby, waiting on their dinner partners. They all wore button down shirts, skinny ties, nice slacks, vintage oxford shoes, and flashy sport coats. Amos had greased his hair back, while Raj's Pompadour was pumped up to the heavens. Raj nervously paced back and forth, fearful of the impending doom that was Ruby Velvet.

The elevator door opened, and all eyes turned to the three beauties stepping off. Amos' focus zeroed in on Will, like there was nobody else in the whole world. He was wearing a blue dress, covered in white polka dots, and with a large white square collar draping down over the shoulders. It fit tight at the waist, accented by two white buttons on either side of a sewn-in belt, and the skirt hung down below the knee, on top of a modest petticoat. He wore white, round-toe pumps, and had accessorized the outfit with pearls at the ears, and a matching double strand necklace. He wore white, wrist-length gloves on his hands, which carried a small clutch that matched the print of his dress. His blonde coiffure was parted on the side, and fell smoothly to his shoulders where it flipped out. Amos was speechless at first, but eventually managed to eke out, "You look gorgeous Bettie Jo. I like your hair this way. Very sixties."

"That's because it was a pretty easy style to manage, after nitwit here, fucked up her set." Ruby said, pointing with her thumb over to Rajesh.

Rajesh, visibly sweating, ran up to Ruby, and said, "I'm so sorry, Ruby. I wasn't thinking. I didn't know if your hair got wet, you'd have to cut it off."

"It's a wig, dumbass." Ruby was wearing a knee length, sleeveless dress, with a blue rose print, and the straps tied in ornate bows on top of her shoulders. Its tight bodice hugged every curve, and the voluminous skirt fell to her knee over an equally voluminous petticoat. Her short wig was curled, and styled high on her head, falling just to mid ear, leaving her blue bead earrings on full display. White, point-toe pumps, white, mid length gloves, and a blue handbag completed her ensemble.

"I take it, this is a wig too," Hank said, greeting Molly with a kiss.

"Indeed, it is," Molly said, giving him a twirl. She was wearing a spaghetti strapped, blue wiggle dress, decorated in a darker blue, peony print. She'd swapped out her contacts for her transparent framed, semi-triangular glasses. She accessorized with strappy sandals with four inch heels, and mid length gloves, both the same blue as the print on her dress. The outfit was finished with a blue jeweled choker necklace, and a quilted blue leather purse. The crowning glory of her look was a curled, Betty Draper style wig, but dyed the same blue as the rest of her outfit.

"We're going to Alder and Birch tonight, guys, and it's on me," Raj said to the group, but looking specifically at Ruby with pleading eyes.

"A pricey steakhouse, hmm?" Ruby mused. "Okay, that's a start, I guess." She looped her arm through his, much to his surprise, and they started walking to the restaurant.

"Looks like you're going to get your meat and potatoes," Will said, taking Amos' arm, and pulling him along. Amos followed behind, just happy that his chances didn't seem dashed.

Dinner went off without a hitch. Raj winced when he saw the check, but he gladly paid it. He'd take any chance he could find to lower his ranking on Ruby's shit list. The group then decided to hit up the hotel bars, and check out the bands that were playing. "Don't get too hammered tonight, girls," said Ruby. "We've got to work in the morning."

"We weren't the ones who got blackout drunk last night," teased Will.

"If I remember correctly, ma'am, you did, a couple of days before we left. Don't act like you're better than me, little missy." Ruby made an exaggerated angry expression, and shook her fist playfully. It was this moment when Will realized that the animosity Ruby was harboring was long gone. Something had changed since the day before.

"Play nice, you two," Molly said. "We'll all be on our best behavior tonight."

They ordered their drinks, and found a table near the stage. Molly and Hank were in a new relationship cloud, and hung off of each other's every word. To them, in that moment, nothing else was of any consequence. Ruby and Raj were engaged in their own world, bickering about the proper way to roll a blunt. That left Will and Amos, enveloped in awkwardness, just like the previous night. It was akin to some kind of hell loop, though this time, Amos was robbed of any and all confidence.. "I... uhh... like this band." He stuttered, trying to break the tension.

"Yeah, they're pretty good." Will said, unsure of what to follow it up with. Nothing was said for another five minutes, and the silence was palpable.

"Look..." Amos started suddenly, startling Will, who'd zoned out watching the band. "I'm sorry about earlier. It wasn't about you. I just don't dance."

"That's fine. I get it. I don't even care really. Why would I? This is all for show, isn't it? You've just been acting so weird since then, and I didn't know what to say. I'm not great at awkward situations."

"So, you forgive me, then?"

"There was nothing to forgive in the first place. It's not like you owe me anything. Like I said, I was just disappointed." As anyone with parents will tell you, when they say they're not mad, just disappointed, it's almost worse, but lacking parentage, Will didn't really understand this subtlety.

A little bit later, Ruby, and Raj announced they were going out for a cigarette, and Hank and Molly, unaware that they were rubbing salt in the wound, got up to dance, leaving Will and Amos sitting alone at the table, and the silence resumed. "I think I'm going to call it a night," Will said, reaching his threshold for weirdness. He put his gloves back on, and rose from the table, after collecting his purse.

"I'll walk you!" Amos said, panicked. "If you want me to, that is."

Will took one quick look around the room, and found half a dozen leering eyes fixed on where he stood. "Sure, I could use the company."

When they stepped off the elevator, they awkwardly stared at each other's feet, not sure how to say goodbye. This went on for a while until Will finally broke away, and said, "I need to get to bed. I've gotta get up early, and Molly said our hair was going to be a pain in the ass tomorrow."

"I understand. Get some rest, beautiful." Amos pushed the elevator call button, meanwhile, Will walked over to the door, and reached out, only to notice a bra hanging from it.

"Dammit Molly!" Will cursed.

"Dammit Molly, what?" Molly asked, stepping from the opening elevator door, pulling Hank behind her.

Amos looked at the couple, then turned back to Will. "Yeah, they were behind us, Bettie."

"Wait... what?" Everyone tiptoed to the door, to examine the brassiere closely, murmuring in hushed whispers.

"That's not yours, is it?" Will asked.

Molly replied, "Not unless my boobs suddenly grew two sizes, like a grinch heart."

Hank lifted the strap to get a better look at it. "Then that means..."

"No fucking way," Will and Amos practically said in unison. Just then, the sound of leather coming in contact with skin, echoed out into the hallway, followed by a muffled shriek, and then a low moan.

"I genuinely did not see that coming," Will said, pressing his ear to the door.

"Way to go Raj," Amos said, tickled by the noises they were hearing.

Hank looked genuinely scared. "I might be worried about him, though."

"He's fine," chuckled Molly. "It's not like she's going to eat him."

"That's true," Will added. "She never cooks for herself." Molly snorted pretty loudly, and everyone scurried back to the elevator. "Wasn't she the one going on about bedtimes?"

"Yeah, but it's not really that late yet. They'll probably wrap it up before too long."

"What are we going to do until then?" Will asked the group.

After a moment of quiet pondering, Amos offered a suggestion. "There's always our room."

Molly and Hank glanced at each other knowingly, and Hank suddenly shouted, "Dibs!" then the two bolted through the door to the auxiliary stairwell.

“That sneaky fucker!” Amos lamented. “I’ve got to admit though, that was clever.”

“So what do you want to do, then?” Will asked.

“Late at night, with no good decisions to make. We are in a casino after all. Want to check out the floor with me?”

Will paused briefly to consider his options and decided. “Sure, why not. I’ll give them an hour, but then I’m kicking down the door.” Amos’ didn’t say a word, but his expression said, yeah right. “Okay, so I’ll use your leg as my proxy leg, and then I’ll kick down the door.”

It was fast approaching midnight, but the Casino floor was still a flurry of activity, as it seemed to be twenty-four hours a day. The slot machines flashed and blasted a cacophony of music, and sound effects. People huddled around tables hosting every game you could imagine. Crowds cheered, and drunks cursed the gods. Up to this point, Will had really only been interacting with other convention goers, but down here, there were all types. From bachelorette parties, to degenerate gamblers, the gamut of casino patron archetypes was well represented.

With a curious expression, Will’s eyes wandered around the floor. The casino functioned as a giant flashy machine whose sole purpose was to bankrupt the optimistic. He found it functionally impressive, but still downright evil. “What should we play?” Amos asked, pulling him from his thoughts.

“I’m pretty sure I’m not even supposed to be down here, so I don’t think we can play anything.”

“This is probably one of those situations where it’s better to ask for forgiveness than permission. Just stay close to me, and we’ll play as a team. I’ll place the bets, and you provide the luck.”

“If you’re looking to me for luck, you might be barking up the wrong tree.”

“Alright, alright. What are we playing, already?”

“How about that one?” Will said, pointing to a nearby slot machine that had an Alice in Wonderland theme.

Amos shook his head, and with a wry smile, said, “Could you be any more basic? I meant what game are we playing. That thing is basically a vending machine that you put a quarter in, and get a nickel back.”

“I didn’t realize you were some kind of high roller.”

“I’m a medium roller, I’ll have you know. For real though. Pick again. Something that’s actually fun this time.”

A wild crowd could be heard cheering towards the back. “They sound like they’re having fun.” Will said, pointing in their direction.

“Craps huh? It does, in fact, have the best odds in the casino.”

“What does that mean?”

“It’s the game where the casino fucks you the least.”

“Let’s do it!”

They found an open space at the table between a well dressed businessman with some kind of European accent, and a sour faced, bald, old man wearing a green visor. The old man had an unlit cigarette in a plastic tip hanging from his lips, that bounced up and down when he talked. “They’re killing me today, Oscar.” he said, through a pursed maw. He threw his hands in the air angrily when the shooter rolled a seven.

The dealer collected all the chips off the table, and said, “They’re just playing the game, same as you Doctor Thompson.”

“Seven is bad, I take it?” Will whispered, surveying the numbers across the table.

“Yes, except on the come out. Also, don’t say seven.”

“Is it against the rules or something?”

Amos took advantage of the break in play, and dropped four fifty dollar bills on the table. The dealer scooped them up, and in their place dropped a stack of chips for Amos to collect. “Nope. Some folks think it’s bad luck though, and it’s better not to ruffle feathers if you can help it.”

“I’ll call it MacBeth, then.”

“What?”

“Nevermind. So the bad number is bad except for when it’s not. I’m still confused.”

“It’s good when the shooter is coming out, and setting the point, though it doesn’t pay too much then. It’s also good if you just made a come bet.” The new shooter took his opening roll, and hit an eight. The dealer flipped the puck to ‘on,’ on top of the eight, and the stick man collected the dice.

“I’m still confused.”

“I’ll tell you what. Pick a couple of those numbers.” Amos pointed to the row of numbers in boxes up in front of the dealer.

“Okay, I like five and nine.”

Amos set a few chips between him and the dealer. “Split this between the five and the nine please.” The dealer nodded in acknowledgement, and divided the chips, exchanging the extra for singles, and capping them off, then passed the change back to Amos. The shooter rolled a six first.

“Jesus Christ! I can’t get the fuck ahead!” Doctor Thompson shouted, as the dealer collected his bet off the field space.

“Why did he lose his, but we kept ours?” Will asked.

"Field bets are win or lose. The odds aren't great. They kind of suck anyway."

"You're damn right they do!" shouted the old man, tipping back his beverage, downing the rest in a single gulp. "I'll have what they're having," he said to the dealer, dropping his chips on the table. The dealer passed back his change, and the stick man slid the dice back to the shooter. This time, a nine was rolled. "Hot damn little lady, you're my ticket!" Doctor Thompson was over the moon, finally getting a payout.

Amos collected his chips, and asked Will, "Are we letting the nine ride?"

Will tried to assess the table, and still had no clue what was going on, so he settled on taking a shot in the dark. "No. Just leave the five, I guess." The shooter took another roll, and sure enough it was a five. "Leave the five," Will said, before being asked. The shooter took another roll, and this time landed on the seven, eliciting groans from the crowd. "Oh no," Will said, hanging his head.

"Don't beat yourself up. We had to lose sooner or later. It's inevitable."

"Damn skippy," Doctor Thompson said. "You made a profit. You do that with every shooter, and you're going to walk away from this table a happy young lady." The next shooter threw his come out roll, and the game was on. Bets were placed, and dice were thrown. This cycle continued around the table, and pretty soon, Will and Amos were nursing a sizable stack of chips. Dr Thompson, whose strategy so far had been to copy the young people, was in a very good mood, especially compared to when they arrived at the table. Finally, it was Amos' turn to shoot. He set a five dollar chip on the Pass Bet line.

"Why'd you do that?" Will asked. It was the first time Amos hadn't let him pick.

"I have to play the Pass line if I want to shoot. It's just the rules. I could play the Don't Pass, but then I'd just be betting against myself." The dealer slid over five dice, and Amos chose two. "Blow on these," he said, holding them to Will's lips.

"Okay, weirdo," Will said with a wry smile.

"Seriously, it's an old superstition. It's good luck to have a pretty girl blow on your dice before you roll them."

"Fine," Will said, trying to look put out, but inside he was happy to be called pretty. He gently blew on the dice, and Amos tossed them out, bouncing them off the back wall.

"Eleven!" shouted the stick man. The dealer dropped a chip next to Amos' Pass Line bet, which he quickly collected.

"Do it again," Amos said, clearly giddy, holding the dice up. Will complied, and once again, Amos let them fly.

"Seven!" shouted the stick man.



“Damn!” Will said, surprising himself with how invested he’d become.

“No, it’s good,” Amos said, consoling Will. “It’s a come out roll.”

“So, we won?”

“Yeah, just not a lot. We’re going to have to hit a point if we want to make different bets.” Amos picked up the dice again, Will blew on them, and again they

bounced across the table, this time actually setting the point at four. The dealer flipped the puck, and set it on the four box. Amos smiled optimistically. "That's a tough one, but we got this." He looked at the dealer and said, "I'm gonna do odds for thirty. He set a stack of chips behind his Pass Line bet, and the dice were passed back. Will blew on them, and the roll came up five."

"Is that good or bad?" Will asked.

Amos answered, "It's neither. It's nothing. We just roll again."

"When do we stop?"

"Either when we get a four, or we roll the bad number. If we hit the point, the process starts over again, and if we go out, no more rolls for us. No pressure."

"Whatever you say. I'll trust that you know what you're doing, because I sure don't." They repeated their routine, and this time the dice landed on four, causing the table to lose its mind. Everyone was very excited, collecting their winnings, especially Doctor Thompson, who'd ordered another drink, and settled into his seat sporting a cheshire grin.

Another point was set, and within a few rolls, they hit it again. This continued for quite a while, with Amos placing various bets based on Will's whims. They were up three-hundred dollars, and Amos had just set another point when a large dark haired man found a spot on the other side of Doctor Thomson. "Welcome back, Mr. Duke," said the Dealer. He swapped his cash for chips, and slid them back to him across the table. "I hope you've enjoyed your stay, so far. Best of luck to you."

"Thank you, young man," said Mr. Duke, before setting some chips in the 'Don't Come' box.

"Don't play the dark side you Nazi sympathizer!" shouted Dr Thompson. "Can't you see, this young man is on a hot streak? He doesn't need your bad juju fucking up his vibes. And don't buy in in the middle of the game. That's what separates us from the chimpanzees."

"Be nice Doctor Thompson," the dealer said, wagging a finger at him. "We don't want a repeat of the other night." Mr. Duke looked appalled, but held his ground. Will blew on the dice, and Amos rolled them once again.

"Seven out!" shouted the stick man.

"You did this, you filthy animal!" Doctor Thompson yelled, then threw down his drink, and broke his cigarette. He stood and locked eyes with Mr. Duke. "You fucking jinx! Chaos gremlin!" Mr. Duke looked like he might faint.

This brought out the pit boss, who forced himself between them, shouting "That's enough Doctor Thompson! It's time to cash out! We'll call you a cab!"

"This whole industry has gone to shit anyway," Doctor Thomson said, putting the cigarette back in his mouth, though it was barely holding on to the filter by a sliver of paper. "There was a time when we all would have caned this man,

and I could enjoy a smoke while doing it. Whatever. I'm tired." He collected his chips, and walked to the exchange counter to cash out.

"Sorry about that everyone," the pit boss said. His attention was drawn to Will, looking very guilty by trying too hard to not look guilty. "Ma'am, you don't have your ID on you, do you?"

"Uhhh..." Will searched for an excuse, but was still flabbergasted by the scene that had just unfolded.

"She left her wallet in the room," Amos interjected, coming to the rescue.

Will held up his quilted clutch, and gave it a gentle shake. "I could barely fit my phone and lipstick in this thing," he said, following Amos' lead.

The pit boss nodded as though he understood, but said, "We'll need to see it, before we can let you back at the table."

"Not a problem, sir," Amos said. "We were just about to go to bed anyway."

"Alright then. Have a good evening." Chips in hand, the pair found their way to the exchange counter, and approached the cage. Amos collected his winnings, and the two started toward the elevator, but were stopped by Doctor Thompson, who'd somehow procured another beverage.

He slipped a bill into Will's hand, whispered in his ear, "You've made me a lot of money tonight, sweetheart. One piece of advice; don't take any guff from these swine." He stood up straight, and just as quickly as he appeared in their lives, he stumbled right back out of it.

"He was cute... and a little sexist." Will watched him disappear into the crowd, and held up the bill.

"That's a hundred," Amos said in disbelief. They got onto the elevator, and the doors closed. Amos took Will's hands, and looked deep into his eyes. "So I was thinking tomorrow, you could be my date for the Ball... if you're going that is... platonically of course..."

"I'm definitely going. The girls packed me a big, stupid, poofy dress and there's no way they're letting it go to waste." Will looked Amos up and down, and shrugged. "I suppose there are worse dates than you."

The elevator doors opened, and the two walked back to Will's hotel room door, only to see the bra was still there.

"Jesus Christ, Ruby, it's like two in the fucking morning!" Will, very annoyed, shouted in a whisper. "I'm going to text her." A few moments later Will's phone chimed. "She says they fell asleep."

Just then, the door opened, and out walked Raj, wearing only his underpants, and Ruby's wig. "She said I had to wear it back to the room, and I could have my clothes back tomorrow if I was good."

"You know you could probably take it off now," Amos said.



With a haunted expression Raj said, “Nah bro. She’ll know.”

Amos’ first impulse was to make a smart-ass comment, but instead took pity on him, and just said, “C’mon man. Let’s go to bed.”



The next morning, Will was seated in front of Molly, freshly out of the shower, wrapped in a towel, his long blond locks hanging limply to his shoulders.

“Drink your coffee, sugar. We need to be happy and alert when we meet up with Gerry,” Molly said. She had wrung out his hair, and was starting to set it in tight small rollers. Ruby, in her underwear, with her roller set completed, was searching the room with a cigarette hanging from her lips.

“Has anyone seen my robe?” she asked, throwing garment after garment from one of her suitcases.

“It’s crumpled on the bathroom floor,” Will muttered.

Ruby quickly found the bundle of pink terry cloth, and stepped into a pair of white bunny slippers, complete with floppy ears. She said, “Thanks, Bettie Jo. I thought I was going to have to smoke naked,” then disappeared into the hallway.

“She wouldn’t really do that, would she?” Will asked.

Molly chuckled, “I wouldn’t put it past her.”

Will rubbed his eyes and took another sip of his coffee. “I don’t understand how you are so chipper. The sun is barely up. I guess you got a good night’s sleep in your boyfriend’s bed.”

“We didn’t get that much sleep, if you know what I mean,” Molly said playfully. She tickled Will’s ribs causing him to squeal a little. “I’m always chipper when I’m about to make a bunch of money with minimal effort. You at least got most of the bed to yourself last night, didn’t you?”

“I did, but I kept wondering if I was sleeping on Raj’s cum stains. I didn’t get in bed until super late, and it still took me an hour to actually pass out.”

“How about Amos though? You two have been spending a lot of time together. Does he strike your fancy?”

“Guys, stop, please,” Will whined, turning crimson. “He’s really a nice guy, once you get past the arrogant exterior. You guys know I’m still a guy underneath all this. I’m not interested in boys anyway.”

Molly, with a sardonic grin, mimed a masturbatory gesture with her hand. “Keep telling yourself that.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Seriously, Bettie Jo!? You might not have liked many boys before, but you definitely like that one, and as far as being a boy... well let’s just say you don’t look like much of one to me. You certainly don’t act like one.”

“Molly, I’m just trying to pass through this weekend with as little incident as possible. Amos is a means to an end. Once we get back home, all of this is over, and I can get back to my normal, boring ass life.”

Molly leaned down, hugging Will tightly from behind, and the two faced each other in the mirror. "You're a beautiful, intelligent, funny young woman. I'm sure you already know that on some level. You just need to accept it. Sooner or later it will happen." She kissed him affectionately on the cheek, and stood back up and returned to her task. "That's enough heavy shit for one morning though. We have work to do." Will smiled back at her pleasantly, but inside, his mind was running at ten-thousand rotations per minute.

"Oh! My! Gawd! You ladies look lovely!" Gerry squealed, clasping his hands together in front of his chest. Will, Molly, and Ruby had just made their entrance onto the blacktop, and found their way down to Gerry's vintage, cherry red, fifty-five Chevrolet Bel Aire. "Those outfits look exactly how I'd imagined. You've outdone yourself, Ruby."

"Ask, and you shall receive," Ruby said smugly, lighting a cigarette. "Molly did an amazing job with our hair and makeup too."

"I'll say she did." Gerry lit his own smoke. He snapped several photos with his camera, catching them from every angle. "Thank you so much for doing this for me, y'all. Thank you especially, Bettie Jo. I know this was last minute, but you still came."

"I wasn't doing anything, anyway," Will said, blushing. "You've been extremely generous. If anything, it's me who should be thanking you."

"Looks that can kill, and she's modest. You're gonna break some hearts, kiddo. Hop up on the back seat, and let me get some shots before the crowds start rolling in." The group took their positions, Molly in the middle because she was the tallest. "This is absolutely perfect. Exactly as I had imagined it."

They all three matched to perfection. Each was wearing navy high-waisted short-shorts that fit snug to their thighs, hips, and rears, with pleated fronts, and button accents on the left side of the waist. They wore red sleeveless tops, in a shade that perfectly matched the car, with deep plunging necklines showing off ample amounts of cleavage. The tops were decorated with white pin-stripes, and white piping around the neckline and straps. The simple, but flattering outfits were finished by pearl studs at the ears, and stained wooden wedge heeled sandals with white straps. Molly, who had worn her contacts today, had arranged all of their hair into poodle updos, in an homage to Lucille Ball, complete with white lilies pinned to the side of their coiffures. Their matching makeup consisted of perfectly blended contour, white eyeshadows, bold cats-eye eyeliner, and false eyelashes, and finished with cherry red lips, fingers and toes, the same shade as the car, and their outfits.

Gerry finished taking his pictures, and they still had a little bit of time left to kill before the lot opened. Molly pulled out her phone to check the weather. "It's not getting out of the seventies today fortunately, but we still need to put on sunscreen. The clouds are supposed to clear up around lunch time."



“I need to put on sunscreen in a snowstorm,” Will joked. He dug through their gear bag, and found the spray bottle, and liberally coated himself. Everyone else did the same, and soon they were back in the car and ready to go. “So I just sit here and look pretty, all day?” he asked.

“More or Less,” replied Molly. She opened a large paper parasol, and held it high above the group. “We try to accommodate any reasonable request for a

photo. Just keep a smile on your face, and remember those poses we taught you. Also, be ready for some harmless flirting.”

Ruby added, “Harmless flirting though. If somebody starts getting weird on you, shut that shit down. Don’t hesitate to scream if need be. There’s no shortage of dudes here that’d be willing to beat some pervert’s ass at the drop of a hat.”

“I doubt that will be necessary though,” Molly said reassuringly. “Most people here are awesome. It’s rare that someone’s not on their best behavior. We’ve got a decent view of the stage too, so at the very least, we’ll get to hear some killer music.”

“Anyone playing today, that I’d know?” Will asked.

“Do you like surf music?” Will nodded. “There’s an all girl band from Canada called The Surfrajettes. Their beehive game gives Ruby a run for her money.”

“Hey! Nobody’s beehive game does that,” Ruby said defensively.

From there, the day progressed on without surprises. Excited convention goers strolled past the automobiles, taking photos, and ogling both the girls and the machinery. Will probably posed for about two-hundred pictures before lunchtime arrived. Most of it was simple, but the hardest part was keeping that inviting smile plastered to his face the entire time, when in reality he was hot, tired, and his tuck was starting to pinch. Almost every break he took involved him having to go to the bathroom and adjust his equipment, before getting back to work.

It was almost three when Gerry demanded they take a lunch break. “I know you’re professionals, but I can’t have you passing out on me. I’ll hold down the fort. You ladies, get something to eat, and be back here in an hour or so.”

“You’re too good to us, Gerry.” Ruby said, blowing him a kiss, and jumping up from her seat. They wandered the show floor, and found a food vendor. Then they strolled over to the stage where the Queen of the Car Show pageant was underway.

“They’re so pretty,” Will said, watching the pinups stroll across the stage.

Ruby snickered, and asked, “Are you jealous or something?”

“What? No!” Will replied defensively.

“Well, don’t be. You’re just as hot as them. If we did a few more lewd photo shoots, and you scooped up some more instagram followers, we could submit your pics and you could be up there next year.”

“That’s just silly,” Will said, playing it down, and waving his hand dismissively, but his expression said otherwise. After the winner was crowned, they made their way back to the car, and gave Gerry a break. Through the rest of the afternoon, the stream of convention-goers waxed and waned. When the sun was starting to disappear in the horizon, three familiar faces strolled up.

“Looking gorgeous as always, ladies,” Hank said, then lightly kissed Molly’s cheek, trying not to mess up her makeup. “What time are you done here?”

Gerry said, “They’ll be free to go here in a few, gentlemen. The light is pretty shit for photos at this point, so there’s no reason for me to hold them hostage any longer. We just have to handle some paperwork, and once I get them paid, they’re all yours.” Will, Molly, and Ruby followed Gerry over to his display table, where three stacks of paper were arranged neatly. “I’ll leave you girls here to sign these. Everything is exactly as we discussed Ruby, including the signing bonus. I’ll be right back, once I find my checkbook.”

Will turned to the last page, and was surprised to find his full legal name in print beneath the signature line. “I can’t believe you told him!” Will cried.

“Calm down, booboo,” Ruby said. “We had to. It’s fraud if we don’t. Trust me, hon. Gerry doesn’t care. It’d be pretty weird for a guy who’s had that many dicks in his mouth to have a problem with a girl having one.”

“Okay, fine, whatever,” Will said, visibly irritated. He signed his full name, dated the document, then stormed off back to the boys.

While Gerry wrote the check, Ruby did her best not to visibly salivate. “I’ve got to go meet up with Rodrigo now. We’ll see you guys at the Glamour Ball tonight. Be good, darlings.”

“Who’s hungry?” Amos asked the group.

Raj was the first to reply. “I could eat.”

Will rubbed his temples, and said, “You guys go without me. I didn’t get a ton of sleep last night, so I’m going to go take a power nap.”

“Do you want me to walk you?” Amos asked.

Will brushed him off, saying, “No, I’m good. Y’all have fun, and I’ll see you shortly. I just need some me time.”

“Okay.” Amos said dejectedly. “See you soon then.”

Back in the hotel room, Will took another shower, washing off all his makeup, and destroying his updo. He rolled his hair up, and left it to air dry. He dressed in his short nightgown, and laid down in bed. He pulled the covers up over his face, and quickly fell asleep.



When the guys knocked on the girls’ hotel room that evening, Ruby answered, looking absolutely flawless in her royal blue, slim fitting, tea length cocktail dress, with a swan neckline. Black, glossy court shoes, black wrist length gloves, and black beads at the neck, wrist, and ears, accessorized her ensemble. She dressed up her makeup from earlier, keeping much the same design, but with

deeper, more vampish colors. Her black hair was smooth on top, brushed down with a bundle of tight curls gathered from ear to ear around the back of her head, and was topped off by a little, black pillbox hat. "I am not walking into that party with you looking like that. You're embarrassing yourself so much, it's actually embarrassing me. You look like a bastard toddler as his father's best man. You look..."

"I get it, Ruby," Raj interrupted. "I thought if I hung up the suit yesterday, it'd be fine today, but I guess I was wrong." He waved his arms, showing off his wrinkled, purple suit, with its matching bowtie and cummerbund.

"Come with me," she said, taking pity on the boy. "I've got my steamer plugged in still. We'll getcha sorted."

Molly came out next, and was first greeted by a kiss from Hank, then a showering of compliments. "Baby, I didn't think anyone could look good in that shade of green, and here you are, proving me wrong."

"Thanks, sweetie," she replied, curtsying, and twirling to show off her outfit. "It's from Bettie Jo's absurd collection. Ruby had to lower the hem a little for me, but it fit pretty well otherwise." She wore a lime green, chiffon, vintage formal dress, with spaghetti straps, a small bow appliqué in the center of the bodice, and a voluminous sheer multilayered skirt, spread out over a large, rustling crinoline. Her pumps, and clutch matched the shade of the dress perfectly. With a string of pearls, simple button earrings, and opera length white gloves, her outfit was straight out of a nineteen-fifties prom catalog. She toned down her eyes, settling on natural shades of eyeshadow, but kept the same red lipstick she'd used at the car show. She had brushed her hair thoroughly, turning the tight curls from earlier into a flattering marcel wave, and rolled it into a french twist in the back, with the ends tucked away from sight.

Hank didn't look too shabby himself. He was wearing a solid black suit, white button down, and a black skinny tie. He reminded Molly of a bald Elvis Costello. He squeeze her hand, feeling truly grateful that this incredibly gorgeous woman would even give him the time of day. "Well, wherever it came from, it's all the more beautiful because you're wearing it." They kissed again, while Amos tried to find anywhere else to set his gaze.

Amos looked incredibly dapper, channeling a kind of James Bond-esque energy. His tuxedo was a simple pair of dark pants, a white button down, and a black vest and bowtie, but his jacket was a pure, clean white. "Somebody trimmed their beard, I see." Molly said, patting him affectionately on the face. "She's going to love it. Speaking of which..." She cracked the door open, and shouted inside, "Bettie Jo, you look fine! Hurry up! I want to get a good table near the stage!"

A chipper voice shouted back a reply. "I'm just finishing my hair! There was a curl out of place! Ruby's not even done with Raj yet."

"Yes I am!" countered Ruby. "I'm getting my purse now, hurry the fuck up!"

“Okay, okay, I’m ready!”

Ruby and Raj came out first, with Raj being measurably more presentable. Ruby twirled the boy around, showing off her work, and said, “It’d be perfect if we had time to press it, but I’d say he looks okay.”

“Lightyears ahead of when he got here,” Molly said in agreement. She brushed her hand across his jacket to inspect the fabric, and was impressed with how soft it felt. Just then, the door opened for the final time, and out walked Will. Amos had to pick his jaw up from the floor. He was wearing a vintage, strapless, pink, tulle, tea length prom dress. The skirt, decorated with rows of lace, was spread out by a voluminous, soft petticoat that swished with every step he took. To complete his outfit, he wore white, t-strap pumps, clip-on, rose earrings, and a translucent, rose colored, shawl hanging daintily around his shoulders. His hair was styled in a classic pageboy, and his makeup was soft, simple and feminine, with neutral colored eye shadows, brown eyeliner, and blush pink lips. He checked his soft clutch for his phone, and anything else he might need. After confirming he was good to go, she looked up to see that all eyes were on her. He spun on his toe in a perfect pirouette, and asked, “Do you like what you see?”

“You’re damn right, I do! Shall we?” Amos offered his elbow, which Will accepted, and the group was off to the party.

Downstairs, the festivities had already started. The room was filled to the brim with party-goers, and everyone looked marvelous. Will had never seen sequins, glitter, diamonds, and furs in such magnitude, at least not in person. It looked like several people were stepping off of the stage, and few folks were left, most of whom were wearing sashes. “Damn, it looks like we missed the Best Dressed contest.” said Molly, disappointed. You’d have been a contender in that getup, Bettie Jo. Your outfit has to be authentic vintage, so not that many people actually participate.”

“I don’t care about any of that,” Will said with a shrug. “What does a person have to do to get a drink around here?”

“I’m on it,” Amos said, before hurrying off to the bar.

“Don’t take too long.” Will shouted after him. “I can practically feel these creeps breathing down my neck already.”

A short while later, Will and Amos were sitting alone at a table, and Will was already four drinks deep. His face was so flushed, one could see the shades of red peaking through his thick matte foundation. Amos had been keeping up, but with their size difference, Will was obviously the more intoxicated of the two.

“You know,” Will said, louder than usual. “I thought I had you pegged when we first met, but you’ve been a pretty stand up guy.”

“I try,” Amos replied.

“Well, I appreciate you not trying to take advantage of me, in all this.”

“Of course.”

The two continued to sit in awkward silence for a little while, sneaking glances at each other. They were at a glamorous ball in a fancy hotel ballroom, dressed up to the nines, but the two were acting as though they were on their first date at a middle school dance.

Finally, as though a lightbulb went off above his head, Will met eyes with Amos, and his smile was so bright it almost sparkled. Before he even had a chance at a second thought, Will grabbed Amos' hand, and pulled him out onto the dance floor. “It's a slow song now, so all you have to do is put your arms around me like this, and sway back and forth. I figured a guy like you was probably too cocky to admit he couldn't dance.” He placed his hands in the correct positions, and the two gazed affectionately at each other while Elvis' *Can't Help Falling in Love With You* played over the speakers. Will let his head rest on Amos' shoulder and they held each other close, basking in every moment they had together that remained.

The song came to an end, and the uptempo sounds of Cab Calloway filled the silence. Amos started to sweat; his palms clammy with anxiety. “I've got you,” Will whispered. He placed his hands in Amos', and started bouncing back and forth on the balls of his feet in rhythm, swaying his hips. With a wink, he said, “Just do this, and I'll handle the rest.” Amos followed Will's instructions, and once he was sure that no one was staring and pointing, he started to actually have fun. Will started to steadily pick up the pace, pushing and pulling to the beat, so that their faces nearly touched, and then backed away, with their feet steadily moving beneath them.

The song started reaching its apex. The drum solo was warming up, and building to its big finale, when Will whispered, “Don't let go of my hand.” He twisted out and in, as the drum roll sped up. When the floor toms came into play, he started twisting around Amos' body like a tornado, while Amos held on to Will's hand high above his head. The horns joined in, and Will spun around with both their arms fully extended, and flung his arm straight back, making himself as wide as possible, then spun himself back in, winding himself in Amos' arms like a yoyo, and threw himself into a dip, that Amos' well muscled frame required little effort to catch. The song continued, but before Will could pull himself back up, Amos kissed him passionately, taking his breath away. At first Will wanted to scream, but as he found himself swept up in the moment, he didn't stop it, and after a brief moment, returned the kiss with equal fervor.

“Do you want to get out of here?” Amos' question was simple enough. Will might have lacked the romantic experience of his friends, but he knew well enough to pick up on the subtext.

Before he had a chance to think any harder about it, Will grabbed Amos by that hand and pulled him out of the ballroom, before anyone else had a chance to beat them to the room.

A short time later, Will was back in his hotel room taking in the handsome chiseled body in front of him. This time it was his turn to leave a bra dangling from the knob. Amos started, "We can take this as slow as you need. I don't have any expectations going into this. I just want you to..." He was cut off by Will leaping off the ground, and wrapping his arms around his neck, wrapping his legs around his waist, and shoving his tongue down his throat. It took Amos a second to get his bearings but once he did, he used one hand to support Will's weight while also squeezing his bottom, and the other to unzip the back of his dress. Will broke their kiss, and undid Amos' tie. He started unbuttoning his shirt one button at a time, but Amos said, "Just rip it." and Will gladly complied, popping off the remainder of his buttons, exposing his light chest hair. His pecs, and abs were as firm as the blacktop they had been walking on all day.

"You're rock hard," Will said, practically drooling over his virile form. "I mean, I could literally climb you like a jungle gym." Amos started kissing Will's neck, and shoulders, then sat back onto the bed, while cradling him tightly. Will raked his nails lightly across his back, and the two just held each other tightly for a moment, breathing in each other's scent. Will started grinding against Amos' crotch, and felt his manhood stir to life. He unbuttoned his trousers, and slid them down to his ankles, and then slid them off with his shoes in one hungry, continuous, clumsy motion.

Amos' erection tented his boxers, begging for release, which was a request Will was only too happy to comply with. He slid off the boxers, and the flushed member sprang right back into place. Out of the two penises in the room, Amos' was by far the largest. Will bent down, and nervously kissed it on the head lightly, causing Amos to flex and the head to bob up and down once, much to Will's surprise. Will wrapped his gloved hand around the base, and started to guide the head between his lips. He was suddenly stopped though. Amos had pulled away, and started pulling down on his dress. "I can't be the only one naked here," he said, offering a lustful smile. "Let me see you."

Will apprehensively removed his dress, showing off his pink panties, and his garter straps affixed neatly to his stocking tops. Will then took a deep breath, and after summoning all his courage, slid the elastic band over his hips and buttocks, letting the underwear fall down to the floor around his heels. The two locked eyes. Will managed to say, "So, this is me..." and then froze in anticipation of Amos' response.

He scanned Will up and down, flaccid phallus and all, like he was a piece of fine art hanging in the Louver, appreciating every detail of his soft supple skin. He sat up and placed a hand on each of his cheeks, and looking deep into his eyes, said, "You're beautiful; every single part of you." They kissed again, and



Amos playfully pushed Will back down on the bed, this time taking his sex into his mouth. Will didn't have time to process what was occurring, before he became engorged. Before he knew it, Amos' head was bobbing up and down, practically swallowing his little member whole.

It was a foreign feeling to Wil, relinquishing that much control, but when he relaxed, and let go, it became the most pleasurable experience of his life. His

fingers stroked the hair on the back of Amos' head, while he melted into the comforter, moaning, and whimpering as he edged closer and closer to completion. He felt his member stiffen, signaling the coming climax only to have Amos stop, and get up from the bed. "No! Get your sexy ass back here!" Will found himself saying, almost involuntarily.

"I'll be right back, baby. Give me just a minute. I promise it will be worth the wait." Amos removed a condom from its package, and rolled it down his veiny, throbbing erection. He crawled back into bed, lube in hand, and kissed Will reassuringly, while he writhed in anticipation. With lube spread on his fingers, Amos reached through Will's legs, all the way back, and found his rosebud. He started by lightly fingering the outside. Will didn't find this unpleasant, though it was a completely foreign sensation. Once the apprehension passed, he relaxed his body, and Amos, seeing his opportunity, slipped one finger in the hole. Will gasped, completely taken by surprise. Amos gently massaged the muscle, while Will tried not to clench down, and slowly but surely, he began to relax. He was even starting to find the whole experience pleasurable, but his world turned upside down once more, when Amos slid in another finger. The pressure was immense. With a little more massage though, Will relaxed further, and let the rush of delight wash over him.

This went on for a few minutes, until Amos removed his finger, only to have Will grab his wrist, and beg, "No... don't stop."

"We're not stopping sweetie. We're just getting started." Amos rolled onto his back, and rubbed the silky lube all over his swollen member, and applied a generous amount to Will's orifice. "Get on top darlin'. We're going to take this very slow. I promised I wasn't going to hurt you, and I meant it, so we need to be careful." He gently rubbed the tip of his penis into his rosebud, almost as if to let the two get to know each other first. Amos then placed his hands on Will's hips, and slowly guided him down on top, just placing the head in first. Will thought that it did, in fact, hurt a little, but somehow in a good way. Amos pulled Will close to his chest, and the two held each other tightly, while he slowly started working himself back and forth. He'd slip in a little deeper, until he'd tighten up again, then he'd back off, letting Will relax and then Amos would start the whole process over again. This went on, inch by inch, until with one triumphant thrust, he was fully inside Will. Will shuddered and squeezed him tightly, burying his face in Amos' chest. They held each other for a few minutes, melting into one another, until they were ready to proceed.

It was Will who started sliding himself up and down on his shaft. He felt Amos swell even more inside of him, and the pressure was immense, though this time, there was no pain, only rapture. Amos started thrusting, gently at first, but following Will's lead, steadily increased the speed of his rhythm. He sat up, and braced himself on the mattress with his hands, and started bouncing Will's plump backside with his pelvis, while he held on for dear life, squeezing Amos' torso between his knees. The room was heating up, and a fog was building on

the windows. Amos paused for a moment to adjust his position, while Will ripped off his gloves, and ran his fingers through Amos' hair, kissing him feverishly till he started again. Their eyes locked as they matched rhythm, Amos letting out a primal grunt with every lunge of his hips that pushed the pair closer and closer to climax.

Will started screaming, "Yes, yes, yes..." which cued Amos that she was close to completion. He flipped her onto her back, and slid his arms under the backs of her knees, lifting them up, and pointing her backside to the sky. Their entire night of lovemaking had worked up to this moment. "Holy fuck!" Will screamed, as Amos pounded him harder, and harder, till he was hardly making a sound beyond barely perceptible squeaks. All of this built to one final, forceful, penetration, where they exploded in unison, Amos deep inside of Will, and Will, all over his own belly. Exhausted, and satisfied, Amos dropped Will's legs, and collapsed on top of him. Will, overwhelmed by feelings of glee, started chuckling.

"Y'know, a guy could take that the wrong way," Amos said, after finding the strength to lift his head, and kiss Will affectionately on the cheek.

"Sorry, it's just... nothing has ever felt anywhere near that good before." Will replied, still laughing. "I've never experienced anything like that. I mean, I've definitely helped myself, but that was something else entirely." Amos, pushed up off the bed, and started to slide himself out, only to have Will wrap his legs around his waist, and pull him back down. "No!" he nearly shouted, before smiling, and whispering, "You have to stay inside of me forever."

Amos laughed, kissed Will on the lips, and said, "As romantic as that sounds, I'm going to have to pee here in the near future, and I'm fairly certain, you'd rather I do that somewhere else.

"Okay," Will said, pouting. He released Amos, and he stepped into the bathroom to freshen up. When he returned, they spent the remainder of their time together spooning, and talking about life, the universe, and everything, until Will fell asleep in his arms.



Hey, Where'd you go

I'm at the airport Bettie Jo. My flight leaves this morning.

You left without saying anything

Seriously, that's kind of fucked up

That's probably not the best way
to start whatever this is

Look, you're a sweet kid. I totally respect you. Trans women are women, and all that, but you can't seriously expect me to bring you home to meet my family. That would be the last Thanksgiving I ever went to

Wow

Just wow

I gave you my virginity

FUCK YOU ASSHOLE

Amos?

Your message couldn't be delivered. Please contact your carrier for further details.



Hours of staring into the desert in a haze hadn't helped Will out, as he sat in the back seat of the girls' car, wondering what had just happened to him. He had too much to think about, and the long drive home seemed like only a fraction of the time he would need to figure things out.

Ruby, Molly, and Will had just arrived back home, and were unloading the car. When they arrived, Hank and Johnny were waiting for them. The guys were soon forced to abandon their case of beer, and the comfortable shaded front porch, when they were conscripted into helping carry the luggage inside. Johnny, arms loaded up with garment bags, followed closely behind Ruby. He asked her, "Did you really sleep with Raj?"

"I did," came her flat reply. "Are you jealous?"

"A little."

"I'll give you his number, then."

Hank and Molly kissed as though they hadn't seen each other in weeks, instead of just the day before. Everybody seemed perfectly happy, except one person. Will got out of the back of the convertible, with an expression of pure misery. He glared at the happy couple as he stormed past. For the first time in nearly a week, he was out on the street without an ounce of makeup on. His blonde hair was a mess of tangled knots. He was wearing a pair of baggy gray sweatpants, and a t-shirt from the hotel gift shop that was three sizes too large.

"Do you need help with your bags, Jojo?" Hank asked.

"Fuck you, Hank," Will replied, as he trudged to his front door.

"Okay then," Hank said, confused.

"Don't worry about her." Molly said, consoling Hank. "Your friend broke her heart. Don't take it personally. Just be a sweetheart, and leave her things on her porch. I'll go talk to her."

"Yes, dear." The two shared a quick kiss, and then Molly chased behind Will, following him into his house, and up the stairs.

"You know, Hank didn't deserve that, Bettie Jo." Molly said sternly, as she walked into Will's old bedroom, to find him sitting on the floor staring off into space.

"Stop calling me that. My name is Will. I don't have to do that shit anymore. In fact, I don't have to deal with you anymore either. I'm done."

"I don't understand." Molly sat down on the floor across from Will, while he refused to look at her.

"Whatever. I'm done. Ruby has been blackmailing me, because I stole your panties one night when I was drunk. That's the whole reason I agreed to this fiasco in the first place. I'm sorry. It was a fucked up thing to do, but I think that I've more than paid for it. Please get out of my house now, so I can get back to the shitty life I had before I met you."

“Oh baby, I already know all that. I’m the one who saw you take them. Who do you think came up with your punishment in the first place? I mean, do you really think Ruby would be so subtle? She wanted to have Johnny kick the shit out of you, and call it a day, but I knew you were worth so much more than that.”

Will raised his head, and locked eyes with Molly. Despite her loving and caring expression, he was terrified. “What are you saying, Molly?”

“Ever since that first night you stumbled onto our doorstep, I couldn’t believe just how beautiful you are. You were like a sad lost puppy in a gas station parking lot. While you slept in my lap that first night, you were just so gorgeous with your beautiful hair, and cherubic face; much too pretty to be a boy, that’s for sure. And after you stole my underwear, very creepy by the way, my first instinct was to fuck you up and be done with you, but then I remembered your sad puppy dog eyes, and I realized you were in so much pain, so I came up with a way to fix it.”

“I can’t believe this...” Will said to no one in particular, frozen in horror at the story unfolding before him.

“I knew you had a crush on me, and I knew you were terrified of Ruby, so I decided we’d try a good cop bad cop thing. I was the carrot, and she was the stick. You were doing such a good job, and I saw you trying hard, eager to please, and everything just sort of fell into place from there. We’d been talking about adding a blonde to our act for a while, so when Ruby told me about that show, I knew it would be the perfect opportunity to get you into a dress. After a little scheming, we got there. For a minute, I thought you were gonna puke all over your living room, and derail everything, but you solved that issue for me on your own. I mean, I basically handed you an out, but you ignored that one all on your own”

Will’s skin was crawling. He trusted Molly, probably more than anyone besides his grandmother, and here she was, mask off, revealing herself as the puppet master behind his week-long torment. “So that’s it then? I was just a plaything to you?”

“Oh sweetie, no,” Molly said, the hurt evident in her eyes. “You weren’t a toy. I was helping you.”

“*Helping me?*” Will shrieked. “What part of this was *helping*? The part where I paraded around Vegas like a pretty little tart, or the part where I lost my virginity, *to a guy*, who blocked my number the morning after?”

“First of all,” Molly retorted, “I didn’t have anything to do with Amos. I never even met the guy before. That was all you, Bettie Jo.”

“Stop calling me that.”

“Secondly, you’re damn right I was helping. Will Knox was a loser. A loser with no friends, no ambitions, and no future. Will was going to die alone in this



house choking himself while he jerked off to internet porn. Bettie Jo on the other hand is cute, popular, and admired by others. She has no problem making friends. Sure, she's a little uptight, but get a few drinks in her, and boom, she's a firecracker. Like I said at the hotel room, you're a woman Bettie Jo. You'll accept it soon enough."

“Stop calling me that!” Will screamed as he leapt up from the floor and pointed toward the door. “Get the fuck out of my house! Right now!” He was surprised to see a tear streaking down Molly’s cheek.

Molly was hurt, but kept her composure. “I understand you’re angry. Believe me when I say, I did what I thought was best for you. You certainly weren’t doing it for yourself. I’ll give you some space to be angry, but you’re going to have to get over it sooner rather than later.”

“Get over it?” He bellowed. “Get over it?” Then he stopped his anger, realizing he wasn’t going anywhere with Molly. She didn’t even appear to be concerned with his anguish. She had destroyed his life and she thought she was helping. “Please just go.” Will whimpered as he lay his head on his desk, and started sobbing.



Will spent the next several weeks lying in front of the television, barely able to lift his head from the floor, except to eat another antique box dinner that had been in his freezer for god knows how long.

A month later, he tried to get back to normal by resuming his previous routine. He started sleeping in his office again, started wearing the many iterations of the same boy outfit he owned again, and replacing the plastic over all his grandmother’s furniture. The most he saw outside of his walls were the occasional peerings out his window over to the girls’ house. When he cooked his first real meal in what felt like an eternity, he sat at the table to eat only to see his luggage out in the foyer where Hank must have left it. It was then that the reality that he had just let people into his life and his heart and they just had it ripped to shreds struck him like an airliner pulverizing a goose.

He picked up the mail that had been dropped through the slot in the door and threw almost everything away. It was mostly a stack of unpaid bills, but there was one very curious letter that he put aside. It was from Gerry. He’d never gotten paid for the convention. Gerry heard through the grapevine about the falling out, and he’d taken it upon himself to ensure Will received his fair share. Will tossed the pile on the floor. It wasn’t that he wasn’t grateful, but he didn’t want to be reminded of pinups, or his crushing debt that was growing larger by the day right now.

Will wrestled with his thoughts for the rest of the night. The future, for the first time in his life, terrified him. He had learned too much about himself to ever accept the life he had been living, but at the same time, he couldn’t be Bettie Jo anymore. She had been broken, shattered by what he thought was love. It probably only took him a minute to accept what he had to do, but that

didn't stop him from staying up till well after midnight, trying to come up with any other option.

For his entire life up to this point, Will had been at the mercy of the whims of his grandmother, his clients, the girls, or some other external force. He balled his fist tightly to his chest, as he sobbed into his soft down pillow. Though he'd cried plenty of times before, this was different. These were angry tears. He was angry with Ruby, and Molly absolutely, but most of all he was angry at himself. Sure, the girls had schemed and manipulated to get him in his current predicament, but every step of the way, he let them. If he'd shown even the slightest bit of backbone at any point since this all started, then it never would have gotten so far. If only his grandmother were here to help him, he thought. Someone to guide him. To hold him. To slap some sense into him.

In what was a moment of great catharsis, Will screamed into his pillow, letting out all of his impotent rage with it.

Afterwards, a calm washed over him, and for the first time since getting back from the convention Will could assess his circumstances clearly. Idly, he walked back downstairs and as he headed for the kitchen, he looked closer at the letter from Gerry. He was confused, and then even more confused, and then interested. Keenly interested. It was then he realized the answer had been in front of him all along.

He took inventory of the things he couldn't control, but also what he could, and he came to a resolute decision.



“Didja see the sign?” Ruby asked Molly as she rolled into the living room and dumped her groceries in the kitchen. She came back eating an apple. “Probably inevitable.”

“What is?” Molly asked, putting the pencil she was using to do a crossword behind her ear.

“The sign?”

“What sign?”

The girls had made their way down the road to see it. It was a thin metal sign in Will's yard. “For Sale,” it said. A small red “Sold” sticker was already plastered over it.

“You know, I can't help but feel partially responsible for this,” Ruby said.

“Ruby!” Molly barked. “This was all because of us! If we hadn't...”

“Tricked him? Scammed him?” Ruby tossed the apple core into a bush.

“We were helping him!” Molly insisted.

“Eh, at least he’ll have some money. Nothing to apologize for there. That house is 2 million, easy.” Ruby stretched out her back. “He should thank us.”

“He really did seem kind of devastated.”

“Will needed a change. It’s good for him. A kid his age shouldn’t be all cooped up and hiding in a big house like that. I wonder who’s gonna move in?”

“Ruby, at least give it a minute, would you? Bettie Jo was our friend.”

“Well, she ain’t coming back, that’s for sure.” She tugged Molly’s arm. “Come on, no sense getting all worked up about it. It’s history now. I wanna eat.”

Molly took a deep breath, looked down at the ground, shrugged — and followed her friend back to their house.



“... and then there’s Bad Religion. I mean seriously, almost every single one of those original American punkers that are still around are all shameless capitalists now.” Molly was locked in a friendly argument with two random boys sitting across from her and Ruby at the booth. This car show had been a real drudge so far, but a gig was a gig. It had been a while since they had been out this way, to Las Vegas. Nearly two years. “At the very least, they sell merch. Sure, this system is flawed, but it’s the one we live in, so until it changes...” Her voice trailed off as she caught sight of the smoking hot babe who just strutted into the bar.

She was wearing a casual outfit, consisting of a pair of dark denim daisy dukes, a cropped white cami, leaving little of her tight flat tummy, and her d-cup bosom to the imagination. An attempt at modesty only feigned with an unbuttoned denim vest worn over her top, covered in a dozen black and white patches each proudly advertising a love for some garage band nobody had ever heard of. Molly was enthralled. She marveled at how this girl could move so gracefully in such a clunky pair of Doc Martin boots.

“Sorry, do I know you?” Molly asked, as the girl grabbed a chair, and sat in it, pencil straight, breasts full on display, at the end of the booth. She thought the girl was familiar, but couldn’t put her finger on where. Surely, she thought, she would have remembered the girl’s ink. Each and every tattoo covering her arms and chest were top quality work. Molly estimated she must have invested at least a few thousand dollars minimum.

“Bobbie Jean Monroe. Nice to meet you.” Will said sweetly, as he gently shook the two gentlemen’s hands and ignored Molly and Ruby.

“B... B... Bobbie Jean Monroe?” Molly stammered, still floored by the ravishing beauty who just joined them.



“Kind of a private party here, slut,” Ruby said with a snort, only to have Molly slap her on the hand, and glare at her.

Molly pulled herself together, the identity of their visitor slowly dawning upon her. With a warm smile she said, “You look lovely.” She wasn’t lying. *Bobbie Jean* was wearing heavy makeup, stylized winged eyeliner, and lips such a dark deep crimson, they were nearly purple. Her hair, which had been dyed a

chunky mix of jet black, and platinum blonde, was curled loosely, and piled up high on her crown, tied off by a black bandana with two cute tails on the top.

“So glad you approve.”

“What’s your problem, missy?” Ruby said, raising her level of irritation up a few notches. “Scram.”

Molly immediately started motioning to her friend to stop talking. Molly needed more than a few drastic gestures, such as a throat slash, a wave-off, a vigorous head shake and more before she finally paid more attention to Molly than their mysterious guest.

“*What?*” Ruby said, annoyed with Molly.

Bobbie Jean Monroe just smirked.

“Do I know you?” Ruby asked.

There was a momentary awkward silence, then Molly continued, “Oh right, this is Tom, and Dan.”

“A pleasure.” Will replied, eyeing the two men up and down. “Are you two in town for the car show?”

“Nope.” one of the men answered. “We live here.”

The other said, “I see the billboards go up on the highway every year, but I’ve never been.”

Will said, “Well you should check it out. They’re always a little oasis. Should be a nice change of pace in a gambling town surrounded by dry deserts, and sad old men. Speaking of which, I’m thirsty. Would you two be sweeties, and get us some refreshments from the bar?” Will finished his question with a flirty wink, and an adorable smirk, the corner of her lips pointing to the beauty mark dotted onto her plump cheek. The two men were practically stepping on top of each other to get out of the booth.

“Will?” Molly whispered, once the guys were out of earshot.

“*Will?*” Ruby shouted.

“Bobbie Jean Monroe. You know, granddaughter of Billie Jean Monroe.” Will said, never looking in Molly’s direction, only the slight quiver in her voice betraying the turmoil racing through her thoughts.

Five pint glasses were dropped onto the table as the two men returned with drinks in record time.

“Molly here tells us she’s got a boyfriend,” One of the guys asked. “How about you, Bobbie Jean?”

“No, I’m single. I like to keep my options open. How about you, handsome?”



Ruby almost spit out her drink. Any fear that Will had ever experienced at being discovered was long gone. He was sexy, he knew it, and he was acting like it.

“N-n-no...” the guy sputtered, as Will rested his fingertips on his knee, tapping them playfully.

Ruby and Molly sat there with their jaws on the table in front of them, while Will expertly strung the guy along all night. Eventually, they got used to the spectacle, and Ruby returned to flirting with his friend, while they all chit-chatted.

Four beers later, and it was like old times again, the only difference being the confidence that now exuded from Will. Gone was the meek little girl trying to disappear into the background, and in her place was a sexy young woman, more than happy to stand out in the crowd. She was still graceful, charming, and witty, but she now carried herself like a punk kid's wet dream.

Two hours later, the guys were walking the girls back to their hotel. They stopped outside, saying their goodnights, when Will planted a firm kiss on the corner of the guy's mouth, leaving a bright lipstick mark, and they parted ways. Will, though, stayed behind.

"Who are you?" Molly asked, her eyes popping from their sockets.

Ruby chimed in, "And where the hell did all that come from?"

"It's called acceptance, Ruby." Will said. "This is my life. It's who I'm meant to be."

"That's progress, I guess," Molly said.

"Does this place have a bar?" He asked, ignoring the last comment. A glance up at the neon sign for the hotel answered his question

"That still doesn't explain what you're doing here." Ruby said, accusation dripping from every word.

"Do you want to hear a story or not?" He walked to the lobby, his round hips swiveling like a precision instrument. He didn't need to ask for Ruby and Molly to follow him, they were pulled along by the sheer gravity of Bobbie Jean's charisma.

Once at a table, a drink order was placed and Will checked his lipstick in a tiny little compact.

"Jesus, just tell us whatever you wanted to tell us," Ruby said.

Molly was confused. "Ruby?"

"Oh. Come on! It's obvious he's got something to say. He didn't just accidentally walk into that bar. This is a setup."

"That's not..." Molly's response was cut off.

"She's not wrong." Will replied. "I'm working up to it. You know I'm not great at talking."

"You seemed pretty good at talking to that guy, slut."

"Ruby, can you just stop being a bitch for like ten seconds. I know it's a struggle since that stick is stuck so far up your cooch, but if you can just shut the fuck up for ten seconds, I might be able to help you get it loose."



“Fuck you,” Ruby answered. Her visceral expression matched the wrath of her words, but slowly it loosened, and her frown twisted into a gleeful grin. She giddily jabbed Will in the shoulder, and shouted, “Damn, girl! If you keep this up I might just change my mind about you. Are those actually your tits?”

Will's furrowed brow softened, and for the first time in a long time, he smiled a genuine smile to Ruby. “You're goddamn right they are. I paid for them, didn't I?”

“Did you pay for that ass too?”

“Hormones and squats. Lots of squats. Too many squats. I can crush a watermelon in my thighs now.”

As the waiter deposited their cocktails in front of them, Will took a slow sip, drawing things out. Neither Molly nor Ruby touched theirs. “Any, where was I? Oh yes, We were talking about how you guys completely forgot I was a living breathing human being, and decided to treat me like your play toy for months. I mean, I don't even know what to say.”

“I did that for you...” Molly started, prompting Will to hold his well manicured fingers up in her face.

“Don't start with that.” Molly was shocked. She couldn't even form another rebuttal.. She sat still, like a deer waiting for the car to make contact. She was positive Will was about to tear her a new one but the rage never came.

“We don't have to have an in-depth discussion about it. It was fucked up. Plain and simple. You had no right... That said, you were correct about one thing Molly. I am a woman. I mean, at first it was a necessity. I shut down for a little while. I lost most of my clients. I had bills. I was lucky Gerry was there to help. He got my address, and reached out. One of his friends was looking for a quote, *wholesome all American girl*. He really is a sweet man. Anyway, after the gig he took pity on me, and started acting as my de facto manager while I was getting myself set up. He taught me a lot about networking.”

“He is a sweet guy.” Molly agreed. “He never told us he was working with you.”

“Probably for the same reason he hasn't booked us in a while.” Ruby said, clearly irritated.

“Hey, I never told him to. He's a grown-ass man. He makes his own decisions.” Will said defensively. “Look, Ruby. I came here to bury the hatchet. Anyway, that gig was for some lady he knew from some theater or something. It was a catalog thing for like an online order seamstress, whatever the hell that means. I'm not sure exactly what she did still, but whatever. It paid and I needed it. It was *vintage*, but I looked like I was on my way to teach Sunday school. I did it though. I was only insistent that from now on, I was going to be booked as Bobbie Jean Monroe. Bettie Jo was some broken little baby who needed her hand held. Bobbie Jean was going to be her own person. It was job to job, hand

to mouth for a little while there, but once the house sold, I didn't have to worry about money for a while. I bought a cute, reasonably priced little apartment downtown, and I've been there ever since. I love it. It's even got a little studio, and plenty of kitchen."

Molly chuckled, "I bet you save a lot of time cleaning, now."

"You have no idea. I think I have an extra two whole days to myself every month. Anyway, once I got settled, I started to get restless. If I'm being completely honest, I missed the attention, as much as I missed the music. Gerry started getting me a few car shows. I remember the first time I packed my own suitcase for a con. It dawned on me just how risqué my wardrobe had gotten. I guess overtime I became more comfortable showing a little more skin, and I liked being seen as a little girl almost as little as I liked being seen as a little boy. Eventually I accepted Will was gone. I mean he took up such little space that he was barely even there to begin with. I was all Bobbie Jean now, and I was completely fine with that. Next thing I know, I missed my social life so I started going out to more shows with Roxy. She's the best. She was actually the one who talked me into getting my first tattoo. You were right Ruby. They really are addictive."

"Told ya. I like that one, by the way." she replied, pointing to the front of Bobbie Jean's left shoulder. "Is that Elmo?"

"It's Animal." Billie Jean answered, horrified. "Jesus, get your fucking Muppets straight. You're embarrassing yourself. Anyway, I'm surprised I haven't seen you two out at all."

"Well, things have been tight for us, lately. It's been a while since we've had a gig, so we can't really afford to go out." Molly said, trying and failing to hide her shame.

"Yeah, I noticed a drop in bookings too. Trends change. It sucked, but I remembered that I used to be a pretty good social media manager, so I started trying my hand at using those skills to my own benefit. I still do the occasional car show here and there, but mostly, I've been modeling and dancing."

"Pole or Ballroom?" Ruby joked.

"Both actually." Bobbie Jean replied plainly, prompting Molly to spit the sip she'd just taken right back into her glass. "I've got a lot of fingers in a lot of pies. Hustle culture right? I'm stripping at the Dollhouse on Seventh Avenue occasionally. They do a trans night every other Sunday. I'm posting premium content to Onlyfans, and I've been running a vintage fashion TikTok account, currently boasting two-hundred and fifty thousand followers." Bobbie Jean was obviously very proud of herself.

"Jesus fucking Chist, Bettie!" Molly shouted before realizing her error. "I'm sorry, I mean Bobbie. I didn't mean to deadname you."

"It's okay."

"Sounds like you're doing well. Did you get a new va-jay-jay to go with those tits?" Ruby asked without a hint of shame in her voice.

Molly swatted her on the arm. "That's a rude question, Ruby!"

Bobbie Jean didn't seem to mind. She just laughed. "No fucking way. I'm not chopping off my money maker just yet. I'd probably make half as much on Onlyfans if I wasn't a chick with a dick. It's part of my brand. Anyway, all that's going well, but here lately, I've been bringing in even more money from dance lessons."

"Dance lessons?"

"Yeah, people kept coming up to me at swing night and asking if I could teach. I gave my first private lesson a few months ago, and things have been blowing up from there. I rented a studio at the cultural arts center for group lessons, and it's been pretty lucrative. Gerry thinks in the next year or two I might be able to open my own brick and mortar studio."

"That's great." Molly said, but inside she was tormented by jealousy. It's not like the idea of trying her hand at TikTok hadn't crossed her mind. She'd even invested the last of her dwindling funds into a better lighting set up and a new camera, but it wasn't paying off. People just weren't picking up what she was putting down, but for whatever reason, they couldn't get enough of Bobbie Jean Monroe.

"It is. The only problem is, with everything going on, I barely have time to manage it all. Okay, look... I came here with an ulterior motive. I mean, I did need a break, and the convention sounded fun, but mostly I came to see you two. Roxy told me you'd be here. I've heard you two were struggling lately, and it just didn't sit right with me. I wanted to talk to you, and this seemed like as good an excuse as any."

"Okay?" Molly replied. "So what did you want to say?"

"Molly, what you did was fucked up, but I do believe you *thought* you were doing the right thing. I believe, in your own way, you loved me. You tried to take care of me at a time when I could barely take care of myself, and now I want to at least try and take care of you. I've got a job for you two?"

"How much?" Ruby asked without blinking.

"Fifty thousand dollars a year. For each of you." Will took another sip. "That should be about what you used to make, isn't it?" It wasn't a lot, but it would be enough to start digging themselves out of the mountain of debt they'd accrued over the previous years. They were a hundred thousand in the hole, and living on credit cards that were about to reach their limit. They hadn't had a real gig in months. This trip wasn't a paid gig, they were trying to find work at this car show.

Molly looked at Ruby, and Ruby looked at Molly. They knew, right there and then, they'd take whatever deal this was. They needed it bad. It was either this or move back East, back with their parents.

"Is it modeling?" Molly asked.

"It's... in the industry," Will said after careful consideration.

Ruby downed her drink in one swig. "What the fuck is it, then?"



Molly looked out the window of their modest Los Angeles house and the blue skies beyond. She had hoped to get out today, but she had too much work to do.

"Ruby!" She called out to her roommate. "I'm ordering dinner. What do you want?" She waited for a moment, but there was no response. She was going to have to check in on her.

Ruby and Molly were very quiet girls. Their garbage was always disposed of in the correct container, and placed on the curb at the correct time. Their yard was maintained by a service every week. Their sprinkler use was perfectly within regulation during drought times. In fact, if someone didn't know better, and the same light wasn't left on in the upstairs bedroom every night, they might think nobody lived there. Yes, the girls were very private people, with very little interest in the outside world.

They worked from home normally. Sitting at computer desks, focused on their jobs. They even had their groceries delivered. There was no time for much else. As the operators of the Bobbie Jean Monroe social feeds, they were almost always busy planning, writing and answering questions from her many fans. In fact, Ruby had become quite fluent in Japanese in the process. She worked the night shift, and Molly did the day shift.

"Ruby?" She said, sticking her head into Ruby's room. It wasn't decorated, just a bed in the corner and a table with a laptop on it. She rarely left it.

"What?" Ruby replied, without turning her head.

"I'm ordering dinner. What do you want?"

"Large pepperoni," she replied. "No. Extra large."

"You're supposed to be losing weight," Molly said. She looked at her two hundred pound roommate, squeezed into a chair, tapping on the keyboard. Being stuck inside and glued to a computer for two years had not done Ruby any good. Her body, which used to be on the verge of becoming overweight, had lost the battle.

“Don’t tell me what to do!” Ruby barked back. She lifted a two liter jug of orange soda to her lips and sucked on it.

“Fine,” Molly replied and left. She never won arguments with Ruby anyway. She passed by a mirror in the hallway, and ignored it. She had learned to avoid her reflection when she could as she didn't like what she saw. It was an older, saggier, tired version of the model she used to be. Her hair was a mess, sticking out every which way, her neck sprouting a second chin. Her stomach was bulging out over her pajama bottoms, which she had been wearing for a week.

She added another pizza to the order. A medium one, though.

The house was adorned with cut-out cardboard standees of Bobbie Jean Monroe, smiling, svelte, young and perfect. Well, except for the damage done to them by throwing things in anger at their employer’s visage. They were from an ad campaign for the Bobbie Jo Monroe School of Dance and made for good target practice.

Molly was sure of it. She was sure Will had given them these cursed jobs and knew what it would do to them. He’d given them loads of work. Sure, they worked at their own pace, and for every task they had, she’d done just that much work, if not more, but Molly couldn’t see that. Never mind that he’d invited them out every weekend since they’d reconnected. Never mind that he still paid her when she was too depressed to get out of bed and do her job. She couldn’t see any of it. All she could see was Bobbie Jean the monster, and not that it was a monster of her own making. She punched a cardboard standee in the face and it just bounced right back into place.

Bobbie Jean had been busy the previous year, not only getting her gender legally recognized, but also since she’d moved away from fetish work, and had successfully started her dance school, she had a little surgery so that her genitals matched the rest of her. Sure, Bobbie Jean loved what it did for her sex life, but she was also quite fond of how she looked in tight fitting swimsuits.

Bobbie Jean was always the picture of politeness and always bent over backwards to be nice to them, but Molly knew what Will was up to. Whenever she dropped by to check on them, she was very nice. She hugged them warmly, smiled, laughed and told stories, but it was all a show. It definitely wasn’t all Molly’s own fault. She knew that now. This was all Will. It was all payback, It was all revenge.

Her phone buzzed and Molly checked it.

“Having a wonderful time!” Bobbie Jean had written. It was a picture of her in a swing skirt, dance heels, and a leotard that displayed her new breasts splendidly, as she twirled on the dance floor, with her male partner demonstrating proper technique to the rows of eager students. “Use this pic on my next post, okay?” She had added.

“Fuck her,” Molly grumbled. “Fuck her, fuck Will, fuck your Grandma, fuck pin-ups and fuck everything.” Molly dropped herself on the couch, the plastic coverings for the cushions squeaking as she did so.

EPILOGUE

The party at Bobbie Jean's had been raging for hours at this point, and she was just about to pass out on her feet. She'd been celebrating all night, and by this point she was dripping in sweat from dancing so much. Suddenly, she heard a voice from behind her, startling her, and nearly causing her to drop her solo cup. "Hey Bettie Jo. Long time no see."

"Oh, Hi Melvin." she replied tersely, unsure of how to handle the lanky boy who had just appeared from nowhere. "I wouldn't say that's my fault. You're the one who disappeared after that party."

"I deserve that." he said, pointing his eyes straight down at his shoes. "Look, I just want you to know how sorry I am. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. Like, I really don't care about your genitals or whatever... umm... you're gorgeous either way. I was just honestly surprised. I didn't see it coming, and I was too horrified with myself to apologize to your face after that. I thought you deserved better."

"Fine." She said playfully, her frown softening. "And it's Bobbie Jean now, by the way."

"Right, Bobbie Jean. I knew that. Roxy told me you'd switched it up. I like it."

Bobbie Jean giggled at the boy tripping over himself to talk to her. "I guess I can forgive you. You did clean my house after all."

"Everything except Brian. He was just too heavy for me to take out with the rest of the trash." The two shared a little laugh but the awkward silence snuck back in. Desperate to course correct, Melvin said, "I was dragged here by my coworker. I didn't want to come, but now that I've seen you, I guess I've changed my mind. Crazy party, right?"

"It's my party."

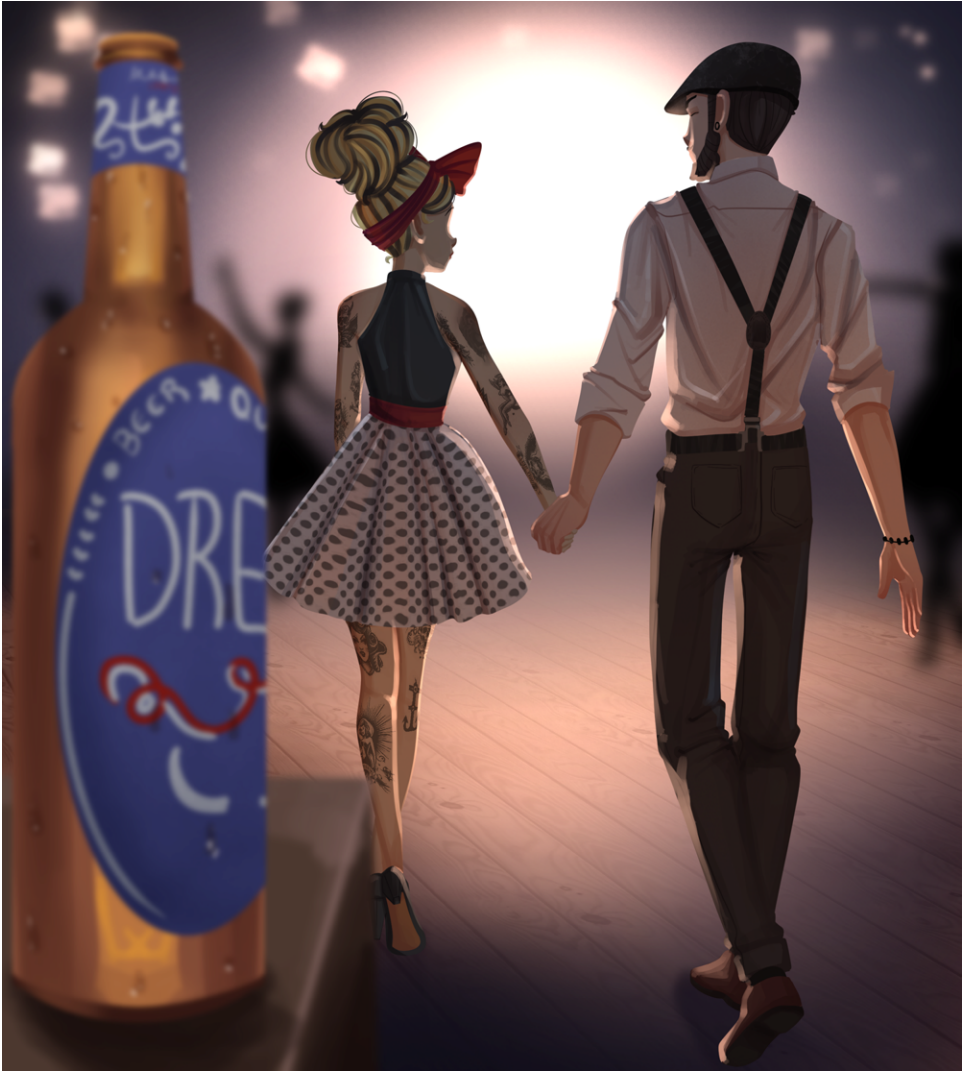
"Holy shit! All this is for you?" Melvin said, trying to sound thoroughly impressed. "You're moving on up in the world, aren't you?"

"Indeed I am. She smiled back flirtatiously, before poking her tongue out at him and scrunching up her face. "Like you didn't know that already. What are you doing nowadays?"

"I'm at the artisanal barber shop downstairs actually.

"Wait, I live above where you work? Are you stalking me, Melvin?" Bobbie Jean asked, grinning mischievously.

He sputtered. "What?!... No?! I mean, I've noticed you. How could I not notice you? You're so beautiful." It took him a couple seconds but he finally summoned up the courage to ask, "Anyway... you know, if you'd like... um... maybe you'd wanna dance?"



Bobbie Jean took one more sip of her drink, and eyed the awkward young man, still as smooth as the night they'd met, up and down while a warm smile slowly crept onto her face. "You know what Melvin... why not? I'd love to." Bobbie Jean took Melvin's hand and drug him back out onto the dance floor. She didn't know what the future would hold, but no matter what, she knew she'd enjoy it.

The End



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

One Year in Tokyo

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

Mall Makeover Madness

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

Convicts to Co-Eds

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

Creating Samantha

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

Crosley High Chronicles

By Joe Six-Pack. River is coming to a new school, and trying to fit in. The problem is the only way he's going to fit in is in skirts and heels. Book / 217 pages / 75 illustrations

Student Exchange

By Joe Six-Pack. Kelley Sue's convinced a French exchange student to disguise himself as a girl. What happens when she realizes he has no intention of returning back home? Book / 77 pages / 22 illustrations

The Substitute Ski Bunny

By Joe Six-Pack. Walker is a young man who's fallen in love with a girl. The only way he can get close to her is to dress up and become her roommate. It's not going to go according to plan, though. Book / 132 pages / 31 illustrations

My Brother, My Mother, My Doll

By Joe Six-Pack. Seven year old Amelia has made a wish. A wish that she had a mother more like her doll, and that her brother weren't so mean. Her family is about to have their lives turned inside-out. Book / 109 pages / 34 illustrations

The Princess Center

By Cheryl Lynn. Jeffrey wanted everything his brother Alan had. He was willing to to any length to get it, even to send Alan to... The Princess Center. Book / 85 pages / 26 illustrations

From Cheer to Eternity

Loner Logan Knox liked to provoke people. When he tries to mess with everyone by changing places with a cheerleader, Logan is about to find how just messed up things can get. Book / 149 Pages / 34 illustrations

Tales of Transformation

He's the Wrong Girl

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

City Boy, Country Girl

By Joe Six-Pack. Richard's successful city life is interrupted when a sheep he wants to fleece needs urgent care out in the country. But instead of returning home, all Richard's wife hears are a series of suspicious excuses. Revised in 2019. Book / 92 pages / 34 illustrations

Thames Greene

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

Hiding in High Heels

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

A Blessing in Disguise

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

I'm Your Dolly

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

Winning is Everything

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

His Life as a Trophy Wife

By Joe Six-Pack. Nick had a great life, but then it evaporated. Now he's down on his luck. In steps a wealthy executive willing to pay him handsomely to pretend to be his wife. What can it hurt? Revised in 2018. Book / 256 pages / 39 illustrations

Male Monday, Girl Friday

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

The Happiest Place on Earth

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

Hello, Nurse

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

My Boss, The Bimbo

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

He's the Girl They Want

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

Demoted and Degraded

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

I, Candy

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

Boyz II Girlz

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

His Strangest Desire

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

Hard Time or High Heels

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

Seriously Skirted

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

From Mister to Sister

Story by Melissa N., illustrations by Joe Six-Pack. Dan just wanted to help guide his girlfriend’s sister out of her depression. Instead, he’s being guided out of his manhood. Book / 84 pages / 24 illustrations

The Russian Girl

Story by Melissa N., illustrations by Joe Six-Pack. Casey’s wife has had enough of watching him kill himself with work, so she forces him out of his comfort zone... Into the life of a female stripper. Book / 196 pages / 30 illustrations

Swindled into Skirts

“Beta Male” by Joe Six-Pack. Kyle inherited a multi-million dollar mansion in southern California. He begins to adjust to the Cali lifestyle, but his adjustments seems to have a decidedly feminine flavor to them. Book / 78 pages / 23 illustration

Mergers & Acquisitions

Story by James J. Craft, Illustrations by Sortimid. Mark is a disaffected retail salesperson, and after a takeover of his store, he finds himself selling feminine fashion... and struggling to embrace everything about it. Book / 103 pages / 31 illustration

Suddenly a Secretary

Story & art by Joe Six-Pack. Rock guitarist Mick has become obsessed with following the life of secretary Lori Chandler through her inter-office email messages. Soon, Mick is taking her place. Book / 133 pages / 30 illustrations

Stories of the Supernatural

A Change for the Better

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

Changed and Rearranged

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

From Pals to Gals

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

A High-Heeled Halloween

Story & art by Joe Six-Pack. A costume shop has four spooky tales to tell this Halloween, where the price you pay for your costume is far more than money. Book / 128 pages / 34 illustrations

Born on Black Friday

Story & art by Joe Six-Pack. Malcom Balford was forced to go shopping on Black Friday. What he finds at the mall may mean that Malcom will never leave. Book / 57 pages/ 17 illustrations.

In the Family Way

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack. The Finch brothers are trying to catfish a man out of his money. To do so, they dress up as mother and daughter. But their impersonations slowly seem to be taking them over. Book / 182 pages / 42 illustrations

Crossed Fiction

Sisters for the Summer

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

They’re the Girls for the Job

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

Blondie’s Lost Summer

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

Blondie’s Lost Year

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

Blondie He’s Not

Story by KK, illustrations by Fraylim. Mark got a job at a salon, and fell in love with one of the customers. Problem was that customer was Candi “Blondie” Wethers, and what happened to Candi was about to happen to Mark. Book / 151 pages / 40 illustrations

I Never Wanted to be a Woman

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

If the Shoes Fit

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

The Boy’s Guide to Girlhood

Story by KK, illustrations by Fraylim. Dweeb Kenny and cool Rex find themselves trapped in a Principal’s twisted scheme, and only one of them is going to get out in tact. Book / 109 pages / 32 illustrations

Fashion Victims

Story by Lauren Bliss, illustrations by Fraylim. Teenage boy Jamie just needed clothes for school. Oh, he’s going to get clothes for school. Just not male ones. Will he ever need male clothes again? Book / 67 pages / 26 illustrations

The Boy’s Guide to Girlhood

Story by KK, illustrations by Fraylim. Dweeb Kenny and cool Rex find themselves trapped in a Principal’s twisted scheme, and only one of them is going to get out in tact. Book / 109 pages / 32 illustrations

The Making of a Beach Bunny

Story by KK & Fraylim, illustrations by Fraylim. Before heading off to college, John wanted to spend his last normal summer at the old rental summer house with his friend Stanley. There was nothing about this summer that would be normal. Book / 134 pages / 58 illustrations

Medical Miss-Practice

Story by KK & Fraylim, illustrations by Fraylim. Jerry just needed a medical procedure. He came out with two big new problems and a whole new life. Now he’s losing everything he loves, piece by piece. Book / 95 pages / 51 black & white illustrations

12 Days of Christmas

Story by KK, illustrations by Fraylim. Paul was a rising executive, but he had a secret embezzlement scheme. Now he's being blackmailed into skirts day-by-day in the 12 days of Christmas. Book / 74 pages / 21 illustrations

Seriously Sissified

A Family Femmed

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

Forever Femmed

Story by James J. Craft & Cheryl Lynn, illustrations by Sortimid. "A Family Femmed's" Deborah is still hard at work, flipping men into sissies and selling them to the highest bidder. But this time, there's a new wrinkle. Book / 108 pages / 28 illustrations

Auntie's Girl Time

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

Revenge of the Cheerleaders

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

He's Got His Mind Maid Up

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

Fated for Femininity

Story by KK, illustrations by RocketXpert. When a web page shows Evan having sex with another boy, the poor kid is chased out of town — right into the arms of a gender therapist who has her own agenda. Book / 70 pages / 15 illustrations

Un-Boxed & Undone

By James J. Craft, illustrations by Banedearg with additional art by Joe Six-Pack. Caleb is struggling to get his YouTube career started. When he gets some strange shipments of make-up and clothes, he finds his channel suddenly taking off - but can he control it? A picture story. Book / 41 Pages / 33 illustrations

Web Classics Revisited

Two Forms of ID

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

Barbie's Life

Story & Art by Melissa N. Chris was a student actor who said he could play any role. A disgruntled girlfriend and playwright are about to see if he'll be able to play the lead role in... Barbie's Life. Book / 55 pages / 21 rendered images

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Sold in three parts:

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Working His Way into Skirts (Part 2)

He Gave at the Office (Part 3)

I'm Your Dolly

(Barbie-in-a-Box)

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He's Her New Doll (Part 1)

Destined to be a Doll (Part 2)

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Sold in one part

