

S. Leigh Farmer

Something Borrowed

SOMETHING BORROWED
written by S. Leigh Farmer

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A version of this novel appeared online in internet newsgroups in a condensed and unrevised form during the 1990s.

“Something Borrowed”
by S. Leigh Farmer

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ALSO BY S. LEIGH FARMER

One Favor

For Vera, Chuck, and Dave

Publisher's Note

Expanded from a short story Farmer wrote in the late 1980's, the novelette-length version of *Something Borrowed* was originally posted to the alt.sex.stories internet newsgroup in December 1997 as a series of eight story installments. In 1998, the author corrected a few pages, revised awkward wording, updated some of the technology used by the characters and added some detail to clarify plot points. A year later, while preparing the revised manuscript for re-release we lost contact with the author, and let the manuscript languish. More than ten years later, one of our editors uncovered and proofread the manuscript, making significant improvements in areas of grammar and syntax. Those corrections are embodied in this printed revision of the online novelette.

Through the years a number of people have requested that we repost the story as originally posted, but we refused, feeling that what had been released was not some of Farmer's best work. With the most recent updates and extensions, the book is ready for a new audience and possibly another look from people that downloaded and appreciated the story many years ago. Our publishing group would like to thank the Fictionmania internet website readers for their encouragement and constructive criticism.

Thirty years after this story was created, we recognize that some of the technology mentioned in these pages is out of date. The characters do not use smart phones and refer to some places on the internet that are seldom visited today, but this is the story as Farmer left it in 1999.

S. Leigh Farmer always believed that this was a thinking-person's story, and that the narrative represented a purpose beyond titillation. We have always felt that Farmer was a genius at injecting some humor and believability into the story and characters. We are releasing this as a tribute to that genius. We hope you enjoy it.

- *The editorial and design staff of SleightFarm Publishing Group*

CHAPTER ONE

Bachelorette at Large

Lisa Purcell absentmindedly twisted her thin gold necklace chain around one finger as she nursed her daiquiri and watched the floor show at the Throbbin's Nest. Lisa had an unconscious habit of winding her finger in the chain whenever she was nervous or excited, and she was definitely excited. The male exotic dancer was gyrating at the edge of the runway near her table, swiveling his hips in a most suggestive way while a pounding rock number thudded from the club sound system. Lisa was admiring the muscular dancer's bronzed physique and was letting her mind wander. She could detect a faint tickle of her breasts against her bra while another aspect of her uncontrolled arousal contributed to the dewiness at the juncture of her legs.

Lisa's long brunette hair framed her slim face and contrasted with her pearly complexion. Her dark chocolate eyes sparkled even though the effects of the late hour and the smoke in the noisy, crowded club were beginning to irritate them. At 5'5" and 103 pounds, she had a figure that one might call petite, with narrow hips and a slender waist. Like most of her friends with similar figures, she wasn't pleased with the size of her breasts (not that she wanted to be really huge, but maybe just a little more up top to give her body just the right proportions).

The remarkable thing about Lisa was how much she resembled her friend and former college roommate Denise Morton. In college, although the two women were not related even distantly, they were frequently mistaken for one another. This happened constantly, particularly because they shared the same dormitory room. They eventually made a game of the confusion, adopting the same hairstyles, sharing clothes and doing their best to confound everyone. Friends started calling them 'Neese and Leese' the twins of Simon Hall dorm. Denise and Lisa enjoyed every minute of the confusion their similar appearances caused.

The two women graduated from Cromwell College a year ago, and although they now lived many miles apart, they were still as chummy as they had been those four years. Denise was a purchasing agent for a small manufacturing company and lived on her own in a comfortable apartment in Asherton Heights. Lisa was a preschool teacher in Kerrville about a hundred miles away, and shared an apartment with another young woman in that town.

The Throbbin's Nest was not the sort of place that a preschool teacher normally would have spent her Friday evening, but Lisa was obliged to celebrate her best friend's final night of single womanhood. Denise was going to be married in less than twenty-four hours.

The marriage proposal had come nearly six months ago at Christmas-time and Denise had accepted immediately. The very day Denise became engaged, she called Lisa and asked her to be a bridesmaid, inviting her to spend the days just before the wedding with her; to relive, for a while at least, those happy times in college. And so the 'twins' were together, sharing living quarters once more, if only for two days.

The hours since Lisa's arrival that morning had been a whirlwind of coordination, rehearsal, and resolving last minute problems before the wedding. The list of uncompleted tasks seemed endless, but by Saturday afternoon the preparation would be over and Denise's ceremony would take place.

Denise's parents were handling most of the major wedding plans for her, since they lived only in the next town. They scheduled the caterer, the music, the flowers, and even coordinated the accommodations for the out-of-town relatives. Denise's father had enough money that any wish Denise had for her wedding was granted. Even with all of the money and relatives ready to help, there were many errands that necessarily fell to the bride. Lisa was happy to accompany the bride-to-be on a few of those last minute tasks, including the final fitting for the wedding gown and help with some late shopping for honeymoon essentials.

The wedding ceremony rehearsal had gone smoothly and quickly that evening. Later, Denise's father treated the participants to dinner at a restaurant in town. After dinner, the best man, Tom Bascome, and his pals escorted the groom to his bachelor fling. The bride-to-be and her attendants, not to be outdone, collectively went elsewhere for a night of singles fun themselves.

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Denise's sister and maid of honor, Miranda, suggested a visit to the Throbbin's Nest club for ladies night. Miranda was two years older than the bride and was by all accounts the more sexually outspoken of the two sisters. She was a creative consultant at an advertising firm, and a very independent woman. Miranda was not married and definitely enjoyed the single life. On the ride to the club, she had regaled the other women with some remarkable stories of her sexual exploits and the parade of lovers and boyfriends who'd briefly shared her bed.

The contrast between Miranda and her more demure sister Denise was surprising considering their mutual conservative upbringing, but Lisa chalked up the differences to dissimilarities in their defiance of authority. Denise had been the conformist, the good little girl. The more mature and worldly Miranda was a rebel.

Lisa sat with Miranda at a table adjacent to the one occupied by Denise and her other bridesmaids. Many of the young women at Denise's table were already drunk and becoming boisterous, even by Throbbin's Nest standards. A few were shouting remarkably lewd suggestions to the dancer, Rrroderick.

Rrroderick... with three leading 'R's. Lisa noticed that most of the hunks who had performed that evening had names with sexual connotations; names like Studs, Jock, Wei Hung, and Peter. Judging from the size of the bulges in their skimpy costumes, the dancers seemed to be more generously endowed than the men Lisa had dated or had admired at the beach, but she was not about to complain. Between the buzz from the daiquiris and the pleasant sensations of her arousal, she was feeling very, very good.

Rrroderick had long ago removed most of his outfit and was left in a G-string plus a white starched collar and cuffs, but no shirt connecting the collar and cuffs together. Lisa likened the effect to having X-ray vision and being able to look through his clothes at the tanned athletic figure beneath. His muscular body was oiled and glistening in the illumination from the smoky spotlights. His tiny black leather G-string held his most obvious assets but obscured little else. Except for the strategic pouch in front, the garment was not more than a few strings that fastened together above the crack of his butt, leaving very little to the imagination. His dance could charitably be described only as a series of poses and suggestive motions, but the total effect was enough to keep Lisa and almost every other woman in the club watching him writhe and strut.

Rroderick was still dancing at the edge of the runway, very near the table where Denise sat in a drunken fog. Miranda wickedly had been ordering drinks with double the rum for the bride-to-be; the cumulative alcohol taking quite a toll. The darkened showroom was very conducive to sleep, and Denise's eyes had fluttered closed more than once before the noise or someone shaking her brought her back to her senses. The other bridesmaids sitting at the bride-to-be's table compensated for Denise's lethargy by continuing to stuff fives and tens into Rroderick's leather G-string. As long as they kept the flow of bills coming, he never danced very far away.

"Denise looks like she's about ready to pass out!" Lisa shouted to Miranda over the thumping rock music and the raucous crowd.

Miranda glanced at the next table, and assessed her sister's state of consciousness. "I think you're right!" Miranda looked at her wristwatch before she shouted back. "She probably won't last much longer. After this guy finishes, we'll round up the other girls and take her home!"

Lisa returned to watching Rroderick, and continued to twist the gold chain around her finger. The tiny golden amulet hanging from the chain slid back and forth as the chain was wound up and unwound. When the chain was at rest, the little charm hung deeply into Lisa's cleavage. When the chain was wrapped around her finger, the little golden disk rested against the side of her throat. As Rroderick danced, Lisa's little talisman slipped back and forth, back and forth.

Lisa swayed her body to the rhythm of the music accompanying Rroderick's performance. She felt the swish of her hair against her neck and the fabric of her blouse rubbing against her bra and liked the way the stimulation made her feel: tingly, warm, and comfortable. She could picture herself with someone like Rroderick - or whatever his real name was - and that fantasy brought a peaceful smile to her lips.

Lisa was currently between boyfriends, but hoped to meet someone interesting at the wedding rehearsal. She'd even prepared for the event that she might get lucky by inserting her diaphragm before the rehearsal, but her karma was not operating that evening. No one except the bridegroom had seemed particularly interesting, and he was the one male certainly not up for grabs. Lisa had been introduced briefly to Denise's groom-to-be, Matt, and even in that short moment, she'd sensed something about him, something unique and strangely attractive. She dismissed

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those feelings because of the obvious inability to act on them, even if she didn't fully understand them.

The final notes of Rrroderick's number eventually sounded, and the party of young women called it a night.

CHAPTER TWO

Bachelor Party

Matt Stevens poured a little more of his cocktail into the potted plant. That fern was going to have a hell of a hangover tomorrow! Tom Bascome had been mixing Matt's drinks on the strong side all evening, but Matt hadn't taken more than an isolated sip here and there once he detected the alcoholic emphasis.

Matt recognized that there was tradition behind making the groom drunk at his bachelor party, but like many wedding customs, the reasoning behind the act was obscure. Was it to fortify the groom for the awesome responsibility of caring for his wife until 'death do we part'? Or, was it to incapacitate the groom so that he could not run off and escape the carefully planned ceremony and reception? Matt believed there was a third and more sinister reason: that was to make the groom barf on his tuxedo at the wedding and make a fool of himself.

The party was on its last legs. Tom's house was strewn with empty beer bottles, open pizza boxes, half-consumed bags of potato chips, and pretzels crushed into the carpet. The TV was showing a raunchy stag video that someone had brought over.

With the exception of Matt, there were only two party-goers left in the living room, and a few more in the kitchen playing poker with Tom and his house-mate Dave. Earlier in the evening, the place had been relatively full of glad-handing, back-slapping young men offering their sympathy to the 'doomed' groom-to-be. This was his last big party before the ceremony tomorrow afternoon proclaimed Matt a married man.

A passionate moan drifted from the big-screen television on the wall. The woman in the stag video was being impaled on the most enormous male organ Matt had ever seen, and yet she was grinning and moaning. Matt mentally compared his own penis against the behemoth stroking back and forth in the close-up on the screen, and felt a pang of inadequacy.

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Matt had seen a lot of naked guys in locker rooms and on camping trips over the years and knew that the appendage depicted in the video was abnormally large and likely very uncomfortable for the actress regardless of how much she smiled and gasped. It seemed that porno actresses were selected on the basis of their breast size and willingness to submit to gynecological photography while the male actors had no remarkable attributes other than the dimensions of their cocks, or the ability to ejaculate on cue.

Matt was moderately well-hung - at least he was by his own estimation. He was confident that Denise had always been satisfied whenever they shared intimacy. He also felt secure about his physical looks. He was six-foot-one, a trim one-sixty, and fit from his twice weekly morning jogs, although no one would term his physique muscle-bound. His sandy hair was short and conservative the way the partners at the architectural firm liked their designers to look. His mustache was always neatly trimmed, and he tried to appear professional in his dress and demeanor. His blue eyes were the feature that Denise had first complimented seven months ago as he introduced himself to her.

Matt was twenty-six years old, and already making enough money to live comfortably and support a family. In a few years, if his promotions came regularly, he might become a partner in the firm, or he might branch out and start his own architectural consultancy. Add it all up and he wasn't such a bad catch for Denise.

He glanced at his watch. Half past midnight. In less than sixteen hours he would be marrying his fiancée, and doing so without a hangover, so long as he kept pouring his drinks into the ferns.

"Hey, Matt!" one of the guys watching the video shouted. "Can Denise do that?" The fellow was pointing at the screen as the porno actress did something apparently remarkable. The other guy on the couch was tilting his head this way and that trying to make sense of the screen, because the stag-film director had dollied so close to the action that the indistinct images made it difficult to tell what was being shown. Matt had to agree that he had no idea what was being depicted, nor could he possibly know if Denise could do whatever it was that he was supposed to be watching. The fellow who asked the question must have considered his question rhetorical, for he was already intently watching the next part of the video. Cinematography aside, for stag entertainment, this epic was pretty fast moving, with lots of quick edits and fairly good lighting.

However, as was typical, there was virtually no dialogue other than the occasional orgasmic utterance, and no evident plot.

Stag films never really had a beginning, any logical end, nor, for that matter, much structure in between - they were not much more than an excuse for filming one or more sexual acts in excruciatingly close-up detail. Matt had never enjoyed watching that kind of thing, preferring actual participation in 'the act'. Sex was never much of a spectator sport for him, and he never planned to ride the bench. The other guys at the party seemed to enjoy the film though.

The music on the video began fading away as the movie ended. After a few credits, the video faded to black, and the two guys on the couch yawned and stretched.

"I ought to get out of here," the first one said. "I'm taking my nephews miniature golfing at nine in the morning, and we've all got the wedding in the afternoon."

"Yeah," the other one agreed, rubbing his neck, "I think I had one too many gin and tonics." The two fellows drifted out to the card game and said their good-byes then let themselves out. Alone in the living room, Matt could hear intermittent laughter from the card players in the kitchen.

Matt was feeling pretty exhausted and wanted to go home to his apartment but he didn't have his car. Tom Bascome, Matt's best man, had seen to that, insisting on driving Matt to the party, expecting that by the end of the evening the guest-of-honor would be too drunk to drive and more than likely would be unconscious. Tom hadn't counted on the groom to surreptitiously irrigate the ferns. Matt realized that the only way he could get home would be to give the best man what he wanted: a groom incoherent and disoriented from alcohol.

Matt swished a little of the cocktail in his mouth and spit the rest into the planter. He loosened his tie, unbuttoned his collar and ruffled his hair. He adopted a stumbling swagger and ambled to the kitchen. His apparent drunkenness was noticed immediately.

"Heeey!" he greeted the card players a little louder than was necessary. "I'm getting married!"

Dave Emerson looked up from his poker hand and pulled the cigar from his mouth. "Brilliant deduction, Sherlock!" he responded.

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Matt tried to look as unsteady as possible as he swayed in the doorway. His gaze drifted erratically from one person to another. "Deneeech... Duneeeesh... Duhneeeese issss reeeeaalllly party, ya know?"

The card game stopped as everyone eyed the obviously very tipsy groom in the doorway.

"I think you made Matt's last few drinks a bit strong, there, Tom," Wally commented.

"Look at him," Ed agreed. "The poor slob is going to have to be poured into his tuxedo for the wedding." The players began extinguishing their cigars and putting away the cards and poker chips, certain that Matt was not going to last much longer in his condition, and that meant the party was over.

Matt kept up his act by blinking and drifting back and forth on his heels. "Yup! We're getting a wedding. And afterward, you know what? We're going on a honeymoon to Hywah... Hawaii... I'm driving us there personally."

Tom studied his apparently drunken friend and chose his words carefully. "Matt. I'm sorry, but you can't drive to Hawaii."

Matt pretended to be crestfallen. "I... I can't?"

"No. You can't drive to Hawaii," Tom confirmed.

"I'm a good driver, Tommy!" Matt whined.

Tom spoke in measured tones: "Good driver or not, once you reach the ocean you'd have to hold your breath an awfully long time."

Matt leaned against the wall in a posture of intellectual defeat. "I'd better practice, then," he stated with exaggerated seriousness. He took a deep breath, rolled his eyes back into his head and slumped to the floor.

"Now you've done it!" Ed accused Tom.

"Don't worry," Tom said confidently, "I'll get him home to his own bed, and in the morning, I'll make sure he sobers up and gets all of his pre-nuptial preparations done. That's what a best man is supposed to do."

"You're sure he'll be ready?" Wally asked, pulling on his wind-breaker. His doubtful expression spoke volumes.

"Positive," Tom answered. "You guys just get yourselves to the church by three tomorrow afternoon, and I'll bring 'Jacques Cousteau' here, all bright-eyed and bushy tailed."

"Buuuusshy." Matt mumbled from his position on the floor.

"See?" Tom told them confidently. "He's coming around already."

CHAPTER THREE

Initial Mistakes

Melanie's mini-van idled outside the entrance to the apartment building. Lisa and Denise stood on the walkway just outside the vehicle, saying goodnight to the women still in the car. Lisa was doing all of the talking, since Denise was a zombie.

"Will you need help to get her up to her apartment?" Melanie asked from the driver's seat. She knew that of all of the women in the car, she was the only one that had not had any alcohol, and was best suited to assist Lisa if needed.

Lisa glanced to her side and noticed that Denise was still standing, but only barely. "I don't think it'll be a problem. I already dug her apartment keys out of her purse, and as long as I hurry, she shouldn't collapse before we get up there."

"All right, then," Melanie said. "We'll see both of you at the church at three."

"Three," Lisa repeated.

"I'll be here earlier in the afternoon," Denise's sister Miranda offered from the passenger seat. "If she's really zonked, it might take both you and I to get Denise ready"

"I hope not," Lisa giggled, but realized there was a grain of truth in what Miranda said. Lisa looked to the apartment door and noticed that Denise was becoming more unsteady. "I'd better get her upstairs. G'night!"

The mini-van slowly pulled away from the curb and left the parking lot. Lisa turned to her tipsy charge and guided her toward the apartment entranceway.

"Let's get you inside and into bed, young lady ... you've had a busy night," Lisa urged. It was a little silly to call Denise a young lady, since she was approximately the same age as Lisa; almost twenty four. Their

birthdays were separated by only a few weeks, and Denise was actually the older of the two.

At the glass entrance door, Lisa fumbled with the key and noted the similarity of their reflections. Denise looked more a twin or sister to Lisa than to her actual sister Miranda. Lisa and Denise were the same height. Their weights, their eye and hair color, their hair style, measurements, and even many of their facial features were similar. There were differences, if one looked closely, in the shapes of their eyes and the upturn of their noses. As well, their voices were close but not completely alike. On a casual glance, they were identical. During the years in college, they'd borrowed so much of each others' things that they developed similar taste in clothes, jewelry and perfume. None of this had dispelled the sobriquet 'the Simon Hall Twins'.

"Just like in college," Lisa reminded her friend. "The Simon Hall Twins - 'Neese and Leese' - sneaking in drunk after curfew." She held the security door as Denise silently shuffled inside.

Lisa helped her doppelganger negotiate the staircase inside the building to the second-floor landing. With Denise beginning to stumble, Lisa thanked her lucky stars they didn't need to climb to the third floor and that the apartment was right off the landing. Lisa worked the key in the door and helped Denise inside the well-lit unit.

The living room couch was opened into a guest bed for Lisa, but Denise fell onto it moments after she came through the doorway. Lisa kicked off her sandals and tossed her purse into the corner before trying to rouse the prone woman.

"C'mon Sleepyhead! This is my bed tonight," she cajoled, trying to lift Denise back to her feet. As she bent over her friend, she felt the disorienting effects of the alcohol sweep over her. "Ooooh! I shouldn't have had that second ... or third ... daiquiri!" she groaned and paused to regain her senses.

Try as Lisa might, Denise wouldn't budge. This was one of those times when Lisa cursed her lack of strength. Not that she was weak, but she had the limited musculature of the average female. Right now, she wished she had the strength of a man and could just heft a hundred-pound weight onto her shoulder and carry it around. That way, she could get Denise into the bedroom and her own bed, to free up the guest bed. Not only was Denise unconscious on the sofa bed, but she was lying diagonally and face-down so that Lisa could not find a suitable patch of

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the guest bed on which to sleep. Worse yet, Denise was still fully dressed and smelled of cigarette smoke and booze.

"Denise?" Lisa tried to rouse her friend. "Denise? If you sleep out here, I'm going to have to sleep in your bed. All right?" There was, of course, no answer other than a muffled snore.

Lisa went into the bathroom, brushed her teeth, and removed her blouse and bra. The edge of the bra cups had left little indentations in her breasts that itched slightly when she removed the garment. Lisa gently rubbed the indentations along her boobs and looked at her reflection. There in the mirror was a young woman, with dark shoulder-length hair, brown (and slightly bloodshot) eyes, a toothbrush sticking out of her full lips ... a woman massaging her own sore breasts. The mammae were nice, as breasts went; firm and conical with nicely defined nipples and just the hint of a tan. There was only a small area near the areola of each breast that was not tanned, but that area was normally covered by a swimsuit. They just weren't quite big enough; requiring only a small C or very generous B cup bra. Lisa smirked at her own image. If only the boobs were a little bigger.

As Lisa watched her reflection rub the breasts, the nipples stiffened slightly and stood out like pencil erasers. She felt her lower body responding, too, producing a bit of lubrication and evincing a pleasant overall glow. She stood for a few minutes more, rubbing her breasts and thinking about Rrroderick.

Mmmm. Rrroderick. She remembered his muscular body and the way he'd filled out the pouch in his G-string. Wouldn't it be nice to have a hunk like him waiting in bed? Lisa told herself that she could certainly show him a good time. He was probably gay, though. She'd heard that about male strippers ... homosexual ... every one of them. If that was true: what a waste!

A few minutes later, Lisa emerged from the bathroom wearing her necklace and nothing else. The medallion had caught Lisa's eye at an obscure little shop, and she later bought the chain so she could wear the trinket around her neck. She liked the pretty little design in the surface of the talisman and she swore that just wearing it made her feel happier. She'd taken to wearing the necklace everywhere: to her teaching job, to the market, to bed. As long as it made her feel good, she never wanted to take it off.

She carried her clothes to the suitcase in the living room and put them in the dirty-clothes sack. She wouldn't have been self-conscious about her nudity even if Denise were awake, as her former roommate could attest. Lisa and Denise often hung around the dorm room wearing little or nothing, particularly in warm weather. Lisa mused that boys could walk around in public without a shirt at all in the summer, but girls were expected to be more modest. Her gender was something Lisa could do nothing about, though.

The alcohol in Lisa's system was starting to make her as sleepy as her comrade snoring away face-down on the guest bed a few feet away. Lisa removed Denise's shoes, but otherwise left her as she was.

"I'm going to your bed!" Lisa warned her friend as if the words would make Denise suddenly jump up to its defense. Nothing of the sort happened, so Lisa reluctantly turned off the lamps on the end tables, and ambled down the short hallway to the bedroom.

Denise's bed was a queen-size affair with huge goose-down pillows and covered by a colorful quilt. Lisa fiddled with the digital alarm clock on the bedstand to set the alarm but gave up when she couldn't figure it out. The display read just past one in the morning - fourteen hours until she and Denise would be expected to arrive at the church. She hoped that the anticipated hangovers wouldn't make either of them oversleep.

Lisa pulled the quilt to the floor and climbed into the bed, feeling the cool crisp sheets sliding against her bare skin. She briefly wondered if she would have enjoyed the sensation a bit more if she had not been so drunk. She summoned the strength to reach up and turn off the lamp by the bed. In the relative darkness, it took no more than a moment or two for blessed sleep to claim her.

CHAPTER FOUR

Compounded Error

Tom's El Dorado rumbled noisily at the curb outside the doorway to the apartment building. He'd returned Matt to his apartment before the guy had passed out for good, although the groom seemed to be getting his second wind and looked a little less drunk than he had in the kitchen back at the house. The smell of alcohol was very strong on Matt's breath, however, and his disheveled clothes seemed so out of character for someone that was usually very tidy and together. Right now, the young groom-to-be was leaning unsteadily against the car as Tom addressed him from the driver's seat.

"Now, I want you to go on up and get to bed," Tom ordered.

"Bed?" Matt asked, blearily.

"*Your* bed," Tom clarified. "Third floor. I don't want you stopping off at Denise's apartment on the second floor. Your fiancée would kill me if she found out how much I let you drink."

"I'm not drink!" Matt asserted. "Drink? I'm ... I'm sober as ... I'm as ... I'm not drink ... drunk!" He burped loudly.

Tom shook his head. "Geez, Matt, just do me a favor and don't go to Denise's tonight." He glanced up the side of the apartment building. "Her lights are off anyway, so that means she's already in bed."

"Bed. I want to go to bed," Matt slurred.

"Good!" Tom reinforced. "Go up to your bed on the third floor, got that?"

"Fird Thlor," Matt wheezed and held up four fingers.

"Close enough," Tom allowed. "Get some sleep. I'll be here in the morning to help you do all of the last minute stuff."

"Stuuuuu," Matt hissed as he staggered away to the door and pretended to have difficulty with his keys. As soon as he unlocked the entranceway door and had stepped into the building, he heard the El Dorado pulling away from the parking lot. Tom was gone.

There was no need to appear intoxicated any longer, so Matt straightened his hair, tidied his shirt and immediately lost the shuffling gait. The transformation from a disheveled drunk to simply weary architect was dramatic.

Matt considered Tom's observation. He was right. Denise's apartment lights were off, so she was already back from her night out with her friends - and very likely asleep. Matt looked at the key-ring in his hand and the key that Denise had given him months ago when they'd become engaged. She'd told him to come in anytime and surprise her with a night of passion - the more unexpected the better. So far, Matt had never had an opportunity for surprise, and wondered if tonight would be considered unexpected. He was certainly game to try if she was. Just thinking about her soft smooth skin, her sweet smell, and the curves of her body made his manhood stir.

He bounded up the stairs and stopped outside her apartment door. Should he knock or should he just forget the whole thing and go upstairs to his apartment directly above hers? He and Denise had a big day ahead of themselves; perhaps the biggest day of their lives. Maybe it was better to just wait and get a good night of sleep instead. The next time either she or he went to bed they'd be together, and they'd be on their honeymoon in Hawaii.

What about the spontaneity she'd requested? This would be his last opportunity to show up unannounced. After tonight, he'd be *expected* in her bed every night. What could it hurt to be spontaneous at least once?

Matt twisted the doorknob and discovered that Denise's door wasn't even locked. She was expecting him, after all! He slowly pushed the door open, knocking gently. As the light from the hallway spilled into the darkened apartment, he saw the prone figure of the young woman on the guest bed. Tousled hair covered her face, but Matt could tell that she was asleep from her uncomfortable posture and slow and shallow breathing.

At first he was confused at finding someone on the fold-out couch, but he remembered that Denise's college roommate was staying here the night before the wedding. He had almost been fooled again by their similar appearances. Although he could not see the sleeping woman's

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face, it was obvious that the friend, Lisa, would be assigned to the guest bed.

"Lisa?" he called softly in the darkness. "It's just me, Matt. I'm here to see Denise." The young woman didn't awaken or acknowledge his presence. Matt could hear a slight snore from her and when he got closer he could smell the smoke on her clothes and the liquor on her breath.

"Don't get up!" he whispered hoarsely. "Lisa, my dear, you are going to be one hurting puppy in the morning." he said softly to the woman on the couch, acknowledging her obvious intoxication. Matt quietly made his way to Denise's bedroom without using the lights. His apartment upstairs had the identical layout, so he had an almost instinctive feel for the distances involved.

He stood in the doorway to Denise's bedroom letting his eyes adjust to the very dim light provided by her alarm clock. The window shades were drawn, so there was no illumination from the moon or lights outdoors. He could see the shape of the lone occupant of the bed, and even without much light it was clear who it had to be.

"Denise?" he hissed, "It's me. It's Matt. You wanted romance? You wanted spontaneity? This is it, honey!" He stood near the bed and removed his clothes. As he bent over to pull his jockstrap to his ankles, the decoration hanging on his neck chain swung down and hit his nose.

Tom Bascome, the best man, had bought both the chain and medallion for Matt on a trip to China a few months ago. The golden amulet itself came from a little shop Tom had discovered off an alleyway in Beijing, and the braided gold chain was found at a bazaar in Hong Kong. Matt had never thought of himself as someone to wear jewelry, but the gold disk didn't look too unmanly, and he knew Tom had paid a lot for the gifts, so he wore the chain and talisman to show his appreciation. After a while he'd gotten attached to the little golden trinket, and felt undressed without it.

Matt piled his supporter and socks on the pants and shirt and slipped his naked body between the cool sheets behind the woman. He snuggled close and placed his incipient erection in the crease of her derriere.

"Hi, Honey," he whispered. "Surprised?"

"Mmmmm," the woman sleepily moaned, and she slid her warm body back against his torso, urging his prick up between her legs. Matt could feel the warm wetness that was her pussy settling against the ever-

lengthening shaft of his penis. Matt reached over her and cupped his hand around one of her breasts. The woman held his hand against her breast as Matt made slow gentle circles with his fingers. Her other hand sought out the intruder between her legs.

Matt could feel her nipple stiffening under his fingers, and the smooth warm expanse of breast skin trembling slightly at his touch. The woman's other hand was gently rubbing the underside of his manhood and pushing the organ against her damp vulva. "Ohhhhhh, Rrrroderick! You're here!" she mumbled.

"Roderick?" Matt wondered. His bed-mate didn't seem to be awake, but her actions confirmed that if she was dreaming, the dream was pretty hot. Heck! He could play along with a fantasy.

"Yeah, Honey, I'm here!" he breathed into her ear and gently nibbled her neck. He could smell the wonderful fragrance he'd long come to associate with Denise as he trailed his lips along the ridge of her shoulder.

Her fingers guided him as he slowly rubbed her breast. Her pelvis was tilting gently, rubbing her labia up and down his pecker, and her head was rolling lazily from side to side as she pleased herself on him. Her lubrication continued to flow and before many moments had expired she was getting him very slippery. After a while longer of slow back and forth sliding, she turned around to face him. Matt could make out only the barest outline of her features in the darkness, but he could see that her eyes were closed and that she was smiling placidly. He gently used both hands to massage her breasts, which only encouraged her to slide her pelvis closer to his. He felt the tickle of her pubic hair against his glans and she inched gradually closer until the tip of his shaft just rested against her clitoris. Matt could feel the gentle rocking of the woman's hips as she tickled herself on him.

"Mmmmm," she moaned softly. "Take me, Rrrroderick! Take me now!"

"Are you sure?" Matt teased, knowing how frustrated it made Denise whenever he made her beg for him.

"Yes! Oh, Yes! Now! I want you now!" The woman's whisper was an insistent hiss as she rolled onto on her back and spread her legs.

"Anything you say, darling," he agreed. He pulled the sheets off of the woman and climbed between her splayed thighs. Her hands were hungrily reaching for his manhood to guide it into place. Matt eased

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forward slowly, and let her direct the object of her desire where she wished. If he'd known Denise would be this passionate and sensual, he would have surprised her months ago! The entrance to her vagina was warm, slippery and wet as she pulled Matt further into her nether slit. Matt easily slid the entire length of his cock deeply into her without a pause, enjoying the sweet tightness.

"Oooooooh," she cooed as she sensed his organ filling her. Matt leaned down and kissed her. Her lips were warm and soft and gently moving against his as their faces met. She brought her hands up and held his face against hers for a long slow kiss. While the kiss continued, he could smell the alcohol on her breath under the fragrance of mouthwash and toothpaste. The smell of liquor was unmistakable, but nowhere near as strong as when he'd passed the person on the guest bed. The woman beneath him began sliding her legs up and down the sides of his body during the kiss. He took the cue and began rocking his pelvis to stroke in and out of her, ever so slowly.

"Mmmmmmm," she purred and removed her hands from his face and employed her fingers to massage and compress her own breasts. Matt watched with amusement as she rubbed the breasts sensuously. Of course she had intimate knowledge of how best to stimulate herself. He could feel the muscles lining her vagina gripping and releasing his pecker as she enjoyed her own breast manipulation in concert with his slow pistoning motion. Every so often she would stop her gentle breathing to make tiny gasps that Matt guessed marked her orgasms. He knew that before long, he too would experience sexual ecstasy, particularly if she kept doing the things she was doing to his reciprocating member.

It didn't take more than a half minute before Matt felt the familiar pressure at the base of his penis that signaled that his ejaculation had begun. His muscles stiffened and he plunged his cock deep into her, stretching her to the limit. Hungrily, her hips thrust upward to meet his. As the semen thundered into the woman, she panted and whimpered the name once more, but this time with a grateful edge: "Ohhhh! Rrrrrroderick! Mmmmmmmmm."

Spent, Matt withdrew his rapidly dwindling erection just before the woman turned to face away from him again, cuddling herself and moaning softly. He pulled the sheet over her and himself and lay back for a well-deserved rest. He was so tired that he didn't notice that the medallion on his neck chain had a faint ruddy glow.

CHAPTER FIVE

Differences

The sun crept over the eastern horizon and awakened the birds in Asherton Heights. Matt emerged from the arms of Morpheus with an uncomfortably full bladder and a killer headache. Even the indistinct sunlight sneaking past the drawn shades was painful to his squeezed-shut eyes. He decided it would be best to keep his tortured orbs tightly closed while he negotiated the way to the bathroom. No matter. He knew the way from the bed to the toilet in his apartment.

He immediately remembered stopping by Denise's apartment late last night and surprising her with a very passionate session of lovemaking before falling asleep in her bed. That meant he was still at her place and had to get from *her* bed to *her* toilet. Fortunately, Matt could find Denise's bathroom blindfolded because her apartment layout was identical to his. He was thankful for that similarity because, given the way his head felt, he might well have to navigate without his eyes. One of his legs was already off the side of the bed, so he pivoted his body and lifted the other leg off the bed and to the floor.

His brain felt wrapped in cotton, as if he'd drunk several of Tom's powerhouse cocktails, but he didn't remember having more than a sip or two. After brief consideration, he decided that he preferred a hangover to being sick, and hoped he wasn't coming down with something. A hangover would quickly pass; illness was the last thing he needed on the day of his wedding and honeymoon.

The delirium even made him feel different all over, somehow. As he stood, the headache pounded stronger and Matt seemed unable to balance himself. If this was a hangover it was straight from hell! After a moment he discovered his equilibrium and slowly made his way along the wall to the lavatory.

The indirect light from the other rooms provided scant illumination inside the windowless bathroom, but that was of no concern for Matt who kept his eyes closed anyway.

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He stumbled over to the toilet and raised the seat, momentarily catching his long fingernails on the edge. He braced his left hand on the wall over the toilet tank, and reached down with the right hand to point his pecker toward the bowl. Unerringly, he found his pubic region but not the essential part of his anatomy.

After a second or two of unsuccessful probing, he eased his eyes open and looked down to try to diagnose what was amiss and realized that he was overlooking a pair of fleshy mounds.

"What?!" he shrieked, in a decidedly non-masculine soprano, as his eyes snapped open. Something was very wrong. He had breasts. Real honest-to-gosh breasts. His right hand groped further between his legs and never found the expected penis and scrotum, although there was a very smooth and wet slit instead. He could feel his strangely longer fingernails desperately scratching at his thighs.

"Oh God, no!" Matt gasped in the higher-pitched voice. He momentarily forgot his headache and his reason for coming to the bathroom as he turned on the bathroom lights and squinted at the unfamiliar reflection in the medicine chest mirror.

In reality, the image in the mirror was not completely foreign. It was Denise. No ... on a second glance, it was her friend, Lisa! He was looking at the woman who'd driven here from Kerrville for Denise's wedding. She looked kind of cute in a wholesome sort of way, he decided, standing there looking at him with a cute expression. Matt pondered briefly that until now, he'd not seen Lisa without her clothes. She had a great figure. Nice tits, too, Matt noted. If he hadn't been engaged, he would definitely have been interested in her. The problem was that the dainty figure he was admiring was not someone else. That was his reflection!

Matt's addled brain tried very hard to reason things out. Could this be a dream? No. Matt could not remember a dream where he had a headache, and he'd never had the remotest thought or desire to be female. Besides, dreams never seemed totally real, but this situation did, regardless of how impossible it was. How could he look like a woman?

Could this be some kind of practical joke - an elaborate prosthesis or special effects makeup? No. He cupped one of the breasts, and felt the warm slightly heavy smoothness in his hand in addition to the breast nerves sensing the grip of his hand. This was not some costume or makeup; it was real skin ... his skin. He looked at the reflection in the

mirror and saw that his eyes ... the woman's eyes ... were slightly bloodshot and very brown. His natural eye color had always been blue.

Even worse, about half the distance to the floor, the part that made Matt a groom was missing entirely from this body.

A groom! The wedding! Matt guessed that it had to be sometime after six in the morning and in less than ten hours Denise would be coming down the aisle of the church looking for her fiancé standing at the altar. She would simply not appreciate seeing another woman waiting there instead. There had to be a way to reverse this, somehow to get things back to normal before the wedding. As the shock gradually wore off, Matt's bladder urgency returned.

Matt was levelheaded enough to know that he would have to lower the seat and sit on the toilet to relieve himself. "Just like a girl," he muttered as he sat and relaxed.

The liquid sprayed out of him from some indefinable point in his crotch as he sat there. When he had nothing more to drain, he started to stand, but remembered that women wipe themselves first. He grabbed a square of toilet paper with hands that he noticed were more delicate than his male paws had ever been. His slender fingers pushed the paper along the smooth canyon that had appeared between his legs this morning, and as he reached the rearmost part of the orifice, a thick, warm mass slopped onto his thumb.

Matt dropped the paper and pulled his hand free. His thumbnail was coated in a runny glob of white goop that looked like ... like ... semen. He could hear additional drops of the stuff plunking into the bowl of the toilet as the substance fell from him. He wiped his hand on a piece of tissue and drew a little water into the bath. He quickly stepped into the tub and squatted over the shallow pool of warm water.

Matt scooped water into his slender hand and cupped it into his pubic region. More of the sloppy pale glop was washed out as Matt continued splashing water onto and into himself. This was messy and difficult to clean up! After a minute or two, no more of the gummy white residue was produced.

He took a moment to confirm his earlier observation by touch and visual inspection of what little of his anatomy was actually visible externally. He indeed had a pussy where he'd had a dick and balls only last night. The sexual cleft started from about where his pecker had been and ended back almost at his anus. Although Matt's fingers had touched a

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woman's sex many times before, that same configuration of skin felt alien when it was between his own legs. That part of him was now very smooth and sensitive to his probing. The outer lips felt kind of like the sac that had surrounded his testicles, except that the labia didn't dangle very far. Up near the front of the slit was a tiny and very tender bump that he guessed was a clitoris. Whatever it was, when he touched it, it felt he was fingering the head of his vanished pecker.

Matt stood up and closed his eyes. If he stood very still, with his arms out from his sides, nothing seemed any different from the way his male body felt. He could hardly tell that there were lush breasts hanging off his chest, and he would not have guessed that his genitalia were any different as long as he didn't see or touch them. He quietly let the water out of the tub and dried himself off.

He ran his fingers through the slightly damp pubic hair and noticed that the fur was silkier than the wiry tangle that had surrounded his male sex. There had been so many changes! The bathroom scale showed he'd lost more than fifty pounds, and he seemed a lot shorter than six-one now, judging from the way he no longer had to bend at the neck to see his face in the medicine-chest mirror. He wondered if he would be able to grow back to his normal height and weight before the ceremony. He only hoped that whatever had happened would wear off so he could go back to being a guy.

A more immediate problem was how to keep Denise from waking up and finding two Lisas in her apartment. He figured he would just go back into the bedroom, slip into his clothes, and get out of the apartment before either Denise or Lisa woke up. Heck! Now there would be three people with nearly identical faces around here.

Matt stole back into the darkened bedroom and started to reach for his clothes. Just then, the figure on the bed stirred. Matt looked over and saw himself ... that is, he saw his male form lying in the bed.

He froze and considered the implications. Who was that on the bed? Could that person somehow be him too? Was there now a male Matt in addition to a female Matt? What if Denise somehow looked like Matt now that he looked like Lisa? He had to know.

Matt tiptoed to the bed and put his dainty hand over the sleeping person's eyes, then leaned in very close to the man's ear and whispered, "Wake up!"

The figure on the bed began to rouse.

"Shhhh!" Matt whispered urgently. "Don't talk! Whisper your name to me!"

The man on the bed smiled, and brought his hands up to touch the fingers covering his eyes.

"C'mon Denise! Quit fooling around!" the fellow whispered quietly, playing along. It was obvious now that the person in the bed wasn't his fiancée, and Matt felt relief at not having to deal with Denise waking up in a male body. But, how could that person be another aspect of himself? And, if this other person was his clone, where was Denise?

"Did you get so drunk you can't recognize your college roommate?" the guy on the bed continued tonelessly.

Matt's heart sank. "College roommate?" he inquired in an urgent whisper.

The fellow smiled and whispered back just as urgently: "Yes, silly! It's me! Lisa ... Lisa Purcell."

"Oh my God!" Matt said aloud in his new female voice.

"What's wrong?" Lisa boomed, and then she clasped a hand around her throat, after hearing the deep pitch of the words issuing forth.

"Oh my God!" Matt reiterated. He stood up and removed his hand from Lisa's face.

After Lisa's eyes focused in the dimly lit bedroom and made out Matt's outline, she looked down at her own body and noticed her flatter, hairier chest. "Geez!" she bellowed. "What's going on!?"

"Shhhhhh!" Matt urged.

"What's the matter with my voice? I don't have my ..." Lisa muttered. She was groping her muscular chest, and her eyes were bulging with disbelief. The breasts she'd had for years were suddenly gone! The former female plunged one hand further beneath the sheet and Matt saw the color drain from her face.

"What the heck am I doing with one of these?!" Lisa exclaimed. She flung back the sheet, and Matt could see that Lisa had a firm grip on the penis ... a part of her body which was climbing steadily into an erection.

Matt continued to gesture for silence although his best shushing seemed to have no effect.

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"Oh, no!" Lisa said, as the remnants of sleep cleared her brain. "I look like a guy! Ewww!" She released her phallus as if it were scalding.

"You look like Matt Stevens, to be precise," Matt stated.

"Matt!? I can't look like Matt! I'm a woman for goodness sake! C'mon, Denise! What kind of trick is this!"

"No trick. Go ahead," Matt encouraged. "Touch yourself there again. Does that feel like you actually have a cock? It should, because it is real."

Lisa lifted that unfamiliar organ apprehensively, as if it might bite her. "You're right!" she agreed, uneasily. "It's real. And it's part of me... But ... but ..."

As Matt sat on the bed he felt the cool sheets against his naked bottom. "Now, take a good look at me, Lisa" he encouraged.

Lisa scooted her male body across the bed and switched on the bedside lamp. She turned to look at the person in the room with her, then her jaw dropped and she simply stared. She was looking at her former mirror image - actually, the reverse of her mirror image.

"You're not Denise! You're me!" she said with a deep tone of incredulity.

"No," Matt told her, his voice sounding very soothing and breathy. "In fact, I'm not you either. I'm Matt Stevens."

"No!" Lisa's rough male features were a mask of total amazement.

Matt shrugged. "I don't know how it happened, but somehow during the night, your consciousness ended up in my male body, and my consciousness ended up in your female body."

"No!"

"Check it out!" Matt said. "This is your body. Correct?" He stood up and pirouetted for Lisa.

"Let me get this straight," Lisa began, finally regaining some of her composure. "You exchanged bodies with me somehow, then came to Denise's apartment in the nude to confront me?"

"Not exactly," Matt admitted, gradually, "but you magically appeared in Denise's bed this morning."

Lisa stared at Matt dumbly, as he stood idly scratching the fine hair of his pubic triangle.

"No rocket-science there, dumb-dumb," she replied. "Denise passed out drunk as a skunk on the couch-bed last night when we came home, so I had to sleep in here."

"Oh no!" Matt said, an obvious blush coloring his face and chest. He brought his hands over his cheeks and mouth, totally ignoring the parts more logical to cover in mixed company. He now knew whose semen had been inside him a few moments ago, and that he had not spent the night in bed with Denise.

"What?" Lisa asked. "What's wrong? I mean ... besides the obvious problem you and I have with our body shapes."

"I'm really sorry," Matt apologized, softly.

"Sorry? Sorry for what? It's not like you were in bed ... with ... me ..." her voice trailed off as she began remembering the very vivid dream she'd had the night before.

"I'm sorry! I can't express how very sorry I am!" Matt said again, casting his eyes to the floor, afraid to look her in the eye.

"I *knew* that dream was just a little too realistic!" Lisa exclaimed. She hopped out of bed and stood over Matt as he cowered nearby.

"I ... I ... didn't know!" Matt apologized. "It was dark, and you and Denise look alike even in daylight!"

"Not any more," Lisa said, resignedly, and her expression softened slightly. She examined her more muscular arms and legs now that she was standing. Over six feet tall for the first time, she towered several inches over the body that she formerly occupied. The top of Matt's head was just about at her lip level. Looking down on him was a new perspective for her. It was like being on stilts.

Matt tried to explain what happened. "Last night, while we were ... you know ... in bed together ... you called me Rodney."

"Rroderick," Lisa corrected Matt. A flash of ecstasy crossed her rugged features as she recalled the events at the club. "But fiancée or no fiancée, what gives you the right to just climb into bed and take advantage of Denise any time you want?" Her tone was very threatening, even more so because of her powerful voice and imposing physique.

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"Well, she asked me to!" Matt tried to reason. "And I don't remember any complaints from you last night either."

"I was drunk and thought I was dreaming, you turkey!" Lisa turned away from Matt, moderately disgusted with him and with herself.

"Please keep your voice down!" Matt insisted. "Denise is in the other room, and the last thing she needs is to find her best friend in her bedroom, nude, arguing about having sex with the groom on her wedding day!"

Lisa spun to face Matt, her eyes wide. "The wedding!"

"Tell me about it," Matt agreed, sullenly. "We have to get unswitched or de-transposed or whatever before the ceremony this afternoon! I don't think the tuxedo I rented would fit me like this." He used his hands to gauge the width of his new hips.

"Worse yet, I don't think you and Denise would have half as much fun on the honeymoon without one of you having the ... how can I put this delicately? ... You know ... right *equipment*." Lisa reached between her legs and gestured broadly with the part of her new anatomy that she meant. As she did so, she discovered how tender those relatively tough-looking elements of this body were.

"I just wish I knew how we got this way!" Matt complained.

"Maybe it's just temporary and we'll switch back after a few minutes or something," Lisa suggested hopefully.

Matt sighed. "I'm all for that, but I'm not going to hold my breath."

"So until then," Lisa recapped, "we look like each other?"

Matt nodded in confirmation. He began pacing back and forth, his breasts bouncing with each step. "We not only *look like* each other, but I think we actually *became* each other! This is ridiculous! No one will believe that you and I woke up in the wrong bodies. This sort of thing is possible only in those weird fantasy stories I read on the internet newsgroups."

"Possible or not, we've got several problems as I see it," Lisa explained. "We have a wedding in ..." she glanced at the alarm clock, "about nine hours. In that time we have to get ready for the ceremony, plus do some detective work to figure out how we got this way, and then figure out how to undo whatever this is."

"Oh yeah," Matt said, his hands on his hips, and a sarcastic sneer on his lips. "Absolutely no problem. A piece of cake."

"You don't need to be such a bitch about this," Lisa offered, her voice showing great restraint.

"Bitch? Me? A bitch is a fema..." Matt stopped as the sound of his voice reminded him of his new gender. "Oh. Maybe you're right."

Lisa chuckled. "It's easy for me to forget you're not really a woman. I mean, from where I'm standing, you look just like one."

"I not only look the part, but I am every inch the woman you used to be," Matt interjected. "I may not have been female yesterday but I have to remember that I'm a girl until this condition goes away. Physically, genetically, and hormonally I'm a real woman. Coincidentally, that makes you a real man."

"Me? A man? I don't think I feel like one," Lisa told him, skeptically.

Matt reached out and tugged Lisa's semi-erect cock. "You sure feel like a man to me."

Lisa slapped his hand away and blushed. "You know what I meant."

"What do we do now?" Matt asked. "I'm open to any suggestions."

Lisa shrugged. "First off, I guess I have to leave before Denise wakes up."

"Why?" Matt asked, tilting his head and nervously pulling his bangs out of his eyes. The tickle of the unaccustomed long hair against his forehead, shoulders and ears was already becoming a source of distraction.

"I'm pretty sure that Denise believes all that superstition about the groom not seeing the bride before the wedding," Lisa told him.

"Oh. Right," Matt agreed. "But why should you leave? You're not really the groom!"

"As far as Denise knows, I'm the groom, and you're a bridesmaid," Lisa reminded him. "I don't think we should tell a soul about what happened to us last night. Particularly Denise. With luck, it'll go away before anyone finds out."

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"But since in reality I'm the groom," reasoned Matt, "and I'll be spending time with Denise until this thing between you and me sorts itself out, won't that somehow still be bad luck?"

"You'd know the true meaning of bad luck if you told her what we did in her bed. Besides, she is going to wake up on the sleeper-couch wearing the clothes she wore last night. If she sees her groom and former roommate naked together, she's bound to get suspicious. I've seen her go ballistic about philandering boyfriends ... and after what we did, I'd say she would not be pleased with either of us."

Matt gathered the underwear he'd dropped on the floor the night before, and handed them to Lisa. She quickly stepped into the athletic supporter and pulled the pouch up around her crotch. She examined the garment as she pulled it snug. "This is like a knit bag for your family jewels!" she marveled.

"I know," Matt agreed, "it's fairly comfortable."

"Not from my perspective," Lisa told him. She pranced back and forth to try to get the straps to settle somewhere less irritating. "These underwear are scratchy, and look ugly, too. You know, if I was a guy ..."

"And you are, now," Matt pointed out.

Lisa paused, "uh ... yeah ... then I'd probably wear some of those little bikini briefs. They at least have some style."

"Briefs? Bikini briefs?" Matt blenched.

"Yeah!" Lisa confirmed, brightly. "Maybe the kind with tiger stripes! As a woman, I've worn briefs almost every day of my life since diapers. They're not so bad. Heck! You shouldn't complain! You men can even wear boxers!"

Matt cupped his breasts and gestured at Lisa with them. "Us men?"

"Cut it out Matt!" she laughed. "I'm having a tough time dealing with this sex-exchange body-swap thing without your nit-picking."

Matt sighed. "Well, if we plan to keep this a secret until we can get it figured out, people including Denise are going to get suspicious unless you start calling me Lisa, and I call you Matt."

Lisa frowned at the thought. "Oh, Matt, I know I'm gonna forget to call you Lisa!"

Matt stared at Lisa sternly as he handed her the rest of the clothes. "What did you say, ... *Matt*?"

Lisa immediately replied, "I'm sorry. I mean I'll forget your name, ... *Lisa*."

"That's better," Matt told her. "Now finish getting dressed. You'll find my wristwatch and apartment keys in the right pants pocket."

Lisa stepped into the trousers and pulled them up around her waist. "Matt ... I mean ... *Lisa*?"

Matt excused her momentary relapse. "Yes?"

"I see a big problem already," Lisa said, "You're right handed. Correct?"

"Yup." He paused as the implication became clear. "And, I'll just bet you're a lefty," Matt groaned.

"Good guess," Lisa smirked. "Denise is gonna notice immediately if Lisa becomes a right-hander."

"Or if her fiancé suddenly starts favoring his left hand," Matt added. "That's just another reason to get our minds into their rightful bodies as soon as possible."

Lisa was already buttoning the shirt by this time. Matt picked up the shoes and socks he'd worn the previous night and handed them to her. "Don't bother putting these on your feet. Just carry them upstairs. I'll try to break away and join you so we can start trying to figure this out together."

Matt peeked into the living room and made sure that Denise was still sound asleep before gesturing for Lisa to come out of the bedroom. Matt noticed that Lisa's stride on the way to the apartment door was more of a gentle sashay than a manly gait. It was just one more incongruity for someone to notice.

On her way out, Lisa closed Denise's apartment door a little more forcefully than she had intended, thanks to her newfound strength. That noise was enough to rouse Denise from her slumber on the nearby couch-bed.

"Ohhhhh!" Denise groaned, painfully, "Is it morning already?"

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"Uh ... yeah. About seven AM," Matt answered as he entered from the area near the bedroom.

Denise turned to face him. Her expression quickly became one of puzzlement, and that worried Matt. She had been awake only a few seconds. Could his fiancée suspect something already?

"Lisa! I know you're a free spirit and all, but you really ought to put some clothes on or something," Denise urged.

Matt looked down at himself and realized that he was still completely nude. The whole time he'd been talking to Lisa he'd not had a stitch of clothing on. At least, there was nothing about this body that Lisa hadn't seen every day of her life.

Denise continued: "You never know when Matt could walk in. I gave him a key a few months back and told him to surprise me and try to be passionately romantic. I kept hoping he would come to me in the middle of the night and make the earth move. Last night was his last chance before we share a bed every night. I'm disappointed that all this time he never did anything."

"Never?" Matt asked, knowing that Denise had spoken hyperbolically.

"I mean ... you know ... We've slept together. Lots of times," Denise explained, blushing. "But always at my invitation. I want adventure. I want mystery. I want him to surprise me."

Matt realized he couldn't tell her about the episode with Lisa last night, although that had been a well-intentioned attempt to fulfill Denise's wishes. "Maybe Matt was just too much of a gentleman to take advantage of you," he offered in his own defense.

"Lisa, Lisa, Lisa," Denise chided, standing up from the couch-bed. "There have been nights when I've waited in bed, horny as hell, hoping against hope that he'd stop being a gentleman; that he would break down the door and show me a little spunk. Sometime a girl just wants an animal. You know what I mean? Like those sexy dancers last night. Muscular. Powerful. Hung like a plow-horse. Pounding away at your pussy."

Denise made a few illustrative thrusts with her pelvis before groaning. "Ohhhh! I've got to get something for this headache!" She

staggered into the kitchenette for an aspirin. "Remember that one really great dancer near the end of the night?"

"Which one was that?" Matt asked, hoping for a clue. Although Denise thought she was talking to Lisa, who'd been with her the whole evening, Matt had been across town at his bachelor party.

Denise sighed in frustration. "You know, the hunk with the little black leather bikini. Robin. Roger. Something like that."

"Roderick?" Matt ventured. That was the only name he knew.

"That's the one! God! He was hot, wasn't he? I'll bet when his babymaker gets stiff that it's as big as my arm!" Denise made a fist and held her forearm extended for emphasis. Matt blushed at the very graphic and exaggerated description of a phallus implied by Denise. She continued, "Randi looked like she wanted to climb up on the runway with him and stage a live sex act!"

Randi ... most people knew her as Miranda. Matt knew Denise's wild sister well. She was about Matt's age, and in a small town like Asherton Heights, she'd had the opportunity to date a few of the designers at his firm. Matt's coworkers had some interesting stories about her sexual appetite, although many of the stories simply couldn't be true. The woman always seemed to want more than her men could provide. As long as each paramour could perform, apparently she was worth the effort, but eventually she outlasted them all. Matt was grateful that Denise was not as demanding as the rumors surrounding her sister. Denise and he had some nights where they'd made love three or four times before morning, but he'd always been able to match her stroke for stroke until they proclaimed mutual fatigue.

Matt considered Denise a wonderful lover. She was inventive, very passionate, and more than frequently vocal. She often shared her fantasies, although some of them were strange. She'd dreamed once about being suspended naked inside a giant cube of gelatin, and that Matt had to eat his way through to romance her then eventually free her from her viscous prison. She described in great detail the process by which her body would be imprisoned in the gelatin and how other suitors would try to reach her with various schemes and devices. All of these horny men would fail. Some of the consequences that befell the men were quite comical, and some were downright cruel, but eventually her hero would arrive and simply begin eating toward her. She described how he would reach her breasts first and he would lick them clean before proceeding to

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her pelvis. After stimulating her sexually, and causing her to climax several times, the hero would eventually get to her face, kiss her long and deep and finally pull her from the springy substance, rescuing her.

Matt reflected that Denise's fantasies might be impossible, but no more impossible than the situation in which he and Lisa found themselves. It was as if some supernatural force had turned him into a woman, or (more accurately) had caused his mind to jump into the body of a woman, for Matt ended up with the cleanup from his sexual union the night before. This trouble could not have happened on a worse day, either. Somehow he and Lisa had to figure this thing out and quickly!

"C'mon, Lisa!" Denise urged, snapping Matt out of his daydream. "Cover yourself in case Matt shows up!"

"I don't think he'll be here," Matt opined, not telling everything he knew. "What about the superstition about seeing the bride before the wedding ... bad luck and all?"

"Give me a break," Denise grouched. "Nobody believes in that bad luck stuff or magic or superstition anymore!"

Matt smiled weakly as he considered that until this morning he hadn't believed in magic, either. He had always been pragmatic, rational and down-to-earth. He was a believer now, though. Magic and superstition were real. So was bad luck. He would be more careful from now on. He was already neck-deep in negative karma, and certainly didn't need any more.

Matt noticed the open suitcase near the couch, and didn't recognize it as any of Denise's luggage, so he figured it must be Lisa's. He found a pair of satin briefs and quickly stepped into them.

Matt pulled the panties up into intimate contact with his groin, and he felt the smooth panel that descended between his legs resting against his labia. The briefs felt so cool and comfortable that he could sense himself becoming aroused and getting quite an erection. Well, maybe not an erection in the classical sense, but Matt swore he could feel something expanding, stiffening and warming. He had to look down to verify that there wasn't anything protruding from his pelvis. In addition, he could almost feel a spreading dampness inside himself. He reached down to check to see if he really was becoming wet and could feel himself trembling. The touch of his fingers on the crotch panel of the panties felt very good. He wanted desperately to encourage the incredible sensations,

but figured that it was a bit unseemly to start rubbing himself in the presence of his fiancée.

He saw a tee shirt in the suitcase, pulled it on and adjusted his breasts beneath the fabric. The shirt was large enough that the hem hung below his crotch, obscuring the underwear. He located a wristwatch in the suitcase, and strapped it on his left wrist after failing repeated attempts to wear it on his right as Lisa would have. It was difficult enough to fasten the tiny catch without the added handicaps of doing it left-handed and with long fingernails.

"There!" he announced, holding his arms out from his body to show Denise that he was somewhat dressed. "Happy?"

"All I wanted was to keep from giving Matt any free looks at your boobs or stuff," Denise grumbled as she rubbed her throbbing temples.

"Too late," Matt murmured. He'd seen them, touched them, and washed them already.

"What?" Denise asked, thinking she heard a response.

Matt coughed and mumbled, "Oh, nothing."

Matt wandered into the bathroom to brush what were, for the moment, his teeth. His mouth still tasted horribly and felt indefinitely fuzzy. He guessed that Lisa had a drink or two last night at the ladies club; maybe a few too many drinks, judging from his headache. Matt had tried his best not to get a hangover at the bachelor party, and this morning had gotten one by proxy anyway.

He found Lisa's toothbrush in a little travel case on the vanity. He stood at the mirror for a long time, brushing the strange teeth and looking over his female shell. His breasts bulged against the fabric of the shirt, the nipples making tiny bumps in the fabric. The T-shirt material rubbed back and forth over the breasts as he brushed his teeth and the motion made the nipples stand out even more. He leaned against the sink to see himself closer in the mirror, and as he did, he could feel the satin undies pressing against his genital slit. He slid his body slowly up and down against the porcelain, letting the edge of the washbasin stimulate his sensitive tissues. As he brushed and rocked, he felt an overall feeling of well being and gentle waves of pleasure wash over him. Was that an orgasm? Probably not, he told himself. If this was an orgasm, it felt good, but was slightly disappointing, and certainly nothing to scream and pant about.

Something Borrowed

He swished a bit of mouthwash around in his mouth and heard the sound of his female voice gargling with a more musical timbre than his male yodeling gurgle. He studied his reflection in the mirror. His new face had pretty lips and a cute little nose and his ears were now tiny and pink with pierced lobes, nestling in the darkness under his long brunette hair. The hair hung over his shoulders, nearly to his breasts, and was a little messed up. With a hairbrush from the travel case, Matt, for the first time, experienced brushing hair more than an inch or two in length. There were certainly a lot of tangles! But, it seemed the longer he brushed, the shinier the hair got and the more beautiful his reflection became.

He came out of the bathroom to find Denise at the doorway between the living room and kitchenette, speaking into her cellphone. "Yes. I do too. Uh huh. Yes. She's finished primping now. You want to speak to her?"

Denise held the telephone out to Matt. "Who is it?" he asked. He didn't know any of Lisa's acquaintances, so he was afraid he'd blow his cover if he spoke with anyone he hadn't met.

"It's Matt," Denise told him.

"Matt?" He breathed a sigh of relief. That meant it was Lisa calling from upstairs in his apartment. Maybe she had figured something out. He pressed the telephone to the side of his head before realizing he would have to sweep his long hair out of the way first.

"Hi," he said into the telephone, doing his best to avoid any emotion that Denise might read.

"Hi, Ma ... I mean, Lisa," said the voice on the other end of the call. "This is you know who. I called because I want to pee and ..."

"It works just like normal," Matt responded, mindful of what he said since Denise was standing a few feet away sipping a glass of orange juice and listening to every word. "I've tried it both ways, so trust me. I know."

Matt could see that his end of the conversation was drawing Denise's unwanted attention. He placed his hand over the mouthpiece and spoke to Denise. "He's just asking about carry-on or checked luggage at the airport," Matt lied to Denise, hoping the fib sounded plausible. "He found out at the rehearsal last night that I've flown a lot and he wanted to ask some questions before the honeymoon. I told him that checking your luggage is just as safe as carrying it on the plane."

"Oh," said Denise, still wary.

"Denise," Matt reasoned with his fiancée, momentarily holding the phone away from his ear. "You look like you might enjoy a shower."

"You're probably right. I can still smell the smoke in my hair. This wretched hangover has me thinking about soaking in a bubble bath," Denise admitted.

"Good. A bubble bath is good," Matt urged. "You do that while I finish up with Li ... with Matt."

Denise shuffled off to the bathroom and closed the door. A few seconds later, Matt could hear the water being drawn for a bath.

Matt turned to face the wall before speaking. "Okay. She's gone. What's your problem?"

Lisa was quick to respond. "This *dick* is the problem. The stupid thing is stiff and pointing straight up!"

Matt smiled at the mental picture of Lisa struggling with the recalcitrant erection. "I see," he said, stifling a chuckle. He was certain from the tone in her voice that she was not in a mood for humor.

"I've tried bending, twisting and pushing on it, but I can't get it to point down!" she whined. "The more I work at it, the stiffer the thing gets!"

"There's your problem right there," Matt proclaimed. "You need to ignore it. If you touch yourself or think too much about it, a hardon will never go away."

"You're kidding!" was Lisa's incredulous response.

"No," Matt replied.

Lisa groaned. "Penises are stupid! How do men put up with these things? They are so inconvenient! And they just stick right out!"

"You don't need to tell me," Matt reminded her. "I've got ... I mean, I *had* ... one of my own. I could set off the reaction by daydreaming about Denise."

"Well, ... er ..." Lisa began, uneasily, "I was fantasizing about Rrroderick a bit."

Something Borrowed

Roderick. The male stripper again. Matt was confused. His old body shouldn't have reacted to thoughts about another man. "Maybe just getting your brain revved up about sex is all it takes, regardless of the gender," he offered.

"Well, that makes it pretty darn difficult to get a sexy thought without everyone knowing," Lisa whined, "doesn't it?"

"Welcome to the wonderful world of male physiology," Matt chirped, sweetly. He inwardly hoped that his saccharine tone would further irk Lisa. Other than the boner, she seemed to be having an easy time of the situation. She was in isolation while he was being forced to spend almost every moment under Denise's constant scrutiny.

"Gee, thanks for the compassion," Lisa sighed in frustration.

Matt could hear Denise splashing in the tub which meant she would not be reappearing anytime soon. "New topic. Have you figured out anything about how we got like this?"

"No, for gosh sakes, it's only been ten minutes!" Lisa said with exasperation. "Oh! Before I forget, you should take out the diaphragm."

Matt let the words soak into his brain, but had no idea what she was saying. He knew the fuel pump in his car had a diaphragm, and his debate coach had always urged him to speak from his diaphragm, but neither of those references made any sense with Lisa's last statement.

"The diaphragm," he repeated, just to be sure he heard right.

She sighed, heavily. "Yes, Matt, I wear a diaphragm."

Matt tried not to convey his deepening confusion. "You wear a diaphragm."

Lisa was becoming frustrated by Matt's repetition of everything she said. "Yes," she blushed at the admission. It felt so embarrassing to talk to a stranger about her choice in birth control, but it was only common courtesy to let Matt know, because it was his obligation to handle it now. "Actually, I guess, you're the one that wears it."

Matt was totally confused by what Lisa said. A diaphragm was apparently something you wear, and Lisa wanted him to take it out. He looked over at the suitcase, and could see nothing in there that looked like a diaphragm.

"Okay," Matt reluctantly agreed. "Is it in your suitcase?"

Lisa responded, "No, I was wearing it last night, so you must be wearing it right now."

More confusion. Matt started looking on the soles of his feet and feeling along his back and on his neck for a diaphragm. There was a neck chain and something hanging down on the chain into the cleft between his breasts, but he'd never heard a necklace called a diaphragm. He didn't remember encountering anything while brushing the teeth, but he ran his tongue around inside his mouth feeling for something like a retainer. Nothing.

"I'm sorry," Matt said, "I don't know what a diaphragm looks like, and I think I woke up naked. Can you describe it?"

Lisa cupped her face in one hand as she realized how little Matt knew.

"Let me guess, Matt," she began, "you never knew a woman who wore a pessary."

"Pessary? Nope... none of my guy friends had one either," Matt said.

"Oh, Matt," she sympathized. "It looks like you're going to get an education. Are you near the couch-bed in the living-room?"

Matt walked toward the sofa-bed and sat down. "Yes," he responded.

"Good," Lisa declared. "Listen carefully. I want you to lie down."

Matt was really getting puzzled now. How was resting on the bed going to help find a diaphragm? He settled onto the mattress.

"Okay," Matt told her, "I'm lying down. Usually a guy wants a woman undressed when he asks her to lie down." He giggled at his timid attempt at humor.

"You're dressed?" Lisa asked.

"Just underpants and a tee-shirt," Matt told her.

"Lose the panties," demanded Lisa.

As he heard those words, Matt stopped giggling and began to guess where he might find a diaphragm. "You don't mean that the diaphragm is in..."

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"Yep!" Lisa confirmed, with an amused chuckle. "The promised land."

Matt pulled the panties off and noticed that, as he had earlier suspected, there was a damp spot on the crotch panel. He dropped the panties on the floor next to the couch. He ruffled his pubic hair and brushed his fingers against the fringe of his labia, sending a pleasurable shiver up his spine.

"Can't I just leave this diaphragm thing in me until you and I get back to normal?" he asked.

"No," Lisa insisted, firmly. "You're supposed to remove a diaphragm every so often for rinsing and drying."

"I don't mind it staying where it is," Matt offered.

Lisa was stern with him. "Look, I don't know how long we're going to be each other, and the longer it's in there, the more likely you can get toxic shock syndrome. If you get toxic shock, you'll die. Then I'll have to spend the rest of my life with my mind in your male body."

"Okay," Matt hurriedly agreed once he realized the urgency, "I have the underwear off. What now?"

Lisa took a deep breath before continuing. "Quick anatomy lesson. Your va... I mean my ... a vagina is not a thin tube like you guys think, but more like a pocket that widens as it gets deeper. It's not really straight like a pipe either, but kind of bent in an S-shape. The uterus ... or womb is beyond the wider end deep inside and connects to the vagina through a puckered opening called the cervix. Got it?"

"Got it so far," Matt told her.

"Okay. A diaphragm is a birth control device that is placed into the vagina to cover the cervix," explained Lisa. "It is sort of like a little flexible skullcap, made out of a thin sheet of rubber with a stiffening ring on the outer edge that keeps the thing from folding up or getting pushed away from the cervix. The rubber barrier keeps sperm from getting through the cervix to fertilize a woman's egg."

"Oh," Matt said, simply.

"What you have to do is put your finger up inside yourself and pull on the outer ring to get the diaphragm out of you. However, be careful!

You have long fingernails now and can puncture the rubber part, and then it takes a prescription to get another diaphragm."

"Whooh!" Matt sighed, anticipating the difficult task ahead. He could feel a tingle building inside himself that was not unlike the feeling he'd felt a few minutes earlier when he'd rubbed against the bathroom sink. He flexed his new slender fingers in a limbering exercise.

"Carefully reach your middle finger into yourself," Lisa advised. "It'll be a little easier if you go slowly and don't try to plunge the finger in there all at once. Just take it slowly."

"Slowly," Matt repeated. He took a deep breath and placed his middle finger against the folds of skin at the base of his pelvis. He could feel his warm flesh and a general wetness as the finger spread his labia. He was beginning to tremble with a combination of nervousness and anticipation. He ran his finger along the slick channel until his fingernail pushed inside. He'd felt similar geography with his fingers before in his dalliances with various girlfriends. What he'd not felt before was his own body wrapped around the finger.

"Ooh!" Matt gasped suddenly, at the rush of new and unfamiliar sensations.

"I told you to go slowly," Lisa warned.

"It's not that," he told her, cradling the telephone against his shoulder, "I just surprised myself."

"All right then, work your finger in deep," Lisa encouraged. "You'll have to push almost the entire length inside before you'll be able to reach the diaphragm."

Matt slowly wiggled his finger deeper into himself enjoying a very familiar environment surrounding the finger, and experiencing the totally alien sensation of being penetrated. Soon his entire finger was inside himself, and he could feel his digit being compressed by the involuntary muscle action of his vagina. Moisture increased around his finger as he probed around.

"I can feel a smooth rubbery covering on that service thingy," Matt announced.

"Cervix! ...*Vix!*" Lisa corrected. "All right, now, carefully feel for the outer edge of the diaphragm and work your fingernail underneath."

Something Borrowed

Matt followed her instructions, but the more he moved his hand, the more he felt compression around his finger, and the harder it became to concentrate on the task. It seemed as if his breasts were warming and swelling as he continued, which was very distracting. He eventually found the stiff ring surrounding the diaphragm and slipped his finger behind it.

"It's stuck in there!" Matt complained.

Lisa took a deep breath before responding. "Don't worry, sometimes the diaphragm adheres to the vaginal lining, just pull gently, and once it starts to come loose, it'll pull away easily."

Matt was unconvinced. "Are you sure? It feels really big. I'd guess three inches across! You know, like it's too big to fit out through the..."

"It'll fit," Lisa told him, succinctly. "I got it in there last night, so you can certainly get it out. You may need to fold the diaphragm in half to slide it out. The stiffening ring is springy, so you can just bend it. You haven't done this before, so you might need to use a second finger in there to help out. You'll probably find your thumb works best."

"Okay," Matt reluctantly agreed, wondering how he'd fit yet another finger inside the already cramped quarters. He slowly eased his thumb into the slick opening and reached to grab the diaphragm as it gradually slid toward the orifice. It was trickier than it seemed, and took several tries to grab the slippery item. Each attempt stimulated him a bit more as his thumb knuckle pressed against his clitoris.

"Are you getting it out?" Lisa asked anxiously.

"N ... Not ... yet ..." Matt gasped, as a distant tingle rapidly became more urgent, "But ... I ... I'm getting something else! Ohhhhhhh!" A tsunami of unimaginable pleasure collapsed over him and he began panting from the wonderful sensations that seemed to come from everywhere. This was unmistakably an orgasm! His whole body felt as though it was electrified, and Matt could imagine warm energy radiating from his pelvis. His vagina was pulsing and powerful contractions gripped his trapped fingers.

On the other end of the telephone, Lisa could tell from the sharply irregular breathing and the low ecstatic moan what obviously happened. "You turkey!" she groaned just before hanging up on Matt.

The tension began to subside after several long moments, and Matt discovered that he'd been absently working his thumb and finger in and out of himself as well as using his other hand to knead one of his swollen nipples. He had arched his back and lifted his hips completely off the couch-bed without realizing it.

"Yesssss!" he sighed, as he finally pulled the diaphragm out of himself. He'd seen women having orgasms before, particularly those orgasms he'd help to incite, and he'd always had a little curiosity about the way the opposite sex carried on, wondering if they weren't being just a little theatrical. Now that he'd felt a female orgasm for himself, he realized that there were no theatrics involved at all. If anything, he had found it difficult to restrain himself from shouting at the top of his lungs. He was still breathing deeply and he could feel the delicious echoes of his climax rippling the muscles inside him, as he lowered his hips back to the sheets. That was definitely an 'E ticket' ride!

He gradually became less distracted by his own pleasure and it was then that he noticed Denise. She was wrapped in a large bath towel, standing on the other side of the room, staring wide-eyed at him. He smiled weakly at her, wondering what she imagined upon seeing someone masturbating so openly.

"I hope you weren't getting your jollies while talking to Matt!" she snarled.

"Uh ... no," Matt explained, folding the cell-phone closed. "There's no one on the phone. I was just removing my diaphragm. See?" He smiled again, as he displayed the sopping rubber disk between his fingers.

CHAPTER SIX

Payback Time

Lisa wandered into the bathroom. She still had the erection, and it seemed to have gotten a little stronger while listening to Matt. He was such an imbecile! Couldn't he control himself? In her experience, there was absolutely nothing erotic about removing a diaphragm.

Lisa reasoned that if she couldn't pee, maybe she could get a shower while she waited for her embarrassing swelling to go down. The shoes, socks and pants were in a heap on the living room carpet; the shirt and athletic supporter on the tiled bathroom floor. In the bright light of the lavatory, she could see the details of her situation more clearly. The penis - her penis - was about seven inches long, about an inch and a half in diameter, and felt swollen and achy. Without the constraint of the jockstrap, it pointed upward at approximately a forty-five degree angle.

Lisa's boyfriends, at least the ones she'd seen undressed, were uncircumcised, but apparently the foreskin on this penis had been removed at some point, probably when Matt was an infant. Ever since reading about circumcision in her high-school health classes, Lisa had wondered if it was painful for the baby boys, but realized that she couldn't remember anything about the adenoid operation she'd had when she was four, so Matt probably didn't remember any pain from his first few days after birth. The circumcision made the little collar of skin under the tip of this penis a lot looser and less imposing than the same thicker folds of skin on Lisa's boyfriends.

Her scrotum was leathery, wrinkled, very hairy, and there seemed to be two enormous oily lima beans sliding around inside the sac as she inspected herself. She firmly squeezed the pouch between two fingers and the immediate twinge of pain told her that men weren't kidding when they said they were very tender there. She would certainly be a little more careful around her boyfriends from now on ... if she ever turned female again.

When she was a little girl, Lisa had idle curiosity about what it felt like to be a boy, and now she was finding out. So far, it wasn't very enjoyable. First of all there was the stiff thing pointing outward from her groin, making her uncomfortable in pants or underwear. Then there were the testicles getting in the way when she walked. They just seemed to be in the wrong place hanging there between her legs! She considered the times during her period when she longed to be rid of her uterus and ovaries. She'd come close to wishing that she'd been born a boy. She knew now that being male wasn't a picnic either. This was worse in a way, because a menstrual flow was only a few days a month, and for men these genitals were a full-time thing! How did guys put up with this nuisance!?

Lisa ran the water in the shower. She wanted a hot shower, regardless of the expediency of a cold one in eliminating her undesired tumescence. She stepped into the warm spray and was caressed by the water cascading over her skin. She soaped up her hands and began to wash her chest. It was eerie to rub that region and encounter hair and muscles instead of the more familiar smooth soft lumps! Lisa's adult breasts had been an integral part of her for almost half her life, and now her new nipples were so tiny and so insensitive! Maybe, she reasoned, the loss of nipple sensation was compensation for the heightened tenderness in the testicles. She remembered massaging her boyfriend's breasts, hoping they would enjoy the great feelings she enjoyed when they had given attention to her chest. She was now aware that men did not feel the same sensations that women did ... a realization that was a little disappointing.

As she washed, Lisa had to deal with a lot of hair other than on her head. This body had hair on the chest, thighs, calves and arms. There was a considerable amount in the armpits as well. Lisa had not had visible hair under her arms in years, since she'd started shaving there. The hair surrounding her steadfast erection was wiry and thicker than the downy triangle that had graced her female pelvis.

She soaped up her abdomen, and reluctantly washed her penis. As she ran a soapy hand up and down the length of the rigid organ, she realized how good it felt to do that. She continued the action, closed her eyes and enjoyed the feeling of her own touch. She realized that it took a lot more stimulation to enjoy herself than she first imagined would be necessary, which probably explained why her boyfriends always seemed to ask for more intense pressure during foreplay. She liked her thumb and forefinger concentrating on the sensitive rim of skin at the head of her

Something Borrowed

penis, as her hand worked up and down the shaft. The closest comparison she could make to her old anatomy was that the penis was like a clitoris on a thick stalk, much like those science-fiction monsters with eyes, ears, noses, lips or other organs at the end of long protrusions from their bodies. It seemed weird to her rational mind that the part of her new body that corresponded to a clitoris would be at the end of a seven-inch shaft, but in another way, the sensations seemed natural.

As her pelvic stimulation continued, Lisa felt her heart-rate speed up. A tightening seemed to come from behind her testicles. She opened her eyes as she felt the first pulse of semen pushing through herself. A second later, a string of gooey white stuff shot from the end of her penis and was washed down the drain. She continued her rubbing and was able to coax forth another three or four weaker spurts before she felt it necessary to stop. She discovered that she hadn't breathed during the orgasm, and slowly exhaled through her pursed lips.

That was fantastic! It was not like a woman's whole-body orgasm as she was used to, but the concentrated sensations in that small region of her new body were so much more intense! Now she understood why guys seemed to want sex all of the time. She could feel her facial features pulled into an involuntary smile. In addition, Lisa was delighted that her erection was finally dissolving.

"Wow!" she enthused. "That was a lot more fun than just waiting for the stiffness to go away on it's own!"

Now that the big problem was solved, Lisa continued her shower. After she washed and rinsed her hair, she stepped out of the tub to towel off. Her hair dried quickly, and it was obvious that there would be no tangles to brush out with such short locks.

Lisa glanced at her midsection. Her limp penis was not quite as majestic in its flaccid state. The organ was now about an inch in diameter and at most two inches long, since much of it seemed to have retracted inside her groin. The area was a little tender and still fairly sensitive, but the urge to urinate was becoming stronger.

She sat on the toilet and was pushing her male appendage toward the bowl when she realized something. "I don't have to sit to do this now!"

Lisa quickly stood and straddled the toilet. "I've always wanted to be able to do this!" she shouted to no one. She lifted the seat, gingerly

grabbed the stub of her penis and pointed it toward the toilet as she relaxed her bladder muscles and the urine spilled from her. Finally!

She was amazed at the way the liquid issued from the end of the member in what appeared to be a tight spiraling stream. She'd never watched herself urinate when she was female, but it had always felt more like a spray than a stream. She made a mental note to check out what her female emission was like the next time she got a chance. Thirty seconds later she had emptied her bladder but a slow parade of droplets continued to issue forth.

"Oh, Matt! I should have asked you how to shut this thing off!" she wailed, as she stood unable to move away from the toilet.

Eventually the 'leakage' ceased, and she stepped to the washbasin to see her beaming face in the bathroom mirror. She'd done it: her first potty-break as a guy, and she was proud of herself. Being male was a snap!

Lisa grabbed the underarm deodorant stick on the countertop near the sink and she rubbed some of the stuff on her hairy armpits. This deodorant had a stronger smell than the delicate scent she was used to, but she was aware that the less subtle scent was needed to cover the overall stronger male odor that her new body exuded.

There was a lot that was stronger, now, she remembered. Lisa clenched her fingers into a powerful fist and felt the tension of her arm muscles. She'd never been able to feel the effect of her own grip so strongly. As she held the fist, her other hand sought out the biceps, and she was intrigued by the incredibly solid bulge shaping her upper arm. Her old female muscles were always kind of puny and soft in comparison. She turned to look in the reflection and upon seeing herself posing with the bulging arm decided that she was now a somewhat attractive guy. If she'd found Matt before Denise had, she could have really fallen for someone who looked like him. Of course, she reminded herself, he'd already demonstrated his insensitivity more than once this morning. And at this point, being infatuated with the image in the mirror was an exercise in narcissism.

She could feel a slight patina building up on her teeth, so she searched for the toothbrush. The toothpaste was in the medicine chest, right next to the shaving cream.

Something Borrowed

Lisa hadn't thought about shaving. She examined her more rugged face as she brushed her teeth and realized that this face was going to need shaving pretty soon. The mustache hid the upper lip, but her chin, cheeks and neck were already covered with pale stubble. She ran her hand across her cheek and felt the rough whiskers scratching against her palm. No doubt, either she or Matt would have to shave before the wedding, and who knew when they'd get their bodies unswapped? Maybe she should do him a favor and shave now, just in case they didn't return to their normal bodies until the last minute.

Lisa covered her face in shaving cream and located Matt's safety razor. She carefully pulled the blade across her skin and could feel the tug of whiskers being removed. She eventually had her neck, chin and cheeks fairly smooth, and had only nicked herself once. She tried to get in close to the mustache on the right and ended up shaving off the end of the mustache itself. It wasn't a problem, she realized. She'd just shave off a little from the other side to balance things out. She transferred the razor to her right hand and pulled it against the mustache on the left side of her face. Ooops! She compensated a bit too much, and now needed to take a little more off the right side.

She alternated back and forth, and eventually had shaved off so much from both sides that the leftover looked like something from a Charlie Chaplin movie, so she just shaved off the entire mustache leaving her upper lip bare. Where the whiskers had been was tingly and slightly irritated skin, but her face looked so much younger and better without the mustache at all!

She toweled off the remaining dabs of the shaving cream and put the razor away just before she heard the apartment door squeak open.

"Yo! Matt! You awake yet, buddy!?" A male voice shouted.

Lisa panicked. Someone was here to visit Matt! And here she was standing in the bathroom naked! Lisa grabbed the towel and tried to obscure the critical parts of her anatomy.

Tom Bascome's face appeared at the bathroom door. Lisa remembered quickly that Tom was the best man.

"There you are!" he boomed. "Hey, you don't look too bad after a night of heavy drinking!"

Tom stepped to the toilet and unzipped his fly. Before long, he was relieving himself. Lisa was still holding the towel in front of her naked

body and trying hard not to stare at Tom's penis. Tom was watching her intently and she wondered what was attracting his interest. Had Tom noticed her eying his cock? She hoped not. Perhaps there was something in her stance or behavior giving her true identity away.

Tom suddenly smiled broadly and laughed. "Now I know what's different! You shaved off your mustache!"

Of course! Why wouldn't he stare at that?

"Uh, yeah," Lisa replied, blushing, yet trying to sound nonchalant and a bit macho. Was this the way a guy would speak to another? How should she act? Was it even proper for her to be standing here while this guy emptied his bladder?

"What's with the towel?" Tom chided. "You getting modest on me? It's just us men here! Hey, we've seen each other in our birthday suits hundreds of times at the racquet club! Although, you really ought to get dressed! We still have a lot of stuff to do before the wedding!"

Lisa swallowed audibly, upon hearing the news that she was going to be busy. She hadn't counted on that. She had intended to use the hours before the wedding to investigate how she and Matt got into each other's bodies. She could only hope that Matt would use his free time wisely to figure something out on his own somehow.

"What kind of things do we have to do?" Lisa asked, innocently. With luck, she would be finished with the chores quickly.

"Maybe you really are hungover after all!" Tom laughed. He shook the last few drops of urine out of his pecker and quickly folded it back into the pants. "I thought surely that you'd remember that we have to pick up the tuxedos, get the rings at the jewelers, and get the reservations and airline tickets for your honeymoon. Denise's folks called me and asked me to play taxi for a few folks who are flying in this morning for the wedding... so we're going to be very, very busy until we get you married."

"Great," Lisa sighed with thinly veiled disappointment. She collected her shirt and jockstrap off the floor and headed for the bedroom. The towel and dirty clothes went into a hamper. She opened Matt's underwear drawer and selected a clean supporter. There were five or six of the things in the drawer, and all were identical. The guy had no imagination! These things were so plain, so ugly, and so uncomfortable! Lisa stepped into the garment and pulled the waistband upward. She had to admit that it did provide a lot of support, but was not very pretty to look

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at... but then the items needing the support were awfully ugly, too. Support could be fun, Lisa knew: wearing a bra, particularly a lacy one, sometimes made you feel sexy. In contrast, this supporter just made her itchy.

Matt's closet had lots of different styles of pants, and some sport shirts. Lisa selected a burgundy open neck sport shirt and a pair of black slacks. The combination was not very casual, but far from dressy. She quickly slipped into the clothes and returned to the bureau for socks. Once again, Matt was apparently the definition of conformity; having two dozen identical pairs of black socks. Lisa could see a practical side to the choice in hosiery, he didn't have to worry about losing a sock in the wash or spend any time finding the mate for each one. She pulled a pair of the socks over her feet, and ran her hands over her very hairy calves. This was quite a difference from her smooth, frequently shaved and infrequently waxed female legs; she could feel the topology of the sturdier muscles here and in her thighs. She felt almost invincible, like she could do anything! If only there was an opportunity to experience the benefits of a strong body for herself; to try things like weight lifting or bike racing. She had no way to determine how much time was available to do any of these things. For all she knew, any moment she could find herself returned to her proper body as Matt reclaimed his.

Matt's shoes were in the living room where she'd dropped them when she came into his apartment. The discarded trousers on the floor near the shoes held Matt's wallet and keys. Lisa momentarily felt lost without her purse, but rationalized that she wouldn't need the makeup or other items in there as long as she was male. She also realized that her face now matched the one on the drivers license photo in this wallet rather than the license in her purse. She would have to remember that for the time being she not only looked like someone else ... to everyone except Matt and herself, she actually was someone else!

She found a comb in a pocket of the trousers on the floor, and took a moment to pull the comb through her hair. This body had such short hair that all she really did was tidy it up a bit. There was no need to shape or style the short bristles. A few swipes of the comb and she was done. There had been so many times over the years that she'd hated her long hair, especially when it got windblown and snarled. Sure, a woman could have a short hairstyle, but long hair looked prettier and her boyfriends liked to run their fingers through it, although it was a lot of work to shampoo, condition, cut, style, dry, and color. She smiled at how easy

things were now. It might not be so bad being a guy for the entire morning!

Tom came out of the kitchenette sipping a glass of juice. "I hope you don't mind," he apologized, "I took some grapefruit juice."

"No, I don't mind," Lisa said, and thought to herself: "Of course I don't mind. It's not even my apartment!"

"We've got a few minutes," Tom announced. "The stores we need aren't open for a while. I got here early thinking I was going to have to wake you up, then sober you up, and dress you. I've got to say that I would never have guessed how drunk you were last night from the way you look now."

Lisa took a quick self-inventory. She wasn't tired, nauseous, or headachy like normal whenever she got drunk. Maybe whatever had swapped Matt with her had also miraculously erased his hangover. Besides, she expected to wake up with a mild hangover of her own from her daiquiris at the Throbbin's Nest, and that hadn't happened either. Well! There was a huge benefit to this sex-exchange thing, regardless of what caused it. Lisa wasn't sure how many folks would agree to change their gender just to cure a hangover, though.

"What did you think of that fox who's staying with Denise?" Tom asked.

"Fox?" Lisa wondered.

"Yeah! You know. One of the bridesmaids. Lisa!" Tom was smiling a devious grin. "She was really very sexy. I sure would love to do the horizontal tango with her!"

"You would?" Lisa asked. She had no idea that he was interested in her, and hoped Tom didn't see her face redden with embarrassment.

"Hey! You're blushing!" Tom noticed. "Does that mean you had naughty thoughts about her yourself? You dog! You're going to be married in a few hours, but at least your bride is almost the spitting image of Lisa! You can fantasize all you want then. I wonder if anyone ever noticed how much those two chicks look alike?"

"Oh, I'm sure someone has noticed," Lisa said.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Girl Pro Tempore

Matt was leaning against the doorway of Denise's bedroom, where he had just watched her getting dressed. Denise hadn't seemed modest at all around him while she stood completely naked in front of the closet looking for the right clothes. Whenever Matt had been with her before, except when they'd actually been in the bed, Denise had always worn a robe or underwear or something. She seemed more casual around another woman than she ever was around her fiancé.

"I bet you're just tied up in knots," Matt told Denise as she sat at her vanity selecting jewelry. "I mean, the wedding is less than eight hours away and all you can do is sit and wait until it's time to get ready."

Denise looked up from her jewelry box and put her hands to one ear. When her hands came away, there was a tiny silver ball perched on the lobe. She performed the same trick with the other ear. "There won't be time to get nervous," she explained. "I told you yesterday that I have some surprises."

Matt was at a total loss. The real Lisa was, of course, the one that had heard about the surprises. Besides, whenever Denise had used that tone with him, it meant she wanted him to accompany her somewhere he didn't want to go.

"Surprises?" he asked tentatively.

"Close your ey-eyes," Denise sing-songed.

Matt did as he was instructed, figuring that whatever it was, it couldn't be too bad. He could hear Denise rustling some bags in her closet. He started to slit open his eyes, but Denise noticed and sternly warned, "Closed means closed!"

After another twenty seconds of crinkling paper and plastic, he heard her walk up to him and say, "You can open your eyes, now!"

Matt was a little apprehensive, but opened his eyes anyway. Denise was standing a few feet away holding a bright pink nylon gym bag in her outstretched arms. A huge bow was tied around the handle of the bag.

"Well?" Denise asked with a broad smile, when Matt didn't react.

"Oh!" said Matt, catching on quickly. "For me?"

"Yes!" Denise squealed. "Here!" She pushed the bag into Matt's hands. It felt heavy as he tried to support its weight at arm's length.

"Oh, Denise, you didn't have to do this," he told her.

Denise scowled briefly. "You haven't looked inside!"

"There's more?" Matt was very uncomfortable accepting a gift meant for someone else, and now he was being forced to go even further.

"Of course! Open it and see!" Denise urged, expectantly.

Matt carefully pulled the zipper and looked into the bag. It was filled with all sorts of things. He lifted them out, one by one.

A dark blue almost black leotard was the first item. Denise was beaming with anticipation and happiness as it came forth. "I bought the leotard with hi-cut leg openings, because it will show off your legs," she explained. "It'll make 'em look longer."

"Do you mean it'll make the legs appear lengthier or that it will make men stare at me more?" Matt asked, trying to play along. Denise didn't answer, but Matt could tell by her giggle and sly smile which supposition was correct. He pulled a pair of sky blue tights out of the bag.

"When you're feeling a bit less like showing off your bare legs, you can wear the tights," Denise said.

Next came a huge pair of thick woolen-knit tubes.

"I figured you could use another pair of leg warmers," Denise commented. "If you're still using the ones you had in college, they must be getting fairly ragged by now."

"You can't have too many leg warmers," Matt said offhandedly. Deeper in the bag he found a sports bra, socks, and a pair of hi-sider satin briefs.

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"I got the underwear to go with the leotard," Denise explained. "Otherwise it shows."

"I see," Matt said holding the panties out, and looking at the way the leg openings went from the crotch panel all the way up to the narrow waistband, making the front and back of the garment into a tall V-shape.

"There's still more in there, so keep digging, girl!" Denise urged

Matt extended his arm deep into the bag and found a pair of very expensive athletic footwear.

"Since you and I wear the same sizes, it was so easy to shop for you!" Denise told him.

"Gee," Matt gulped, as he pulled the items from the bag. It felt so wrong to be pretending to be someone he wasn't. It was like opening someone else's Christmas presents.

"Keep going! There's even more in there!" Denise said.

Matt reached in and found a large pouch of toiletries. Through the transparent shell of the pouch, he could see a portable hair drier, a woman's electric shaver, brushes, combs, deodorant, shampoo and powder. Matt turned the pouch over and found an envelope taped in place.

"Well? Are you going to open it?" Denise prodded.

Matt pulled the envelope open to discover a card that announced a one-year gift membership to the Marvel Health Spas.

"I asked about the locations, and they told me there was one right in Kerrville near the preschool," Denise explained. "I figure, on those days when the kiddies had you all tense and stressed out, you can trot down to the gym after school and work out to relieve some stress."

Matt put on a sincere face and turned to Denise. "This is very generous, but ..."

"Now you listen to me, Miss Elisabeth Althea Purcell! You've been my best friend for five years, and I wanted to do this for you." Denise threw her arms around Matt and hugged him very tightly.

Matt found himself distracted. Elisabeth Althea? Who names their child Althea? Of course, his middle name wasn't much better: Leon. Matthew Leon Stevens. His parents thought it sounded nice. He hated it.

"I don't know how to thank you," Matt told Denise. He forced a smile and hugged her in return. He noticed how Denise had placed her boobs in relation to his so that she could hug him tightly, with one of her breasts between his, and one of his between hers. Matt made a mental note about this in case he ended up hugging any other women while he was in this body.

"Nonsense! You are thanking me by just being here on my wedding day! Besides, I want you to come with me to the health club this morning. One last time together as the twins," Denise concluded.

Denise's health club? This morning? While a woman? "No ... I couldn't," Matt hedged.

Denise chirped, "We have nothing to do until it's time to dress for the wedding, and that'll be one o'clock or so. I'm still feeling my hangover, and I figured that maybe I could sweat the darn thing away, so get yourself together!" Denise went to her closet and pulled out a gym bag identical to the bag she gave to Matt except that it had no gift-bow on it.

"When I bought your gift, I bought a set of identical things for myself," she told Matt.

"Are you sure you want to do this? ... you know ... exercise and all on your wedding day?" Matt asked. He'd hoped Denise would relax all morning so that he could spend the day working on the puzzle of how he became a woman and how to get his male body again. Now it looked like Lisa would be figuring it out on her own if Denise dragged him to the health club for a lengthy workout.

"I'm sure. Besides zapping the hangover, it might make my wedding gown fit a little less uncomfortably around here," Denise gestured under her ribs. "Oh ... and ditch the tee-shirt, Lisa. I want you to wear a button-front blouse to the gym."

Matt thought the tee shirt looked okay. Yes, his nipples were a bit more prominent through the fabric than was perfectly decent, but he'd seen lots of women dressed like that. At least if he wore a T-shirt, he would be dressed like a guy, even though he no longer looked much like one.

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"A button-front blouse?" Matt asked, "Why?"

Denise answered with a soft voice. "It's a secret."

"Another surprise?" Matt asked cautiously.

"Might be," came Denise's sly response.

Matt went to Lisa's suitcase in the living room, and looked through it, finding a bright yellow silk blouse that buttoned up the front.

"Will this one do?" he asked, holding the blouse out for Denise's approval. This was standard operating procedure for Matt. Denise often chose his shirts, ties and slacks when they were going out together. She seemed to have an opinion about everything he wore, and that prerogative apparently wasn't limited to dressing her husband-to-be.

Denise glanced at the blouse and mentally compared it to the cutoff denim shorts Matt wore.

"That'll look great!" Denise responded brightly.

Matt glanced into the suitcase and saw a brassiere lying near where the blouse had been.

"Denise? Do you think I should wear a bra?" Please say no. Please say no. Pretty please.

Denise didn't look up from where she was tying her shoes. "Nah! Just go without. I'm not wearing one."

Matt breathed a sigh of relief. He knew a lot about how to get a woman out of her bra, but he had no idea of how to put one on. He was sure that if Denise saw him struggling with something Lisa wore almost all of the time, she would start to wonder what was going on, and with his headache, he was not prepared for any fast thinking or fast talking.

He slipped off the tee shirt and buttoned the blouse around himself. He stuffed the bottom of the blouse into the waistband of his shorts and pulled his hair out of the collar.

Denise stood at the apartment door, with her sunglasses on the top of her head and her gym bag in hand. She was jingling the apartment keys.

"Let's go, Slowpoke! Grab your purse and gym bag and let's get out of here!" she urged.

A purse. Lisa's purse. Matt had never had to carry a purse before. He found the cloth and leather accessory in the corner of the living room where the sandals had been. He wondered if he looked natural carrying the thing. He certainly felt ill at ease, and more than a bit off-balance. It was a whole lot easier just to jam a wallet into your pocket and go. Now he had to carry this thing around in his hand or sling the strap over his shoulder. It felt so unnatural to carry a purse for the first time in his life. He lifted the brand-new gym-bag and followed Denise out into the hallway.

Matt looked upward to the third-floor landing and wondered if Lisa was up in his apartment trying to figure out what happened to herself and him. He'd honestly planned to slip away and brainstorm with her on the problem, but Denise was making that impossible.

He followed Denise down to the apartment building exit.

"Stay here," Denise said as they emerged into the warm June morning. "I'm parked way out in the back, and it'll take a while for me to bring the car around."

Matt stood nervously rocking on his heels as Denise walked swiftly away. Although he normally had no problem leaning forward and back that way, his new center of gravity made him unsteady, and the sandals he now wore were not designed for that type of motion anyway.

Denise had disappeared around the corner of the building when the entranceway doors behind Matt opened noisily.

"Hey! Is that Lisa?" A deep voice asked.

Matt recognized Tom Bascome's voice, and he turned around. Tom and Lisa were emerging from the door. Lisa had changed clothes, but there was something else different that Matt couldn't quickly place.

It was the mustache! She'd shaved off the mustache! Matt was disappointed. It had taken years to get the mustache the way he liked it, and suddenly it was gone.

"Hi, Lisa," Tom said to Matt. Tom noticed Matt's grimace about the missing mustache on his former body, but mistook the reason for Matt's sour expression. "Why so sad? You should be happy for your friend Denise!"

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Tom grabbed Matt playfully around the waist and hugged him. Matt wasn't certain, but he thought he felt Tom's fingers trail under his breast as he removed his hand. That joker was trying to sneak a quick feel!

"Hi, Tom." Matt said emotionlessly.

Tom stepped back from Matt a pace. "Why, Lisa! I didn't think you'd remember my name! You hardly spoke a word to me last night at the rehearsal and dinner."

"Yeah ... well, ..." Matt fudged, realizing too late that Lisa might not remember Tom's name, or perhaps not have been introduced to him.

"Aw, leave her alone," Lisa said stepping to Matt's defense. "Not everyone is happy on a wedding day, right ... *Lisa*?"

Now that Lisa was standing closer, Matt could more clearly see the place where the mustache had once been. The skin was smooth and slightly pinker than the surrounding area .

"The mustache ..." Matt said, his voice trailing off.

"There was a horrible accident with the razor this morning," Lisa joked, "and the mustache was one of the casualties."

Tom sneered, "Just goes to show you shouldn't shave when you're drunk or hungover."

Matt raised an index finger to Lisa's nose. "May I touch your lip?" he asked her.

"Hey, whatever floats your boat!" Tom interjected.

"Sure," Lisa agreed, easily. "Go ahead." She could see the disappointment in Matt's eyes. Apparently he'd liked having the mustache. Letting him investigate her handiwork was the least she could do.

Matt reached up and ran his finger over the smooth skin under her nose. She had shaved closely, and the skin was very silky and moist there. Just before he pulled the finger away, Lisa gave the fingertip a quick playful kiss.

Tom pretended not to notice. "So, what is a nice girl like you doing standing out here all alone?" he asked Matt.

"Denise is taking me to her health club," Matt explained, displaying the new gym bag. He was trying very hard not to look depressed with the situation. "She's gone out to the lot in back to get the car."

Lisa looked at Matt with resignation. "Tom and I have to go out, too. We're going to pick up the tuxes, the rings, and airline tickets and even chauffeur a few relatives around this morning. We'll probably be gone until just before the wedding."

Matt had forgotten completely about the things that he needed to do before the wedding. This meant that neither Lisa nor he would have time to work on the body-swap problem at all! Matt reasoned that if Lisa were not around, he probably wouldn't have been able to come up with a solution to the problem on his own, anyway. Two heads were always better than one.

As Tom and Lisa walked to Tom's rusty, trusty El Dorado, Lisa turned toward Matt and silently shrugged to show her helplessness in the situation. She wanted to stay and figure this out as badly as Matt did.

Tom and Lisa zoomed out of the parking lot just as Denise's car pulled up to the entranceway. Matt put his gym bag in the back seat with Denise's bag and got into the front passenger seat.

"Was that the best man driving away just now?" Denise asked.

"Yeah," Matt told her. "Tom and L ... er ... Matt are off to pick up their tuxes and the rings and stuff."

"Oh," Denise replied, vaguely disappointed.

Matt pulled the door closed and dragged the seatbelt across his body. The shoulder harness uncomfortably pressed into Matt's breast. He squirmed trying to find a better position under the strap.

"These things just cut right into you don't they?" Denise commented.

"I never noticed until today," Matt told her honestly. He tugged at the belt until it felt less irritating. Standing beside Lisa a few moments ago had reminded him how much height he'd lost since last night. He noticed now that he could not see as far above the dash in Denise's car as he normally could. There were so many differences beside the obvious bits between the legs and on his chest to contend with.

Denise began driving toward the health club. Matt had once been a member at the same club, going several times a week for weight training

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and a couple of rounds of racquetball. He'd been so busy at the architectural firm in recent months that he had simply let the membership lapse. He still did a bit of exercise at home and jogged in the neighborhood streets one or two days a week. He looked down at the body he'd inherited overnight and realized that the muscles on this body were not as developed as his male ones had been. Matt seemed to feel fit, though, and he supposed that with the lower body weight, this new body would probably be able to pace his male body on a five kilometer run. For a woman, this body was probably fairly healthy. He glanced at his fiancée and recalled that Denise kept her body in similar condition. She was a frequent visitor to the health spa, although Matt had no idea what she did there. Today he was likely to discover the answer.

Denise's car pulled up to a traffic light where a shirtless muscular guy about Matt's age sat astride a bicycle on the curb waiting for the crossing light.

"Hey, good looking!" Denise shouted out the window. She waved at the fellow when he turned in her direction.

Matt couldn't believe how Denise was behaving. She was air-kissing and batting her eyes at the guy as he crossed the street in front of her car.

"Denise!" Matt exclaimed.

Denise turned to look at her passenger. "What?"

"Do you know that guy?" Matt asked, half-expecting that it might be someone from her company.

Denise shrugged. "No ... Why?"

Matt was flustered. "Then, what are you doing?"

"Sheesh! Just a little harmless flirting," she explained, as if speaking to a developmentally limited child.

"But aren't you supposed to be getting married in a few hours?" Matt reminded her.

Denise looked puzzled. "Yeah? What's your point?"

"Married women don't do that sort of thing." Or at least Matt hoped that Denise wouldn't.

"Who says?" Denise challenged, keeping her eyes on the bicycle guy as he reached the other side of the street. "What Matt doesn't know won't hurt him."

Matt didn't have a good answer, so he just relented.

"Nice buns," Denise said simply, as the light changed and she accelerated away.

"I guess he was okay," Matt said unenthusiastically, realizing he should say something, since Lisa might find that fellow attractive too.

"Okay? You guess? Hey! Where's the old Lisa?" Denise wondered.

"The old Lisa?" Matt asked, suddenly aware that he might have acted inappropriately again.

"Yeah! The Lisa that would have been out of the car like a shot, groping the guy and offering to bear his children," Denise explained.

Matt blushed at the mental picture. He'd never pictured Lisa that way. He also tried to picture himself coming on to a guy and shivered at the thought.

"I ... I don't ... I'm not ..." Matt tried to wish away the image in his mind.

"I'm kidding, of course," Denise said, flashing a grin. "I've never seen you chatting up a boy or flirting. You were always the one that had to be set up on dates and dragged kicking and screaming to bed with a guy. I think it was all of those years you spent in Sunday school. You're a regular Snow White."

Matt smiled at what Denise said about himself; that is, about Lisa. Apparently Denise considered Lisa relatively chaste. It made him feel even worse about how he'd inadvertently gotten into bed and had sex with her. A rogue thought crossed Matt's mind and he chuckled slightly, wondering if his current predicament was God's way of punishing him for the indiscretion. That idea was simply nonsense. If this was punishment, Lisa was in a similar situation, and she had been an unwitting if not unwilling participant. No, there would be no Biblical solution here, although Matt did say a little prayer for guidance, and another prayer for penance. He made up his mind to apologize more fully to Lisa the next time he saw her, and to go to church more often, just in case.

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Denise pulled her car into the health club parking lot. Due to the early hour, there were few other cars there, but she parked near the street rather than near the building entrance.

Marvel Health Spas were franchised in little towns just about everywhere. The one here in Asherton Heights had been open a relatively long four years. Matt had passed the place hundreds of times since his membership lapsed and from the small number of cars in the parking lot this morning, he presumed that the health craze was waning. After all, how long can someone think that sweating is attractive?

Denise led the way into the club. Matt followed closely behind, trying to mimic her walk. He remembered how Lisa's gait in the male body had looked so strange. Once he figured out the rhythm, he had little problem swaying his hips like Denise. He hoped his stride didn't look forced or artificial.

The club was virtually silent. There were a few of the club attendants bustling around, but Matt didn't see any other members.

"Hi! Good morning, Denise!" The relentlessly perky young woman behind the checkin desk chirped.

"Hi!" Denise returned. "Are we the first guests here?"

"You sure are, but don't worry ... in fifteen minutes, there'll be a whole bunch of people coming in to work out."

"Good!" Denise exclaimed, as she signed in. "I wanted to get in an aerobics class as early as I could."

A look of familiarity crossed the woman's features. "You're getting married today, aren't you?"

"About four in the afternoon," answered Denise, smiling broadly. "This is Lisa ... one of my bridesmaids." Denise reached over and pulled Matt to the desk.

"Hi Lisa!" the woman at the desk trilled.

"Hi," Matt said quietly, lifting his hand in a slight wave.

Denise continued, "I gave Lisa a one-year gift membership." Matt began digging in the gym bag for the membership card.

"Don't bother looking for the card, Lisa. I remember seeing the paperwork," the woman behind the desk commented.

"C'mon, Lisa," Denise suggested, offering the pen, "sign in already."

Matt took the pen and froze. He had no idea of what Lisa's signature looked like, and even if he did, there was a better than even chance he'd never make it look feminine enough.

"Just sign your name!" prodded Denise. "Lisa starts with 'L'."

Matt took a deep breath and scrawled as flowery and delicate a signature as he could manage. To his eye, the indistinct scribble looked too forced, and entirely too angular and masculine. Fortunately for Matt, Denise was too keyed up to scrutinize what he'd written, and the other woman had no idea what Lisa's signature looked like anyway. Matt looked up to see the woman staring at him intently. Matt blushed self-consciously.

"Lisa? Has anyone ever told you how similar you and Denise look?" the checkin person asked.

Denise didn't wait for her companion to answer the woman and broke in: "All of the time! We roomed together at Cromwell College, and after four years, we were even starting to answer to each other's names!"

"You were?" the woman asked incredulously. "I don't think I'd ever get used to hearing people call me anything but Heather."

Matt had to agree with Heather. He was not yet used to being called Lisa. He hoped he wouldn't have to deal with that problem for the rest of his life. He wanted to hear people refer to him as Matt again.

"Well, have a good time here today!" the young woman bubbled. "And Lisa? Welcome to Marvel Health Clubs!"

Heather's words were still echoing in the lobby as Denise headed for the locker rooms, practically towing Matt along with her. She pulled him through the padded door into a part of the club Matt had never visited during his many trips there.

Terra Incognita. The women's locker room. As Matt paused to look around, he realized that the name and reputation of a locker room certainly didn't fit this place. The men's locker room was smelly, dingy, and almost rough-hewn in decor. This place was bright and cheery, with colorful pastel benches and lockers. It smelled of mildew and faint

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perfume, but the thick odor of sweat and overly used socks was missing entirely. Matt decided that if the men's side had been this nice, he might have come to the club more often.

Denise went to the lockers nearest the showers, opened one of the metal doors, put her purse inside and dropped her gym bag on the bench.

"The locker next to mine is available," Denise offered.

Matt opened the adjacent door and set his bag on the bench. He carefully put his purse into the locker. Denise was already unbuttoning her blouse.

"You know, Lisa, you've been acting oddly this morning," Denise observed.

"Oddly?" Matt asked, warily. Denise had obviously noticed his discomfort pretending to be Lisa, in spite of his best efforts to the contrary.

Denise frowned. "Certainly stranger than normal. It's like you're in a fog. My gosh! It's not the wedding is it?"

"The wedding?" Matt responded. "No."

"You're sure?" Denise asked, as she stepped out of her shorts. "You know there's nothing to be sad or upset about! Just because I'm getting married doesn't mean we still can't be best friends! Matt and I are looking for a larger apartment but we're not moving away. And if you're worried about yourself, don't be! You are bright, sweet, and cute, and a really fun person. You're just in a slump right now. You'll find someone right for you... I know it. And when you do, I promise to come to your wedding. Honest!"

"That's not it," Matt told her. "I've just been feeling a little weird since I woke up." Matt had no intention of telling Denise just how weird he felt or whose consciousness was looking out through these eyes.

"It's those darn Throbbin's Nest daiquiris," Denise complained. "I feel the same way. From the strength of my hangover, you'd swear I was ordering doubles or something all night."

"Maybe that's it," Matt conceded. In truth, he had felt awful since waking up, and apparently Lisa had imbibed enough at the bar last night to feel it this morning. Matt wondered how susceptible this body was to the effects of alcohol. In his normal male body, he could drink a tray of

daiquiris without any affect. Lisa probably hadn't had more than one or two of the rum concoctions. However, she wasn't the one battling a hangover. Matt had carefully avoided drinking too much at the bachelor party but his abstinence served only to give his alter ego a clear head.

Denise was by now completely naked and standing by her locker, stretching. "Are you going to stand there all day or are you going to get undressed?" she asked.

Matt looked down at himself, and realized that he hadn't even started unbuttoning his shirt ... er ... blouse. There were a few more women filtering into the locker room, now, and he recognized that if he didn't hurry, he was going to be undressing in front of all of them. Females like Lisa and Denise might not mind being in a room full of undressed women, but he was starting to feel uneasy. He quickly unfastened the buttons and pulled the silk blouse off. The air in the locker room was cool enough to make his nipples stand at attention, and for goose bumps to form on the surface of his breasts. It seemed so strange to have these large lumps on his chest, where he'd formerly had only moderately developed pectorals. He carefully hung the blouse in the locker.

He unbuttoned the fly on the shorts and slid them to the floor. Denise was stepping into her exercise briefs by now, and pulling them up her long legs. Matt paused to admire his fiancée as she adjusted the panties at her crotch. She was so sexy in underwear like that. The sight of Denise's sensual body was stirring his arousal, but the customary erection was nowhere to be seen. Instead, he could feel a swelling around his vulva and thought he could sense a building moisture inside himself. He'd read enough erotic fiction on internet newsgroups to know a bit about female physiology, but he'd taken most of the descriptions with a grain of salt, not only from knowing the inclination of the authors to exaggerate and even fabricate sexual feelings but from sensations he'd already experienced himself since awakening. Regardless of his skepticism, what he was experiencing right now wasn't much different than what he'd read.

Matt slid his slightly damp panties down his legs and threw the underwear into his locker. He unzipped his gym bag and attempted to catch up with Denise, who was by now pulling her athletic bra over her head. He quickly stepped into briefs like those Denise wore, and pulled them up over his hips. The leg holes in this underwear were long ovals that came clear up to a thin waistband. He had a fairly good idea of what

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the hi-sider briefs looked like on him from what he could see of Denise. Without a mirror handy, it was nice to have a body-double close-by.

Matt pulled his sports bra on over his head. This was much less complicated than a regular bra, and had no snaps or hooks. The tight garment compressed his boobs against his chest, and made him look considerably less busty, almost boyish. If he was fated to be a woman from now on, he might just wear one of these all of the time and try to pass for a somewhat effeminate man. He figured that he could cut his hair really short, maybe workout a lot to build muscles and adopt a relatively butch attitude. His sweet voice would probably give him away, but he decided it might be worth a try. Matt continued to hope this situation wasn't permanent but it did not seem to be going away by itself. Maybe he could get a sex-change operation. Matt inwardly chuckled at the thought that one of those operations on him would actually be sexual restoration surgery.

Both Matt and Denise put on their leotards without wearing tights.

"This leotard feels wicked sexy!" Denise giggled.

Matt giggled too. He was taken aback slightly by the sound of his own laughter. He no longer had a hearty chortle, but instead produced a twittering titter with kind of a musical lilt. He sounded like a little girl. He listened carefully to Denise, and realized that her giggle sounded very unlike someone her age. Matt supposed that a woman might grow up but her laugh never did. He liked the way his giggling made him feel. Light. Carefree. Happy.

"You look wicked sexy!" he told Denise, as he admired the cut of the outfit.

"So do you, girl! So do you!" Denise remarked. She gestured for Matt's attention. "Lisa? Are my undies showing?" She turned and bent at the waist to display her buttocks to Matt.

"Not in back," he told her, seeing no trace of the satin along the leg opening in the leotard.

"How about the front?" she stood, turned around, and thrust her pelvis toward him for his inspection.

"No. Looks good," Matt said. He then realized that he should be asking Denise to do the same for him. "How about me?"

"The back is fine. Turn around. Ooops! Here, let me tuck this in." Denise reached between his legs and tugged the leotard over a visible part of the panties. "There!"

That was something you never saw in a men's locker room! If any guy tried to touch another in the pelvic region, the toucher would be punched into next week by the touchee. Women apparently could get away with this sort of thing with other women. Heck! If Denise wanted to adjust his underwear after they were married, he wouldn't complain! Matt concluded that the person doing the adjustment had to be female for it to be socially acceptable, regardless of the gender of the person whose underwear was being adjusted.

Matt put on thick white socks and the new shoes and followed Denise's lead in donning the leg warmers. There were bright aqua terrycloth wrist- and headbands in the gym bag that Matt hadn't noticed at the apartment. He put the headband on. Denise was wrapping some sort of clamp around her hair to tie it into a ponytail.

"Let me do yours or we'll be in here all day!" Denise said with mock exasperation at Matt's slow pace. She tugged on Matt's hair, pulling it tightly to the back of his head, and grabbed a matching clamp from the recesses of his bag. In moments, Matt had a long ponytail just like Denise.

"I think we're ready!" Denise proclaimed, throwing her duffel into the locker and slamming it closed. Matt was a little more gentle with the bag and locker door but he, too, was ready to work out.

Denise grabbed a towel for each of them on the way out of the locker room. Denise draped the towel around her neck, and Matt copied her as he stepped into the health club proper.

The woman at the front desk, Heather, had been right. The club quickly was becoming busier, and there were already a few men on the treadmills, but no other women had dressed yet.

"Let's use the stationary bikes for a few minutes until an exercise class starts," Denise suggested.

"Fine with me," Matt agreed.

Denise jumped onto an exercise bike in a way that would have been very painful for a man. Matt tried the same move and found that he could

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hop onto the seat without crushing any important organs. Soon he and Denise were pedaling briskly.

"Want to race?" Matt offered, slowing his pace eventually to a complete stop. He'd never raced Denise before, knowing that her strength and endurance were no match for his musculature, but now that he was female, too, this was a more even competition.

"Sure!" Denise agreed. "Set your tension to 'four' and reset your odometer. The first one to two miles is the winner!"

Matt set the wheel-resistance and cleared the mileage on the odometer. "Ready," he announced.

"Three ... Two ... One ... Go!" Denise shouted. She began pumping her legs furiously.

Matt pedaled as fast as he could, but discovered that he had to work a lot harder than he'd imagined keeping pace with Denise. She was in pretty good shape, and Matt's new body was not quite in the same league. Identical looks aside, Matt now had less strength or endurance than Denise had. She beat him handily, finishing almost two tenths of a mile ahead of him. They resumed pedaling at a more tolerable rate to cool down from the exertion.

The background music snapped off and an announcement of an impending aerobics class echoed through the club. Denise stepped off her bike and began pressing the towel to her face. "Let's go to the class! I want to get a good spot!"

Matt followed her down the hall to the aerobics room. On the way they passed several guys. Matt could feel the stares of the men as he passed them. In his new form, he was fair game for their fantasies. He could well imagine the kinds of things the men wanted to do with him, given the chance. It felt odd to be on the other end of the longing looks.

Matt walked slightly behind Denise, still trying to copy her way of moving her hips. He found it really wasn't as hard to do as he'd imagined. Years ago, he'd been one of the 'contestants' dressed in drag for an interfraternity gender-bender 'beauty' pageant and tried to learn the swishy way a woman walked. One of his girlfriends had tried in vain to teach him how to swivel his hips, eventually abandoning the task as hopeless, but now it seemed almost second nature to him. Maybe it was the skeletal configuration or the way the muscles in this body had been trained by

Lisa. Whatever the reason, Matt was pleased with his ability to produce an appropriately girlish stride.

They arrived just in time for the aerobics class. All of the participants in this class were women, although the class was posted as open to either sex. Except for Denise, Matt and the instructor, everyone else was wearing sweatsuits. The instructor was a very athletic young woman who looked like she spent every spare moment at the club. She was tanned. She was thin. She was more muscular than any woman Matt had ever met. She was blond. She had blue eyes. She had teeth whiter than snow. She had tits to die for. This Nordic goddess was the kind of woman that other women took aerobic classes to become. She was the kind of woman that men wanted to get between the bedsheets.

Matt had dated an aerobics instructor a few months before he met Denise. Her name had been Sheila, and Sheila was everything Matt had wanted ... almost. Although she was no slouch in bed, she was so consumed with fitness that she could do little else. Sheila's idea of a date was a bicycle ride in the hills around Asherton Heights or brisk walks in the shopping malls. Sheila talked incessantly about her diet, heart rate, cholesterol, and about her exercise regimen. She wanted to be a professional runner, and the last time Matt saw Sheila, she was planning to fly to New York City to run in their marathon. He didn't miss her as much as he'd first thought he would.

The club aerobics instructor started the music and began her routine. Matt watched the instructor and compared her movements to his own reflection in the mirrored wall behind her. He looked almost like he belonged here. He was dressed for the class. His new figure was evidence of someone who kept in shape. The ponytail swung back and forth in his reflection as he moved to the music. The mirror also showed the glass wall behind him. A small group of young men stood in the hallway watching through the windowed wall as the class, including Matt, exercised.

Matt ignored the gawking men and concentrated on the routine. His reflection paralleled Denise's, and in the identical leotards, shoes, and headbands, he and she looked like two peas in a pod.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Hints And Suggestions

Tom's car pulled easily into the parking spot at the curb in front of Krimmins Formals. Lisa opened the door and instinctively reached onto the floor for her purse. She took only a moment to remember that she no longer had a reason to carry one.

The doors on the El Dorado didn't seem to lock, and Tom hadn't made an attempt to roll up the window on his side of the car so Lisa didn't try to secure her side either. She stepped out onto the curb.

"I'm going next door to the coffee shop for a few minutes," Tom announced as he strode away. "I'll meet you in the tux place."

Lisa walked to the door of the formal wear store. A number of tuxedo-clad mannequins graced the display window of the shop, and there was even a female mannequin wearing a wedding gown. Lisa wondered if the shop rented wedding gowns or if the feminine figure was merely to accompany the groom mannequin. She could not recall anyone she knew ever renting a wedding gown.

The tiny bell atop the door tinkled merrily as she entered the shop.

"Hello. May I help you?" a wizened old man asked, appearing from behind the pages of the newspaper he had been reading. He folded his newspaper and dropped it onto the counter near the cash register.

"Hi. Uh ... yeah. I'm here to pick up a tuxedo for a wedding today," Lisa told the old man.

"Name?"

"Matt ... uh," Lisa stalled, having trouble remembering Matt's last name. "... Stevens."

The old man shuffled out from behind the counter and smiled at Lisa. "Groom, eh?"

"No ... uh ... I mean ... yes," Lisa corrected herself.

"I can tell," the old man explained. "The ushers are universally indifferent about a wedding, and the best man is usually pretty organized. The groom on the other hand is almost always a basket case. I've seen thousands of them coming through here over the years, and you're no different than any of those other young fellas."

Lisa wasn't about to correct the man's impression of her. Although she might look like the groom and was picking up the groom's tux, she wasn't a groom, and she had no intention of marrying Denise. Unless ...

Now, *there* was something that hadn't crossed her mind before! What would happen if she and Matt couldn't figure out how to undo whatever had happened to them? What if this was permanent!? How could she be a man? An hour or two like this was kind of fun in a novel sort of way, but Lisa didn't want to live the rest of her life as a male. What would she tell her family? Her friends? The preschool director? Her own students? This had to be reversible somehow! How could she marry Denise!?

The little old man shuffled over to a rack of suits individually wrapped in plastic bags. Each suit had a paper tag on the hanger.

"Garrison, ... Harris, ... Hong, ... " the man intoned. "Nelson, ... O'Conner, ... O'Conner, ... O'Conner, ... O'Conner. Hmmm, big wedding. O'Conner, ... Reynolds, ... Reynolds, ... Stevens. Matthew?"

"Uh, yeah," Lisa confirmed. "Oh! The best man is next door at the coffee shop. He has a tux reserved, too. His name is Tom Bascome."

The old man handed Lisa the hangered tuxedo with Matt's name on it. He stepped to an adjacent rack and read the tags off those hangers. "Darwin, ... Coleman, ... Chang, ... Chang, ... Chang, ... Burton, ... Bascome! Thomas Bascome!"

"That's him," Lisa said, and the old man handed her Tom's tuxedo.

"Sorry to make you do all of the work. I just don't have the strength I had when I was younger," the little old man apologized. "I'm not a strapping young lad like yourself."

"I'm not much of a strapping young lad," Lisa retorted. The old man gave her a curious sidelong glance, since his eyes told him otherwise.

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Lisa followed the man to the register, where he indicated a hook on which she could hang the tuxedos. The fellow rummaged through a folder of invoices.

"Ah! Here we are! Bascome is on this invoice, too," the shopkeeper said.

The bell on the shop door tinkled.

"Hello. May I help you?" the old man said automatically, not even looking up.

"I'm with him," Tom grunted, indicating Lisa. Tom was sipping from a steaming foam plastic cup that looked like it might hold a quart of coffee.

The old man continued to scan the invoice. He reached into the shelf behind the register and pulled two crisply laundered and starched shirts around to the counter. He dug in a drawer and withdrew two sets of cufflinks. He reached into a carton on the floor and removed two shoe boxes, one size ten, the other size eleven-and-a-half.

"Accessories?" he asked Lisa.

"Accessories?" she asked right back at him.

"Lotsa folks come in here and rent tuxedos, but they don't have the flashy jewelry to complete the ensemble," the man told her. "We rent the jewelry to go with the formal wear if you want it. You know - watches, rings, that kind of thing."

"I don't think ..." Lisa began.

Tom leaned over the counter. "We're a little ahead of schedule. Let's see what he has."

The shopkeeper sensed he might be able to make another few dollars off the groom and his best man, so he turned away from the register. He pulled a keychain from a retractable winch on his waist, and unlocked a little panel on the wall on the other side of the counter. With a flourish, he opened the panel to reveal a cabinet full of gold and silver.

The old man explained: "We rent a lot of watches to grooms. They seem to need to be reminded of the time. The rings and bracelets mainly rent to kids on prom night. They want flash, but don't care what time it is."

Tom was impressed by the display of glittering stones and metal. He noticed several items too large to be bracelets. "You rent neck chains too?"

"Yes, sir, we do," the old man told him. "We have quite a selection."

"I can see that," Tom complimented him. "Hey! He's got one of those things I got for you!" Tom said, nudging Lisa roughly.

"What?" asked Lisa, rejoining the train of conversation.

"On the necklace, right there." Tom directed the old man to the item under discussion. "No. To the left ... One more. Yes. That one!"

"Ah!" the merchant exclaimed, picking the necklace from among the others in the cabinet. "Chung Doh Wat!"

"Chung ... *what*?" Tom asked.

"Chung ... DOH ... Wat," the man repeated. "We rent a lot of these pieces to the Chinese immigrants in these parts. The little medallion there is supposed to be good luck." He held the necklace so that Tom could inspect it closely.

"Gee, Matt, it sure looks a lot like the one I got for you," Tom observed.

Lisa, of course, remembered nothing about a gift from Tom. Tom reached around her neck and pulled on the thin gold chain hanging there. A little gold disk popped out of the neck of Lisa's sport shirt.

"See?" Tom said, pulling the charm so that the shopkeeper could compare the two. The amulets were both approximately the size of a dime, but the one the shopkeeper held was thinner than the one Lisa wore. The frills around the edge of the medallions were similar but not identical.

The shopkeeper looked at the item hanging around Lisa's neck, and at the one he held in his own hand. "I'm not a jeweler, but yours looks to be very high quality ... even better than the ones here in my shop."

"Why do you say that?" Lisa asked, her neck pulled by the chain within inches of the little old man.

The storekeeper squinted at the two golden charms. "This one looks weathered, almost like an authentic piece. Mine aren't authentic at all,

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and if you can keep a secret, I'll tell you I buy them at the costume jewelry dealer's conference. Is this a real Chung Doh Wat?"

"Damned if I know," Tom admitted. "I picked it up while I was on a trip to China. It just seemed to catch my eye in this little shop in Beijing, so I bought it for my buddy Matt, here."

"Look at the differences," the old man encouraged them. "See the inscriptions? The markings in mine are very regular as if made by a machine. Yours are very irregular but delicate. Hand made. Your inscriptions are undoubtedly Chinese, and mine look kind of artificial. I can't read the symbols, so for all I know, the markings on mine translate into something like 'Souvenir of New York'. We keep these in stock because we get a lot of the Chinese families in here who rent the Wat medallions for weddings as good luck."

"Good luck, huh?" Tom asked. "Maybe that's why Matt here never takes his off!"

Lisa thought to herself that she'd always considered her own amulet to be a good luck symbol, except that she and Matt certainly didn't seem to have very much going for them today, given the two medallions between them. So much for superstition.

"All I know is that I get lots of requests for these pieces from the Chinese grooms, and for the right price I'm only too happy to oblige them. So, did you see anything you might want to go with the tuxes?" the man asked.

Lisa and Tom decided that they didn't need any additional jewelry after all. The little old man replaced the neck chain in his cabinet and locked the panel closed. He turned and scanned the invoice one more time.

"Just sign here," the shopkeeper said. He pushed the invoice and a pen at Lisa.

Lisa turned the invoice and put the pen to paper. She curled her left hand at the wrist and prepared to write in her normal upside-down scrawl. She almost wrote 'E. A. Purcell' as she was accustomed, but caught herself in time. She hoped the way she signed Matt's name didn't look too feminine, but she had no experience trying to imitate a man's writing style.

"When did you start writing left-handed?" Tom asked, noticing the obvious difference from times he'd seen his friend sign receipts before.

Lisa finished the forgery before answering. "Uh ... I ... well ... I've been kind of switch-hitting a bit for the last few weeks, and today, I decided to go left-handed for a while." Her answer seemed to satisfy Tom. A bluff was as good as four aces.

The tradesman gave Lisa the receipt and helped her lift the shirts, shoes and tuxes. Tom assigned himself the duty of drinking the coffee and holding the doors. He carried nothing as Lisa struggled to the curb with the outfits. Tom opened the back door of the El Dorado and directed her in placing the items in the back seat.

"Next stop, the airport!" Tom announced. "There's a cousin or an uncle or something arriving at nine-thirty on Puddle Jumper Express. We're supposed to take them to Denise's folks' house."

CHAPTER NINE

Skin Deep

The aerobics session was grueling but satisfying in an exhausting sort of way. Matt had never sweated so much from exercise in his life. When the music ended, he could hear his heartbeat pounding in his ears, and he could feel the tension in his legs and arms.

"That was great!" Denise said with enthusiasm. "My hangover is almost gone, and it's not even ten o'clock!"

"Great," Matt replied, tiredly. Indeed, his headache and overall queasiness were gone, too, replaced by a feeling of real fatigue. He mopped his brow with his towel and followed Denise out of the exercise room. He could see a large wet perspiration stain on her back and knew that he likely had one too.

Denise and Matt neared a group of the men who'd watched the aerobics from the hallway. One of them stepped forward in front of Denise.

"Excuse me, ladies, but my friend and I have a bet on something that you can help us with."

Denise gave him a cold stare. "No," she said curtly, "they're not silicone."

The fellow blushed. "No. I'm sorry if you got that impression about me. This is a harmless bet. What we want to know is if you two are sisters."

Matt cringed. He'd not only heard but had used that pickup line before.

"Sisters, hmmm?" Denise asked, casting a quick glance at Matt to see if he wanted to play along.

Another fellow standing nearby piped up, "You two are dressed alike and look like twins or something, so we had a bet about whether you were sisters."

"I see," Denise commented, taking the lead. "How much are you betting?"

"Fifty bucks," one of them replied.

"Ooooh, fifty dollars! These boys are high rollers!" Denise cooed, then looked at Matt for approval. "Well, what do you think? Sisters?"

Matt simply tried to avoid the conversation, but Denise persevered, pressuring the fellow who'd been ogling her. She spoke in a sultry tone. "Did you bet sisters or not? And how much is the answer worth to you?" Matt realized that Denise was once again flirting.

The young man cast a nervous glance at his friends. "Well, I bet you were sisters, and if I win," he said with a hopeful tone in his voice, "I could take you out to dinner tonight and we can see what happens."

Denise was suddenly all business, and answered abruptly, "Sorry. You lose. We're not sisters." Her answer erased the man's easy grin. His buddies were chuckling at his misfortune. Matt was amazed at how a simple answer to a question could control a conversation. He wondered if women were taught how to do this or if they just naturally had the knack.

"You're not sisters?" The disheartened chap asked.

Matt and Denise emphatically shook their heads no.

The guy was incredulous, but tried another tactic to get a date when Denise began walking. "Did anyone ever tell you that you two could be twins?" he asked. Denise never looked back as she walked away.

Matt was still uneasy from the pickup attempt, but he stayed behind and decided to deflate the fellow further. He paused and leaned in close to him and whispered. "I'm really sorry! But you weren't very far off."

The guy brightened and instantly regained his smile. One of the two might have spurned him, but he still had a chance with the other!

"I wasn't?" the bettor asked, straining to get a better look at Matt's cleavage through the neck of the leotard.

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"It's true we aren't sisters," Matt told him, "until we get one last operation, that is."

The fellow's eyes went wide. "You mean ... y ... you're ... you're ..."

"Twin brothers?" Matt asked coyly. He nodded affirmatively and winked at the fellow before turning on his heel and walking away. Sure it was a lie, but he knew the effect it would have on the guy. That fellow would be very cautious around strange women for quite a while, and probably never really be certain if he is talking to a male or a female ever again.

Matt caught up with Denise at the door to the locker room. "I never knew aerobics were so tiring!" Matt told her.

"They're a better workout than jogging," Denise explained. "Do you want to hit the pool before we leave?"

Fortunately Matt had an excuse to avoid the embarrassment of having to appear in mixed company in a swimsuit. "I don't have anything to wear while swimming," he reminded Denise.

"That's another surprise of mine," Denise told him. "I brought a suit for each of us in my bag. C'mon. We have time. Let's swim for a while to get the kinks out."

"All right," Matt reluctantly agreed, actually beginning to savor a cool dip. He reasoned that a swimsuit was really just a wet leotard, and he was already wearing one of those.

He and Denise undressed and showered briefly to rinse off the sweat. The shower room was a smorgasbord of female anatomy. Big bodies, little ones. Fat ones, thin ones. Buxom ones, flat ones. Old ones, young ones. Buff bodies. Ugly bodies. Taut bodies. Wrinkled bodies. Matt stole glances at each of the women he encountered, and was amused to discover that most ethnic women had jet black hair in their crotch, but Caucasians were adorned with varying shades of brown. The redheads had a slight red tint to the hair between their legs and the blondes had a somewhat lighter tint, but overall, it was a brownish color on most of the women. He discovered more than one other woman checking him out from head to toe as well. He was well aware that this body was nothing to be ashamed of and he proudly carried his head high ... or at least as high as his reduced stature allowed. It was kind of nice to be admired.

Denise and he toweled quickly and returned to their lockers. Denise reached into her bag and pulled out her electric razor.

"You should do this too," she advised, applying the razor to the lower part of her pelvis. Matt watched as Denise methodically shaved away the hair on her tummy, and left a narrow vertical strip of thick fur just above her vulva. He found his razor and followed her example.

"Why should we shave down here?" Matt asked over the faint buzz of the battery-powered razors. Although he was completely naked in a locker room full of women in various stages of undress, he was no longer self-conscious.

"You'll know when you see the swimsuits I bought." Denise responded.

Matt quickly guessed at the reason and wondered how small the suits were that Denise bought, but his concern was quickly lost to the distraction of feeling the razor vibrations as he shaved close to his nether lips. It tingled and tickled as he ran the razor up and down near his clitoris. He wondered if the pleasant sensations he was experiencing were anything like using a vibrator. Matt vowed to himself that if he was a woman long enough, that he wanted to try a personal vibrator.

The new razor was very efficient at removing Matt's pubic hair, and it took him almost no time to shave a rough approximation of Denise's cut. He thought back to the scene on the curb at the apartment that morning, and how he'd discovered that Lisa had shaved away his hard-earned mustache. As he remembered her expression, her tone of voice and her attitude, a thought struck him. He could give her something to remember him by too. He quickly began shaving off the rest of his pubic hair, intent on leaving the area as bare as the upper lip on his former body.

"Lisa! What are you doing?" Denise asked.

"I just figured, in for a penny, in for a pound." Matt explained, as he ran the razor over the area a few more times to catch the last of the errant bristles.

"Not me," Denise disagreed. "What I did already is gonna itch like the dickens in the next few days anyway, but the itch from what you did will drive you bonkers unless you keep shaving it."

Matt grinned, evilly. That was what he was counting on. Lisa would not soon forget his revenge. "I'm sure Matt would find it sexy if

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you shaved yours all off, too," he suggested, knowing with certainty that he would enjoy touching Denise's hairless womanhood.

"We'll never know," Denise said. "I'm not shaving all my pussy hair off to please my future husband."

Matt was surprised and a little disappointed by Denise's lack of adventure but admired the results of his tonsorial artistry. The bare skin at the base of his pelvis now looked really sexy to his male brain.

"What do you think?" he asked, posing for Denise.

Denise smirked at her friend. "Well, girl, you'll certainly make any guys who see it stand up and salute, if you know what I mean."

"You think so?" Matt asked, rubbing the smooth skin where his legs met. Although it was his own skin he was touching and looking at, he was becoming aroused. He wasn't sure if the increased moisture he felt gathering there was from the bareness of his pelvis or from the tickle of the recent vibrations.

"Guys get turned on by the weirdest stuff," Denise explained, "but you look like a plucked chicken."

Denise put her razor away and pulled the swimsuits from her bag. To say that the string bikinis she brought were tiny would have been an understatement. The bright-white two-piece suits were each made of three small fabric swatches and eight thin strings. Matt helped Denise tie her suit around her body. The triangles on the top of the suit were about four inches on a side, and barely covered her areolae. The strings from the top of the breast triangles fastened around the neck, while the other strings fastened around her back. The pubic section was 'Y-shaped' and only covered the absolute minimum for decency. One of the three arms from the lower part went between Denise's legs and the string was routed up her butt-crack. The other two strings went around her hips, all three to meet at the point where Denise's pelvic bone joined her spine. Denise quickly returned the favor and tied Matt's suit around him.

"We already know you have no hair showing around your suit, but how about me?" Denise asked, thrusting her pelvis toward him.

Matt saw a tiny tuft of hair visible on one side. He carefully reached over and pulled the fabric of the bikini bottom to cover the fur in much the same way that Denise had adjusted his leotard earlier. Denise seemed not to mind his touch in her pubic region. He wondered how she would

react if he tried to adjust her bikini bottom after they were married. He guessed that any attempt by her husband to touch her groin in public would bring a quick slap or worse. It was strange to Matt how the shape of someone's skin affected his or her interpersonal rights and privileges.

"I'm ready. How about you?" Matt asked, shifting his weight on his heels in a vain attempt to get the cord in the crack of his ass to rest more comfortably. He'd always enjoyed seeing women in string bikinis and thongs, but now that he was wearing one himself, his opinion of the styles had cooled considerably. It felt as though he was naked, but being tortured with a string in a very uncomfortable place. Denise closed her locker and led Matt to the pool.

They entered the pool enclosure and left their towels in the corner. Denise squealed as Matt unceremoniously pushed her into the deep end of the pool. He jumped in immediately after her, and as he surfaced, Matt felt the buoyancy of his breasts in the water. His body certainly had a different density than before, and he felt himself floating a little higher in the water than his male body had.

Matt immediately discovered that having long hair was a problem in a pool, as the wet strands covered his eyes and got into his mouth. Perhaps he should have worn his hair in a ponytail here, too. There were so many things about being someone else, particularly a woman, to keep you on your toes.

He noticed a lot of people admiring Denise's figure, and suspected that behind his back people were admiring him as well. The two guys who'd had the bet about Denise and he being sisters were standing in the shallow end of the pool eying him closely. Matt wasn't sure if other people were looking at him or not, but there was a barely perceptible buzz of whispered conversation in the pool enclosure.

The water was cool and refreshing as he and Denise paddled back and forth. They swam a few laps together and individually. Matt tried swimming underwater and discovered that the lung capacity of this body was much less than his male form. Normally he could swim two lengths of this pool without surfacing. Today he was lucky to finish one length before needing to breathe.

Matt and Denise climbed out of the pool about a half-hour later and wrapped towels around themselves as they again headed to the locker room.

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"I saw those guys from the hall outside the aerobics class at the pool," Denise told Matt at the lockers, as she wrung out the bikini and reached for her shampoo.

"I saw them too," Matt replied, stripping his suit off as Denise had.

"One of them said the strangest thing to me as I swam past," Denise said. "He said something like 'I would have never known unless you told me.' Do you know what that's about?"

Matt giggled and blushed. "Yes, I do. Earlier today, when you walked away in the hall, I gave them a bogus explanation of why we weren't sisters."

"What did you say?" Denise asked, her curiosity piqued.

"I told him we were twin brothers waiting for sex change operations."

Denise burst into gales of laughter. "Brothers? Lisa! That's priceless! I wish I'd thought of that!" She began walking toward the showers.

"You're not mad?" Matt asked, following closely behind.

"Mad? No! Just envious of your wicked demented mind!" Denise said. "I wish I could have seen the looks on their faces when you told them."

Matt smiled broadly from the memory of the event. "It was great! It looked like they were going to have a bird!"

Denise's laughter diminished but her smile remained. "... have a bird'? That's the kind of expression Matt uses!"

Matt slapped his head. "So that's where I heard that phrase!" Disaster averted. Every conversation was a verbal minefield, now. Matt had no idea what kinds of phrases Lisa used when she talked, and was not sure which things about his normal speech patterns Denise would recognize. As he followed Denise to the shower a second time, he wondered if speaking at all was a good idea.

Denise and Matt rinsed out the chlorine then shampooed and conditioned their hair in the shower this time. The warm soapy water felt good running off Matt's skin as he luxuriated in the steam. He'd gotten used to the heightened senses in this female form, and the wonderful way

it made him feel. He almost regretted having to dry off. He and Denise paused at the dressing table to brush the tangles out of their hair. The conditioner they'd used made removing the snarls pretty simple. Denise told Matt that there was no need to dry their hair until later, but declined to explain further. Matt knew this had something to do with another of Denise's surprises, but could not figure out precisely what it was.

Back at the lockers, Matt followed Denise's example as she rubbed body powder into her skin. It felt silky smooth as Matt rubbed the stuff into his breasts, tummy, legs, and buttocks. Matt used a little extra powder on the area where his pubic hair had been. The powder felt cool and soothing against his shaved skin.

Denise put a little perfume behind her ear. Matt checked his purse and sure enough, there was a little bottle of Expression of Delight in there. He dabbed a little of the fragrance on his finger and touched it behind his ears. He could detect the combination scent of the perfume and body powder and realized that he smelled great, just like he remembered Denise smelling. Matt had often wondered why women smelled so nice, while guys smelled like potato chips and dirty socks, and now he'd learned the secret of powder and strategically placed perfume.

Matt's briefs fit more closely against his smooth body since he removed the hair on his pelvis. He could feel the cool touch of the satin directly on his crotch, and he could now see the distinct outline of his vulva in the fabric. He slid the silk blouse around himself, and enjoyed the sensation of the fabric rubbing gently against his breasts. As his nipples stiffened, he could feel not only the gentle swelling of his breasts but a connection to his groin. It was a sense of arousal just wearing the blouse, and he hadn't even touched himself below the waist. This was fantastic! Here he was getting incredibly turned on in a room full of naked and half-naked women and no one was the wiser. If something like this happened to him a day ago, the result would have been a very embarrassing and very visible erection, but as a woman, he got the tingle of arousal without the unsightly tumescence. Matt was aware of the increase in moisture that his vagina was producing, but that was not visible to anyone and only served to excite him further.

He stepped into his cutoff jeans and buttoned them around his body. He noticed that Denise's shorts also buttoned right over left like the blouse and jeans he now wore. Perhaps the aerobic exercise had helped clear his brain, because he suddenly remembered reading somewhere that women's clothes buttoned differently from men's since the medieval days when

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women were dressed by servants but the men dressed themselves. It felt odd to button the buttons the opposite way, but with a little concentration, there was nothing to it. He slipped his feet into his sandals and grabbed his gym bag and purse.

As they walked out into the morning sun, Matt realized how much the exercise had improved his outlook. Sure, he was still in Lisa's body, and the wedding was now less than six hours away, but at least the hangover was gone and he felt so alive. The world seemed to have new smells, new sounds, new sights. Not to mention the morning he'd spent among a horde of undressed women. That was a voyeur's dream!

Denise opened the automobile trunk and put her gym bag inside. Matt placed his gym bag next to hers. Denise glanced at her wristwatch after she closed the trunk-lid, and began walking away while Matt went to the passenger door of the car. He quickly noticed that his fiancée was heading down the sidewalk and he ran to catch up with her. His purse was slapping against his hip as he trotted up to her side.

"Denise! Where are you going?" he asked. "Is it another surprise?"

"Yep!" she smiled. "It's not far, though." She led him a few doors down the street to a quaint little shop and into the door.

A beauty salon.

The woman behind the counter had heavily styled blond hair that looked suspiciously like a wig. She was probably in her late twenties and had a slightly plump figure. She wore horn-rim glasses and chewed gum noisily.

"Denise! Hi! Congratulations on your wedding!" the receptionist bubbled as Denise entered.

The other women in the salon began congratulating Denise when they heard. "Thank you!" Denise responded to the well wishers.

Matt desperately wanted out of this place. He had never been in a beauty salon, and had no idea of how to act in one. He was sure to do something that would look out of place here. These surprises of Denise's just got worse and worse.

"We've been expecting you," the receptionist said. "You're right on time for the appointment. And this must be Lisa!"

Denise tugged Matt further into the shop. "Lisa ... this is Elaine. That's Maureen and Angela and Marta over there. Everyone! This is Lisa!"

A chorus of voices said, "Hi! Lisa!" like something out of an all-female Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. Matt waved a reluctant hello.

"My mother said to put this on her tab," Denise told Elaine.

"She was here yesterday afternoon for a wash and set," Elaine confirmed. "She told me to give you girls anything you need and hang the cost."

"Oooh!" Denise said with an obvious sparkle in her eyes. It wasn't often that she got a blank check at the beauty salon. "Lisa and I have to be finished here around one so we can dress for the wedding. What can you do between now and then?"

Elaine rubbed her hands together. "My dear, the question is not what we can do, but what we can't do!" She led the way into the salon proper. The air smelled warm and moist with the hint of hair spray, perming solution and shampoo. Matt and Denise were ushered into the presence of two of the salon operators.

"We just came from the gym and we shampooed our hair there," Denise explained, holding her damp hair as evidence. "We need to have it styled and set, and I'd like a manicure and a facial. Lisa?"

Matt didn't have any idea of what to say except, "Anything Denise wants is fine with me."

"Great!" Denise shouted. "Manicures and facials for both of us, then. I'm on the fence about having my legs waxed. What do you say Lisa? Do we get our legs waxed?"

Matt wasn't sure what having one's legs waxed was all about, but if Denise was so enthusiastic about it, and he didn't have to pay for it, why not? He grinned. "Sure! Let's get our legs waxed."

Matt and Denise were taken to reclining chairs and told to sit in them. The manicurists set to work as a few other women began applying the facials. To Matt, it felt and smelled like someone was pouring salad dressing all over his face as the facial mask was applied. Matt was instructed to look at the ceiling as the goop set, and his hands were being

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held in place by the manicurist as his nails were being shaped and re-painted.

"Remember when we used to give ourselves facials in college?" Denise asked, somewhere to Matt's right.

"Not really," Matt answered, truthfully. He spoke through clenched teeth to prevent moving his jaw.

"It seems so long ago that we did those things and yet it all happened in the last five years," Denise ruminated. "You know Lisa, I never told you this, but I think of you as a sister just like Miranda. We're so close."

"You mean I can't be your twin brother any more?" Matt playfully whined.

"Lisa!" Denise shrieked, "Don't make me laugh! I'll crack the facial!"

One of the manicurists' eyes widened to saucers. "Lisa is your ... *brother?*"

Denise suppressed a chuckle as she explained. "No. Lisa is completely female ... and always has been."

Matt sighed at Denise's unknowing error. He took over the explanation. "I got rid of a couple of creeps that were hitting on us by telling them that Denise and I were not completely women yet."

Denise interrupted. "Lisa told them we were brothers waiting for sex change operations. That made them have second thoughts real quick!"

The manicurists begin to giggle. "I think I'll use that one the next time I can't get some guy to leave me alone in a bar. Back off, buddy! I'm a guy, too!"

"Yes," the other manicurist agreed. "I'll have to remember that one myself!"

Matt inwardly groaned. What had he done? He was now guilty of supplying weapons to the enemy in the war between the sexes!

After thirty minutes the stuff on Matt's face was broken away and removed. He reached up with his newly manicured hands and touched his cheek. The skin of his face felt moist and puffy and very soft. He looked

at his hands and noticed that his fingernails and cuticles had been shaped and that the nails had a fresh coat of pinkish lacquer.

The manicurists returned with little fondue pots, which they plugged into outlets on the wall. Matt could smell the unmistakable scent of hot wax. They were probably going to wax his legs now. He'd always liked getting his car waxed. It made the finish look so shiny. If they did something similar to his legs he couldn't imagine how it would make them look. Denise was all for it, so it had to be a positive move.

The beautician spooned a strip of very hot wax onto his legs. Matt tensed, expecting a bit of pain from the molten paraffin, but the wax quickly cooled before Matt realized, and the surface of the wax bead became translucent and dull. Why was the blob of wax just sitting there cooling? Shouldn't someone be rubbing it around to make his legs polished and smooth? Wasn't that how wax worked?

The woman near Matt's legs reached down and pressed a bit of fabric into the wax strip. She grasped the fabric and before Matt could react, snatched her hand away, pulling the wax and a bunch of hairs out of his legs.

Yowtch! It was everything Matt could do to avoid screaming in pain. He gritted his teeth and felt tears rolling down his cheeks.

He heard Denise inhale noisily through clenched teeth as the wax-impregnated cloth was pulled away from her legs. So this was what leg waxing was about! If he'd known this, there was no way he would have agreed to endure this torture!

The salon operators applied strip after strip of wax and pulled them away, taking hundreds of leg hairs each time. By the time the waxing was done, Matt's legs looked a lot smoother than they did before, but they were very sore from the thousands of hairs being ripped from their roots.

The hair stylists led Matt and Denise to styling chairs and brought a book that had pictures of hairstyles. Denise quickly chose a style she wanted, but Matt was unsure of what to choose. For all he knew Lisa and he could suddenly get their normal bodies back at any moment, and he didn't want to pick anything Lisa would think inappropriate.

"Denise. I can't decide," he said, at last.

"Give her one like this," Denise suggested, pointing to a picture in the book after a moment's thought.

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"Good choice!" the stylists agreed.

"We're not going to be twins?" Matt asked, seeing that the style was different than the one Denise had chosen for herself.

"Not for the wedding," Denise stated, flatly. "As the bride, I deserve to be different and special, if you don't mind."

Matt blushed, having forgotten that the bride was the featured attraction of the wedding. "No, certainly that's your choice."

Matt relaxed in the styling chair as the operators cut, shaped, curled and twisted his and Denise's hair. When the stylists were finished, Matt and Denise had dozens of curlers of various sizes in their hair. The hair stylists had Matt and Denise sit under huge hair dryer helmets along the wall while another two customers used the styling chairs.

Matt picked up one of the magazines and thumbed through it as he sat under the drier. The issue was current but the articles were not very interesting. Matt wished for a car magazine or at least an *Architectural Digest*, but there were only copies of *Mademoiselle*, *Vogue*, and *Cosmopolitan*. He was amazed at the number of ads in these magazines for hair spray, dyes and gels, lipsticks, other cosmetics, perfumes, bras, panties, hosiery, contraceptive sponges, birth control pills, implants, douches, menstrual pads and tampons. There were ads for pantliners, PMS medicines, feminine deodorants, pregnancy tests, and vaginitis cures. Matt thought to himself how he'd never cared about advertisements like these before today, and that if he could never get his male body back, he might eventually find himself shopping for all of these products. He prayed silently that this situation was not permanent. He did not want to be a woman forever!

Matt looked at Denise under the drier next to him. She was calmly reading her magazine and looking very sophisticated. The way her legs were crossed just looked so right. Matt looked at himself and realized that he was sitting with his legs wide apart as he'd always done. It looked anything but ladylike. He tentatively crossed his legs and found it was very comfortable and almost natural to sit that way. If he'd done that before this morning, he surely would have impaired his ability to father offspring.

Matt told himself to check that he was sitting with his legs properly crossed in the future. His error had not been too bad since he wore cutoff jeans, but if he sat spread-legged wearing a short dress, it would be a

repeat of Sharon Stone's interrogation scene in the movie "Basic Instinct". Even though he had been a woman for only about six hours, he imagined how embarrassing that would be.

He glanced at his watch. It was noon.

CHAPTER TEN

On The Prowl

The El Dorado thundered into the parking lot at the mall. Lisa was finally getting used to the way that Tom drove - a style that she could only describe as "all or nothing". Tom was either fully accelerating or braking at all times. There seemed to be no such thing as cruising at one speed for him, so at any given instant, she was either being pushed back into the cracked vinyl upholstery or straining against the all-too-insubstantial seatbelts.

Tom pulled to a screeching halt in a parking space between two cars, and slammed the transmission into Park. He held his wristwatch up to show Lisa.

"Twelve noon, straight up and down! We're back on schedule!" he shouted over the muffler-less drone of the idling engine.

"Fine. I want to sit here and wait for my stomach to arrive." Lisa groaned.

"Time's a-wastin'! C'mon buddy! We just have to get the plane tickets for your honeymoon and swing by the airport one more time for Denise's cousin or something before we can go home and climb into our monkey suits." The roar subsided as Tom killed the engine.

Lisa climbed unsteadily out of the car. Her legs were wobbly as she stood and walked toward the mall. Since leaving the apartment, she'd drunk four cups of coffee and she could feel the result in her bladder. If she'd had her normal body, a mere cup or two of coffee would have filled her to bursting, so there was that consolation. In contrast, Tom had consumed several quarts of java and hadn't stopped at a restroom since leaving the apartment. Lisa was positive that the guy had a hollow leg or had sponge somewhere in his family tree.

"I'm still a bit out of it," she lied to Tom as they entered the atrium of the mall. "Remind me again: where are we going?"

Tom glanced around. "Airline tickets and reservations. Starlight Travel. On the second level. Right at the top of these stairs."

Lisa judged her bladder contents against her ability to climb the stairs. "Right. Look ... You go on ahead. I'm gonna stop here in the restroom. I'll be along in a while."

"Okay," Tom agreed and bounded up the stairs two at a time. Lisa marveled at his capacity to hold his water and still exert himself that way. She could not picture herself so full of coffee and vaulting up the stairs without wetting herself.

She turned and walked toward the restroom entrance. She nearly entered the doorway that had the outline of the person wearing a dress on it. Even after six hours with the body, it took concentration to remember that she was male. She pushed open the door to the other restroom. Lisa wondered what the restroom door symbols looked like in Scotland where men wore kilts.

Lisa held her breath and looked around. The public mens room at this mall was quite a bit different than the ladies room at the mall in Kerrville. This room was more austere: it had a number of stalls and washbasins, but no bench for waiting when the stalls were all occupied. There were no makeup tables, but there was a row of standup urinals along one wall. The smell in this place was less pleasant than the women's restroom, reeking of bladder impatience and disinfectant.

She walked over to one of the urinals and unzipped her pants. She reached her fingers inside and around the side of the knit pouch of the supporter to tug her penis until it protruded from the zipper. She stood for a moment and relaxed until she felt the flow begin. This was very different from her experiences in the ladies room. There was only a tiny bit of her anatomy exposed now, instead of having to go into a stall and lift her dress or drop her jeans and lower her panties. Although there was less privacy than the enclosed stalls, there was so little to see this way.

Lisa felt the increasing relief as her bladder drained into the porcelain receptacle on the wall. After she felt empty, she shook her penis gently as Tom had done in the bathroom at the apartment. It worked! She was really starting to get the hang of having one of these things.

She quickly returned her penis to the supporter and zipped the pants, then flushed the urinal and stepped to the sink to wash her hands. In all

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she'd spent less than one minute in the restroom: a record as far as a woman was concerned. Why hadn't God given women something convenient like this for using the bathroom? She had no sooner formed the question in her mind than she remembered the erection she'd had that morning and how she'd cursed having male genitalia. Having a cock was a double-edged sword, no pun intended.

Lisa climbed the stairs in the atrium and found the travel agency right where Tom said it would be. She looked into the large glass windows that fronted the shop and saw Tom amiably chatting with a woman at a desk in the corner.

"May I help you?" another woman asked as Lisa entered the travel agency.

"Yeah, I guess so," Lisa offered. "I'm ... uh ... Matt Stevens. I'm picking up reservations and tickets."

The woman glanced through a folder on top of a file cabinet. "Stevens. Yes." She opened a drawer and removed a thick envelope holding several airline tickets and faxes. She pulled the tickets out and compared the numbers against the invoice.

"Two round trip tickets to Hawaii... leaving Darwin International tonight." She smiled at Lisa fetchingly. "Are you looking for company on the trip?"

"It's a honeymoon," Lisa told her matter-of-factly.

"Oh." The woman's flirtatious mood disappeared. She scanned the reservation summary. "Okay, two round trips to Hawaii, and three days hotel reservations at the Waikiki Island Resort. Bridal Suite."

Lisa was impressed. She knew that hotel suites were very expensive and that the cost had to be well over five thousand for the tickets and hotel alone. That didn't include meals, tips, rental cars or entertainment. Of course if she knew Denise, the entertainment would be provided personally by the bride in bed at no additional cost to the groom.

Lisa discovered that she was beginning to worry more and more that Matt would never re-exchange bodies with her. She would have to marry Denise, and it would be the two of them on a honeymoon in Hawaii. Lisa liked Denise a lot, but not in that way! It was one thing to be a friend and confidant, and quite another to be a sex partner. Lisa decided that if she

ended up on the honeymoon with Denise, that she'd 'fess up about the body switch and try to get a divorce or something.

"I'll need your credit card for the imprint," the woman's voice ended Lisa's daydream. Lisa pulled out her wallet and handed over an Easybank card. When the validation came through, the woman tore the receipt off the printer and handed a pen to Lisa. "Sign here."

Lisa's face showed some concern. Until now no one had known Matt's signature from the scrawl she'd been using. This woman held the credit card with his signature on it. It would be a simple matter to look at the two signatures and know that Lisa was not the person who'd endorsed the back of the credit card. She gathered her courage and scrawled the most incoherent and angular signature she could make. The woman looked at the receipt and at the card.

"Thank you. You have the same problem my brother does," she said simply, handing the credit card back to Lisa.

"Your brother?" Lisa asked.

"He can't sign his name the same way twice," the woman explained. "One day his writing is picture perfect, and the next even he can't make out his own signature."

"Matt's writing with his left hand, for a change, too," Tom added, coming up from behind.

The woman smiled and handed Lisa the envelope with the tickets. "Thank you for using Starlight Travel, and have a nice honeymoon!"

"I'll do that," Lisa promised, breathing a sigh of relief that she'd escaped detection again. "Thanks."

"This was worth the trip for me," Tom told Lisa, as they left the desk.

"How so?"

"I got a phone number from Theresa over there," Tom pointed to the woman he'd been conversing with in the corner. Theresa waved at Lisa.

"You never miss an opportunity to pick up a woman do you?" Lisa asked.

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Tom chuckled heartily as he swept his arm in a gesture indicating the sea of humanity passing by in the mall. "You know as well as I do that any one of these women could be the right one for me. I won't find her if I don't ask!"

They merged into the crowd and were headed for the stairs when Tom stepped away and shouted. "You go out to the car! I'm just going to stop in here at the Beanery to get another coffee!"

CHAPTER ELEVEN

A New Look

A beauty salon. Matt told himself that it was not a dream. He was in a beauty salon. More than that: not only was Matt inside a beauty salon, he was a customer.

The clock said the day was half over, but Matt knew it was hardly begun for him. Sometime in the wee hours of the morning, his mind had transferred to this female body, while the previous owner found her own mind in Matt's male husk. Matt told himself that this kind of thing was patently impossible, and was the stuff one saw in grade-B horror movies and in amateur erotic fiction. The only explanation was that something supernatural had happened. It had to be magic, although that was only supposition. Clearly neither he nor Lisa had wished this upon themselves.

If this *was* a curse, who would have had a grudge against both Lisa and him? He'd only met Lisa at the wedding rehearsal yesterday. He'd said maybe a few words to her, but nothing that would make any third party angry or spiteful.

In terms of being a curse, the situation was embarrassing but not particularly dangerous or difficult for either of its victims. As a man, Matt had gotten used to being taller than most women and had affected a kind of macho swagger. Now he was one of the fair sex and having to act as feminine as he knew how. As long as he had to pretend to be Lisa, he'd been doing all sorts of things that were the antithesis of macho. He'd had to take a diaphragm out of himself. He'd undressed in the women's locker room at the health club. He'd taken an aerobics class. He'd shaved away his pubic hair - all of it. He'd taken two showers with dozens of naked women, and in full view of his fiancée. He'd been hit on by a guy at the gym. He'd gotten a facial and a manicure. He'd had his legs waxed; and he'd had his hair curled and styled. None of these things had been on his agenda yesterday.

He wondered how Lisa was faring in her disguise as a man. It was probably a lot easier for her. All she had to do was hang around all day with Tom, dress up like a guy and pretend to be somewhat butch. Matt

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had known lots of females that wore male clothes from time to time, and they seemed pretty comfortable doing it. Denise had worn his biking shorts and T-shirts in public a few times, and she often used one of his old long-sleeve shirts as a nightgown. Matt was aware that Lisa was wearing an athletic supporter for the first time in her life, but he figured she was having it relatively easy. After all, he'd worn a sports bra today. He'd also worn a leotard and satin briefs, to say nothing of the microscopic bikini! There was no comparison between the disruption in his life and the one that Lisa was experiencing. In his opinion, it was more disturbing to be a man one day and a woman the next than the other way around.

Matt reflected on his feelings since waking. Ignoring for the moment the modified body parts, he really didn't think his psyche was affected. He still enjoyed the Three Stooges and had no inclination to see chick-flicks like "Steel Magnolias" or "Thelma and Louise", He was still Matt Stevens, confirmed heterosexual. He was still very attracted to women and not at all interested in men, although he conceded the fact that his stubborn sexual orientation now technically made him a lesbian.

The day might have been worse, Matt realized. He might have become an ugly old woman, or could have awakened as an unfamiliar woman in a harem or a bordello somewhere. Even exchanging minds with Lisa, the timing could have been such that he would have had to contend with her 'monthly visitor'. Fortunately none of those things had happened, and except for the stress of pretending to be a virtual stranger who happened to be the opposite gender, there was little to complain about.

The hair stylist was pulling the curlers out of Matt's hair then combing and spraying the result. Matt had actually not minded so much being pampered, after the pain of the leg waxing. He'd expected the morning to be filled with a series of little snafus. Instead, sitting here, he had hardly a care as long as no one caught onto his secret.

"All done! You look like a princess!" Marta, his stylist proclaimed after several moments of combing. She spun the chair around so Matt faced the mirror. She removed his smock and helped him step down from the chair.

Matt looked at his reflection in the mirror on the wall of the beauty salon. There was a very pretty woman with a curly hairstyle looking back at him. The stylists had taken the relatively straight hair which he'd had on entering the store and turned it into a frilly cascade of loose curls and satin ribbons. The loops in the hair made it a bit shorter, and pulled it

back from his neck and face. He could feel the circlets of hair tickling the back of his neck as he tilted his head left and right. It was now obvious to Matt why Denise had insisted that he not wear a pullover tee shirt to the gym.

Denise walked up beside Matt and assayed the reflections in the mirror. She had just finished her styling too. Her hairstyle was not identical to Matt's, but both featured lots of curls. Denise's hair was piled on top of her head more, making her seem taller somehow, and very lovely. She was going to be a beautiful bride. Matt had to restrain himself from leaning over and planting a kiss on her.

"You look great, Lisa!" Denise complimented.

"Uh ... thanks," Matt said uneasily. Denise's compliment reminded him that he had learned nothing about his situation since being startled awake at the toilet that morning. He knew that it was nearly one o'clock in the afternoon and he was no closer to getting his male body back than he had been earlier in the day. He smiled at Denise's reflection in the mirror. "You look really beautiful, too!"

"Thanks. Now all we have to do is keep from messing up these 'dos for another couple of hours," Denise said.

Matt wondered how hard it would be to keep his hair from being messed up. He'd never had to worry about that kind of thing before, but he quickly thought of several scenarios that might come to fruition. He could guess that wet weather would be a factor, although he could see the bright sunlight outside the beauty salon window. Being a woman had been a long series of small stresses for Matt so far. Worrying about getting hit on, deciding when or if to wear a bra, having to mind his walk and the way he placed his legs when he sat, and now the hair. If he was going to be female for the rest of his life, additional stress like this might give him ulcers before long.

Denise promised the salon operators that she would bring her wedding pictures by the shop the next time she came in, and after brief good-byes she and Matt left for the apartment. As they walked back to the parking lot, a gust of wind came up and blew a few of his curls against his cheek. Denise noticed that he visibly stiffened and acquired a panicked expression.

"I guess you haven't had your hair done in a while. Don't worry about this little breeze," Denise calmed him with a smile. "It won't do any damage"

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They got to the car and eased into the front seats. Denise's hair almost reached the ceiling of the interior as she strapped herself into the seatbelt. They drove back to the apartment to dress for the wedding.

CHAPTER TWELVE

For Old Times Sake

Lisa opened Matt's apartment door and carried the boxes and tuxedo in with her. The wristwatch on her right ... no, left wrist showed just after one. She and Denise had intended to join the other bridesmaids at the church in two hours and the ceremony was to start around four o'clock. But those plans were those she had before she turned into a man.

Fortunately for Lisa, Tom had reviewed the strategy he and Matt had planned, where Matt would not go directly to the church but drive instead to the hotel where the reception was to be held. Tom was scheduled to meet Matt at the hotel and to drive him back to the church for the ceremony. That way, Matt and Denise would ride the limousine from the church to the reception, but Matt could drive Denise from the reception to the airport in his own car. Now that Lisa knew the plan, she could do those things.

Lisa was getting concerned about the lack of progress on her predicament and the late hour. Nothing so far had happened to help her understand or counteract the body switch in which she and Matt were involved, so she might have to drive Matt's car to the hotel.

Lisa kept hoping that this nightmare would just end. She wanted to be a girl again, and just get back to her life as a pre-school teacher. Matt had to get his body back so he could marry Denise and go on with his life. Despite the experiences of the last six hours, Lisa didn't know anything about being a guy. She liked certain of the physical benefits of her new height and strength, but this situation was not comfortable for her physically or socially. She wanted her good old female body back. This just wasn't right.

Surely, Matt and Denise were back from the health club by now so that they could dress for the wedding. She wanted to phone Matt to see if he had worked out how they got this way, but Lisa could think of no excuse that Denise would accept for letting Matt speak with her again. If

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there were only some pretense, Lisa would have just called him and tried to figure things out, but Denise would have objected. The only thing she could do is wait. It was Matt's turn to find a way to phone her, this time. Of course he would phone if he had news, wouldn't he?

Before long it would be time to don the tuxedo for the wedding, unless she and Matt became themselves again. Lisa decided to get comfortable until the time came to dress. She locked the apartment door and removed her shoes. Her pants and socks and sports shirt were soon lying in a heap on the floor. She adjusted herself in the supporter and wandered into the bedroom.

"Hi, lover!" a silky voice cooed.

Lisa stopped at the doorway and stared at the blond woman sprawled on the bed. Lisa blinked her eyes and hoped it was only an illusion, but the vision persisted.

The woman on the bed was completely naked. Her short blond hair was styled in a pageboy cut and made her look vaguely Scandinavian. Her body was slim, muscular, and lightly tanned all over. She gestured with a long red fingernail for Lisa to approach.

"Wha ... What are you doing here?" Lisa asked, walking slowly to the bed.

"I read in the paper that you're getting married today, and I wanted to give you another fling with me. One more 'stab', you might say, before you settle down with boring old Denise. Let's just call it an early wedding present," the woman explained.

Lisa was more than startled. "How? ... How did you ...?"

The woman lowered her eyes. "When we broke up last year, I made a copy of your apartment key before giving it back. I hope you're not mad at me breaking in."

Lisa was aghast. "I think you'd better leave," she protested.

The naked person on the bed smiled at Lisa. "Your lips tell me to go, but I see a part of you begging me to stay." The woman was staring about three feet below Lisa's face.

Lisa's eyes fell to her own crotch and she saw that the erection had returned in full force. This was ridiculous! How come this body kept doing these things? This is another woman! Lisa tried to tell herself that

she could not be attracted to a woman, but her hardon continued to throb. The woman on the bed finally reached over and freed the turgid organ from the jockstrap.

"Let Sheila make it feel all better," the woman purred.

"Look ... Sheila, ..." Lisa tried to reason. "I'm not interested."

"I'd say at least part of you is very interested," Sheila retorted, pulling Lisa's supporter down her legs. "And don't try to tell me being with you is wrong or anything. Until you say 'I do', it's still open season."

The feelings Lisa had coursing through her body were not at all womanly or pure at this moment. She had an unrelenting urge to plunge her stiffening hardon into the slit in Sheila's pelvis over and over until her orgasm exploded in a geyser of semen. She had no idea why she felt that way, but there was no mistaking the primal messages flooding her brain. Lisa could feel herself blushing just from the thoughts she was having.

The woman stroked Lisa's erection with one hand and parted her own labia with the other. Lisa could see by the moist folds between Sheila's legs that the woman was very turned on. Lisa was dismayed as the erection immediately stiffened further.

"I've never gotten over our breakup," Sheila explained. "None of the men I met since were like you."

"I'll bet that's even more true now," Lisa murmured. Sheila either didn't hear or simply ignored her.

Lisa found herself matching her breathing to the gentle manipulations of the woman's hand stroking up and down her member. Lisa recognized the rapidly surging tension inside herself and pulled away.

"Awww, lover!" Sheila complained. "One more encore! For old time's sake!" Sheila yanked Lisa off-balance. There was no recourse for Lisa but to land on the bed next to Sheila.

Lisa fell onto the bedspread on her back and Sheila was kneeling astride her in a flash. The woman grabbed Lisa's cock and guided it into the depths of her vagina as she settled onto Lisa's pelvis.

"Ooooooh! There! All comfy snug and warm!" Sheila said, wiggling her hips in emphasis against Lisa. The woman's labia were crushed

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against Lisa's groin and dribbled a bit of the accumulated moisture onto Lisa's pubic hair.

"Sheila!" Lisa admonished.

"Shhh! You let me do the work, lover!" Sheila responded, as she slowly raised and lowered herself on Lisa's unwanted erection. Lisa could feel the warm tight wetness of the woman's tissues gently massaging her; a feeling that was wonderful but remotely distasteful. This was not right, making love to another woman!

Sheila had her eyes closed in ecstasy, enjoying the union with a person she thought was Matt. Lisa realized that there was no real reason to stop the woman now, and besides, it felt too good to stop anyway. Lisa reached up and gently stroked Sheila's breasts in the way that she knew would feel very good to her. Lisa figured that she might as well stimulate Sheila, who was certain to appreciate the new skill that 'Matt' had learned.

Lisa looked to her groin and could see the shiny slickness of her erection sliding in and out of the woman. Lisa felt vaguely guilty for violating Sheila, although there was no doubt that the woman had asked for this. Why feel such guilt? Was Sheila being abused? Was she being raped? Was she an unwilling participant? Was she in any pain? From the expression on Sheila's face, it was obvious that the genital intrusion from Lisa was not painful and was in fact greatly appreciated.

Sheila continued her slow up-and-down rhythm for a few minutes until she suddenly paused in mid-stroke and dropped her pelvis onto Lisa with full force. She began panting and moaning in what Lisa recognized was a powerful climax. The woman ground her pelvis against Lisa's with an urgency borne of her own passion. The feel of the trembling pussy around her shaft sent Lisa over the edge, too. She felt the same pulsing of her prostate that she'd felt in the shower that morning, and her body tensed as her orgasm arrived. This was a wonderful sensation!

"Yes! Yes! Do me, lover! Do me!" Sheila gasped in the second wave of her pleasure as she felt Lisa's emission spurting within her. The woman eventually collapsed onto Lisa and kissed her on the lips. "You were always the best! I really envy Denise!" She pulled herself away from Lisa and quickly scuttled to the bathroom. Lisa heard the shower start.

Lisa stood up and noticed the pool of semen on her pelvis that had drooled out of Sheila. She carefully dabbed at the mess with a tissue from the nightstand.

She followed Sheila to the lavatory. Inside the bathroom Lisa was met with a wall of vapor. She slid into the shower behind Sheila and washed the ejaculate out of her pubic hair.

"You know Sheila, I've never had sex quite that way before," Lisa told her, as they let the water cascade over them.

"It was great for me too, Matt," she replied, misunderstanding. She gently soaped Lisa's chest and stared meaningfully into her eyes. "I'm just sorry that you're being taken out of circulation. There aren't any considerate, gentle, cute, passionate ... and hetero ... people like you out there anymore."

Lisa was uncertain just how heterosexual she could claim to be from now on, after making love to Sheila. "Nonsense!. I can't say I know for sure, but there's got to be others," Lisa said to console the woman. She thought about her own situation and how she'd been looking for Prince Charming and all that she'd found were frogs. Sheila was probably going through the same thing. Lisa hugged Sheila tightly and they held each other in the shower until the hot water was gone.

Sheila had dressed and left before Lisa had emerged from the bathroom. The only evidence of the woman's visit was on the coffee table; the illicit copy of Matt's key with a faint lipstick kiss imprint on the handle. Matt had missed quite a romp with her, and Lisa was not sure if she could find a way to tell him what had transpired. Neither was she sure whether she would admit to enjoying the feeling of having sex as a male. It had been more than a little pleasurable, and that observation was disconcerting to Lisa. Was she acquiring a male point of view about sex, too? Did this mean that she was reluctant to get her own body back, or that she wanted to be male forever?

Lisa took stock of her feelings and emotions and decided that she was neither ready to be a man for the rest of her life nor was she becoming attracted to women. She chalked her recent reaction up to a testosterone overdose and perhaps a bit of pity for tragically self-deprecating Sheila. Although she wouldn't refuse the offer of another sexual encounter while male, there was no way Lisa could imagine herself intentionally trying to seduce a woman. Hormones aside, it just wasn't the life she wanted.

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Lisa tried to make a comparison between sex as a woman and as a man and realized that the two were very similar in some ways and quite different in others. There were things about sex from a male perspective that Lisa enjoyed and yet she harbored fond memories of other things that women enjoyed that were totally missing. She missed the long drawn-out climb toward ecstasy she'd always experienced as a woman, and the all-over electricity of her climax. The male equivalent was concentrated in her cock but very brief and intense. Better or worse? It was hard to say. Different, surely.

She drew a deep breath. If there was ever an opportune time for this sex switch to reverse itself, it would be now. She closed her eyes and wished very hard but knew before opening her eyes that nothing happened. There was little time left to work anything out or to try to undo the situation. She would have to get together with Matt at the church and try to work on the problem there.

She retrieved her undergarment from the bedroom floor where Sheila had dropped it. She pulled it up her legs and into place. Matt was right after all. Once you got used to the straps, a supporter was rather comfortable.

Lisa was surprised when Matt's cellphone rang. Finally! She hoped it was Matt with news about their predicament.

She did not recognize the number on the display but answered the call anyway. "Hello?"

"Hey, Matt, this is Charlie down at the office," an unfamiliar voice said.

"Oh," Lisa uttered with a definite tone of disappointment when she heard a man's voice. "Charlie."

Charlie continued: "Listen. I hope I haven't caught you at a bad time, but I just got the news: our firm won the bid for the Kerrville light rail station."

Lisa had heard about the light rail station, as had almost everyone else in Kerrville. The station was going to be built a few blocks from the preschool where she taught. "Well, Charlie, that's really great news, but ..."

"Yeah! I knew you wanted to know. Our company is going to be relocating a whole department right in Kerrville for the next year or so to

supervise the project, and I hear that not only is your group in line for the job, but you personally are up for a promotion to lead designer."

"Lead designer?" Lisa whispered.

Charlie spoke quietly, as if he was afraid of being overheard. "Now, nothing is announced or set or anything, but it looks really good. So mum's the word until everything is official. Hey! Don't you have a wedding this weekend?"

"In an hour or two actually, ..." Lisa said.

"Whoa! Hey, look, you go get married, and I guess we'll see you when you get back from your honeymoon, eh? Don't do nothin' I wouldn't, heh, heh!" the man chuckled.

"All right Charlie! I gotta go. I'll see you when I get back from Hawaii. Bye." Lisa disconnected the call.

So it looked like Matt's job might be based in Kerrville. Lisa wondered how Denise would deal with that. If what Charlie said was true, either Matt or Denise would have a pretty long commute from where they chose to live. Denise's job was here in Asherton Heights, a hundred miles from Kerrville.

Lisa went to the living room and surveyed the components of the tuxedo arrayed on the couch. She took the fancy shirt out of the wrapper and pulled it around herself. The starched collar and cuffs were stiff and scratchy against her skin. She could even feel the nipples on this male body rubbing against the rough heavily starched fabric of the shirt, and found it as uncomfortable as a starched blouse felt against her female bosom.

She located the cufflinks in the shoebox and pushed the studs through the shirt cuffs. The ruffles on the front of the shirt were not too much different that those on some of Lisa's blouses, frilly and not very masculine. She wondered how it was all right for men to wear a fancy ruffled shirt as long as it was with a tuxedo. Was it some sort of license to bend their gender stereotypes? The problem was not with this man or that one ... it was other men ... men in groups. Men cared about the masculine image they project to other guys. A woman didn't place any emphasis on the way her men dressed, and wouldn't mind her significant other wearing ruffles or lace!

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She went to Matt's bedroom and got a fresh pair of socks; black of course. There was no other possible choice. She returned to the living room, stepped into the tuxedo pants and pulled them up to her waist. She noticed that the pants had no belt loops, and her confusion was resolved when she found the suspenders on the hanger. The suspenders were just a bunch of straps and clips: a lot like a bra without cups really. That was another thing that had confused Lisa. Men seemed to have this irrational fear of wearing a bra. It was true that men had no anatomical reason to wear one, but seemed to think that just knowing how to fasten a brassiere around themselves was somehow an indictment against their masculinity. She clucked her tongue and shook her head as she clipped the suspenders on the waistband and slipped her arms under the straps.

There was this wide sash belt thing on the hanger, and Lisa remembered her high-school prom date wearing one around his waist. There were folds that Lisa couldn't decide whether should point down or up. She opted for pointing down in case food at the reception should fall into a fold and get caught. There was a clip-around bow tie in the shoe box. She slid the strap under her collar and snapped the pre-tied bow onto the other end of the strap. She was glad that she didn't have to figure out how to tie one herself. But then, Matt probably didn't know how to tie one either.

She glanced at the time. It was after two, and time to take the car to the hotel to meet Tom. She lifted the highly polished black shoes from the box and tied them on her feet. She dug in the discarded pants on the floor and got Matt's wallet and keys. Fortunately Matt had his license plate number on his keyring, so Lisa had a fighting chance of locating the car in the apartment parking lot. She put on the tuxedo jacket and looked at herself in the mirror. There was a groom in the reflection. A darn fine looking groom, Lisa told herself. She only hoped that Matt could get his mind back into this body before the ceremony.

Lisa looked through the bags and boxes on the sofa to find the wedding bands and airline tickets. She put the tickets in the suitcase and the rings in her jacket pocket. Matt's body was ready for the wedding even if Lisa's brain inside the body wasn't.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Dressed For Success

Denise turned away from the mirror. "Did I tell you that the other bridesmaids are wearing individual nylons and not pantyhose?" she asked Matt .

Matt stared at her in stunned surprise. "No! You never mentioned that!" Matt was standing in the center of the bedroom wearing nothing but his gold neck chain and wristwatch. Denise was almost as bare, wearing just white silk panties.

"I've got the garter belt and stockings here for you," Denise told him. "I'll help you, if you've never worn a garter belt before."

"I can definitely confirm that I've never worn a garter belt before," Matt replied.

Denise went to her closet and dug around in a shopping bag. She pulled out a thing that seemed to be a melange of straps and snaps. She held it out between her hands for Matt to step into.

"Shouldn't I have panties on or something?" Matt asked.

Denise giggled. "None of the other bridesmaids are wearing underwear. It's Miranda's idea. She says it makes you smile a little more knowing how sexy you are under your gown. The other girls think it's really wild."

"It's wild all right. I just don't know if I want to do this," Matt argued.

"C'mon Lisa!" Denise pouted. "You're a fine one to talk after shaving your pubes this morning!"

"I guess I don't have a choice, do I?" Matt groaned, seeing the determined look in Denise's face. He stepped into the loop of elastic and Denise pulled it up to his hips. There were now springy little straps hanging down all around his midsection.

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Denise snapped open a plastic pouch and extracted a pair of nylons. "Here! Put on the stockings. With your newly waxed legs, they'll glide on really smoothly."

Matt sat on the bed and slipped his leg into the stockings the way he'd seen women do it in movies. He bunched the fabric up in both hands and pushed his toe between his hands as he pulled a stocking up each leg and slowly played out the silk. The hosiery felt warm and snug sliding up his calf, over his knee and onto his thigh. The wide rim at the top of the stockings ended a few inches below where his legs met. He straightened the seams along the back of his legs before standing, then Denise quickly began snapping the little garter clips onto the top edge of the stockings, pulling the hosiery tightly upward on his thighs.

When Denise was finished fastening the clips onto the nylons, Matt glanced at his reflection in the full-length mirror inside the closet door and liked the sexy way he looked. Here was a shapely young woman with beautifully coifed hair wearing nylons and a garter belt. He was his own pinup fantasy.

"Whoo! I see somebody has a kinky sense of style!" Miranda said, entering the bedroom, and seeing Matt's stockings framing his shaved crotch. Miranda was wearing a blue-green strapless long gown. Her hair was cut and curled, but mostly a conservative trim without many frills. She seemed older and more mature than the other times that Matt had seen her. Maybe it was the dress Miranda wore. Maybe it was the perfunctory hairstyle. Maybe it was the fact that Matt was now several inches shorter than her.

"I like the look, Lisa," she continued. "You just don't seem like the type who'd shave herself that way."

"Hi, Randi!" Denise greeted her older sister, "She did it today at the gym."

"Neat," Miranda commented, wryly. "Itchy but neat. How you holding up, little sister? You ready to get married?"

Denise took a deep breath and nodded her head affirmatively. "I'm getting butterflies, now. It's starting to sink in that in an hour or so, I'll be Mrs. Stevens. It seems like it was only yesterday that Matt proposed."

"You don't have to marry him, you know," Miranda explained. "Dad will be out twenty grand for the reception, but I wouldn't worry. Dad's loaded. If it doesn't feel right to you, just back out now."

"No," Denise said with complete confidence. "I want to marry Matt. It's the right thing to do. Besides, maybe now I can get him to go to bed with me more than twice a month."

"Twice a month?" Miranda asked. "Denise, are you sure about this guy? Monks have sex more often than that! Maybe he just doesn't love you!"

Matt couldn't believe his ears. "Maybe he loves her too much," Matt suggested. "He might be afraid to scare her away by being too aggressive."

"Geez, Lisa," Miranda said with a tone of annoyance. "For a girl with no hair on her stuff, you sure have strange ideas about guys. I've been around men more than the two of you put together and I can tell you that men want only one thing. They would have their peckers buried to the hilt in your slit twenty four hours a day if you let them!"

"You think so?" Matt challenged.

"I know so!" Miranda replied. "I think I represent the voice of long experience."

"I always thought there were men who were more caring and considerate, and not always looking for sex," Matt reasoned.

Miranda laughed. "They're eunuchs, my dear!"

Matt could see that Miranda's remarks were making Denise giggle as she watched the verbal sparring.

"I believe there are sexy men with compassion out there," he tried to counter as lone spokesperson for his former gender.

"You can wait for a miracle to occur if you want," Miranda explained, "but when you get horny, you want a take-charge kind of guy. Someone ready to plumb your deepest depths at a moment's notice."

"I guess everyone wants something different." Matt conceded.

"Not in my experience, Lisa. Not in my experience," Miranda muttered.

Miranda helped Denise lift her bridal gown over her head and pull it down her body. When the sisters were done, Denise seemed to Matt like a fairy princess. Lace gave Denise an indistinct outline and the frilly lines of the dress made her look unbelievably beautiful. He could feel his male

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passion starting to assert itself, even though there was no appropriate sexual equipment to fulfill the urges he felt. He was aware that there was no outward sign of his arousal, although his mind told him otherwise. He stood there enjoying the glow as he drank in the vision of his bride-to-be.

"You ought to do your makeup and get into your dress, the limo is going to be here really soon," Denise said to Matt.

Matt looked at Miranda and then Denise. "I ... I wasn't thinking of wearing makeup ... you know ..."

Denise pouted. "Not everyone can use the natural look like you," she told him. "But I don't know if we have the time for you to put your makeup on anyway."

"Get over here!" Miranda ordered, and Matt complied, sitting at the vanity. "I'll get you fixed up in jig time. We'll set a new land speed record." She grabbed a little jar of rouge and smoothed a dab onto each of Matt's cheeks. He could feel Miranda's finger spreading the stuff around, although he had no idea how it made him look, since Miranda's face was inches from his and blocking his view of the mirror. Miranda used an eyebrow pencil to draw on each of Matt's supraorbital ridges. She opened a little case containing a palette with a bunch of colored pads in it, and rubbed a plastic stick with a foam applicator on one of the pads.

"Close your eyes for a moment," Miranda warned. She brushed the applicator across Matt's closed eyelids a few times. "Okay. You can open now." She then found a little jar with a thin brush in it and lifted the brush to Matt's eye. He blinked and tried to turn away. "Geez, Lisa, calm down! It's only eyeliner!" Miranda gingerly painted a line on the edge of each eyelid. She immediately got another tiny jar with a long wiry brush in it and brought that to Matt's eye. He had a hard time focusing that closely, but he could feel the brush pulling on his eyelashes. Probably mascara, Matt guessed.

"Looking good, so far," Miranda said. She scabbled on the vanity for another applicator and rubbed something kind of waxy onto Matt's lips. "Do this," she commanded, pressing her lips together as an example. Matt imitated her kissing action and she seemed pleased as he did. She used another fine-line brush to outline his lips.

"Almost done. Just close your eyes again for a moment," Miranda requested. Matt did as he was asked, and felt a powder puff strike his

cheeks and forehead. A light almost imperceptible touch from a soft brush whispered across his face.

"Open your eyes, Cinderella! Your fairy godmother is done! And it only took ... two and a half minutes. Another Miranda miracle!"

Matt opened his eyes and saw his reflection. He had been transformed. His eyes looked larger and seemed to sparkle. His lips seemed fuller and poutier than they had before. His face was translucent and had a rosy glow yet it looked very natural despite all of the things he knew Miranda had used.

Matt got the dress that he'd discovered in Lisa's garment bag and let Miranda help him pull it over his head. It had a full skirt and a sewn-in petticoat. It was blue-green like Miranda's and strapless as well. Matt felt very doubtful about the ability of his figure to keep the dress on his body.

When Matt had been out on the town with his buddies, it had always been a fascinating game, watching women in their strapless dresses, wondering if gravity would win out against friction, but now Matt found himself rooting for friction. Miranda zipped up the back of Matt's dress, and he felt the tight bodice holding the garment in place. At least it no longer seemed like the dress would simply slide off of him. The dress-watching game would never again seem so exciting now that he knew this secret.

"That necklace really goes well with the gown," Miranda told him. "I like the way the little charm hangs down in your cleavage."

Necklace? Oh yeah. The necklace. Matt had noticed it earlier in the day but had never had much of an opportunity to really look at it in detail. He lifted the little charm on the chain and realized how similar it was to the one the Tom had given him. The chain was a lot thinner than the one Matt owned but the little disk looked familiar.

So, Lisa had one of these little amulets, too! Miranda was right, the little gold disk looked right at home nestled there in the canyon between his breasts.

"I think she needs earrings." Miranda suggested, critically assaying Matt from head to toe.

"She's got a pair that she wore the other day. They'll look great. Just wear those again," Denise told Matt, as he stepped into a pair of platform-heels that had been dyed to match his dress.

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"I don't remember where I put them," Matt explained, since he had no idea where Lisa had stashed the earrings.

"I think they're in your suitcase," Denise reminded him.

Matt went to the suitcase and found a pair of dangly earrings in the pouch in the suitcase lid. He hoped these were the ones to which Denise had referred. Walking to the living room in the high-heel shoes was not as difficult as he had imagined. His body had a kind of natural balance on the things. In a lot of the transgender stories on the internet, the men who became women were complete klutzes when it came to walking about in high-heels, but Matt didn't have any difficulty. Another myth debunked!

He went into the bathroom and looked in the mirror as he pushed the earring posts through the holes in his earlobes. The earrings looked like miniature wind chimes with a dozen or so tiny silver tubes of various lengths hanging behind the hinge of his jaw.

The woman in Matt's reflection was beautiful. But, that was Lisa, not him. There was absolutely nothing about the reflection that looked like Matt, although he was painfully conscious that the reflection was his, and somehow not a woman except on the outside. If someone at the bachelor party last night had told him that he would be wearing a dress, earrings, makeup, hosiery and high heels in less than twenty four hours, he would have called them crazy. But, likewise, he would have called them crazy if they'd even hinted he'd have tits and a pussy.

The lobby intercom buzzed and Miranda rushed to answer it. "The limo is waiting," she announced loudly.

Denise came down the hall clutching a veil and gloves. She leaned into the bathroom and critiqued Matt.

"See?" she chided. "Those earrings are ideal. Don't forget your gloves." She tossed a pair to Matt. Matt caught the gloves and followed Denise. Before he got to the apartment door, he remembered his purse. He was getting a little concerned about how this stuff was becoming second nature to him. He'd expected to be like those fictional characters that had undergone an involuntary sex change and who never felt comfortable in the other role until someone ultimately brainwashed them out of spite or pity. He wasn't brainwashed, yet he felt increasingly at ease pretending to be Lisa. Maybe it was a survival instinct. Maybe the comfort was something subconscious just like the ability to wiggle when he walked or to wear heels without stumbling. He could only hope that

Lisa and he could come up with something to reverse the body exchange in the hour that remained before the wedding ceremony began. Matt followed Denise and Miranda out to the stairs.

All three women stood in the apartment stairwell, Denise locked the door and gave the key to Matt.

"You and Miranda can come back here after the reception and spend the night." Denise explained before she turned to her sister. "Lisa's going back to Kerrville tomorrow morning."

"Great!" Miranda exclaimed with a broad smile. "We'll stay awake. I'll mix a pitcher of margaritas and we can watch some TV. I've got a bunch more juicy stories about my boyfriends. We'll have a lot of laughs."

Matt hoped that he wouldn't be the one returning to the apartment with Miranda, although he was increasingly having his doubts.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Prelude To A Wedding

The limousine ride to the church was slow, and quite restful given the earlier events of the day. During the trip, Miranda helped Denise calm her nerves with a little impromptu meditation and sisterly counseling. Matt could have stood some of that assistance himself, but wasn't ready to explain the strange predicament in which he found himself. He realized now how much stress a young couple was under before a wedding ceremony. The groom was essentially going to promise to support his wife for their natural lives. The bride was merely to promise to be there for her husband, but the peer pressure from friends and relatives for her to have a perfect ceremony and reception was intense. Every little detail counted. Matt suspected that no wedding was error-free, and thus there were bound to be one or more moments where the stress level reached stratospheric heights.

Matt could foresee a bunch of problems with his sex-swap and this wedding, depending upon how close to the actual vows his switch back into his proper body came. He wondered if it was possible for the exchange with Lisa to occur without anyone knowing - just one moment Lisa in the tux; the next moment, Matt. If there was some sort of magical side-effect like angels singing or a swirl of colored lights or holograms or something, it would be a little hard to hide from the congregation. In that case, it would be best if the corrective exchange happened in the waiting room out of sight of anyone.

When the limousine reached the church, Denise was ushered toward a dressing room at the back of the sanctuary. Matt took off to find Lisa. He knew she would be waiting in the groom's ready room down the hall near the Sunday school classrooms. Until this morning, that was where he had planned to wait for the ceremony; before he woke up and discovered this freaky thing that had happened to him. He put on the white gloves, pulling them above his elbow and halfway up his upper arm. The bright white fabric accentuated the slight tan on his shoulders and breasts.

Matt grabbed the long skirt and lifted his dress so he could move faster. The wind rushing under the ruffles was cool on the moist area between his legs as he rapidly click-clicked his heels along the linoleum tile of the hallway. He only hoped that Lisa was alone.

"Oh, Miss!" a deep voice called out from behind him; a voice Matt recognized all too well.

Matt turned around to see his parents gesturing for his attention.

"Excuse me, Miss," Matt's father intoned, "but we're looking for our son, Matthew."

"The groom?" Matt asked them, knowing exactly whom they wanted.

"Yes," Matt's mother said sweetly, absorbing the full effect of Matt's dress, figure, makeup and hair in a long slow scan.

"I was on my way there, myself," Matt told them. "I think I know where we can find him. Follow me."

"Young lady, are you one of the bride's sisters?" his mother asked, recognizing the obvious similarity in appearance between Matt's new body and his fiancée.

"Sister? No," Matt answered, deciding not to use the brother joke with this audience.

"You know," Matt's mother commented, "you look so much like the bride, you and she could be twins."

"You'd never believe how many people have told me that... today alone," Matt confessed.

"That dress is really lovely on you. It is very flattering to your figure," his mother continued.

"Thank you," Matt returned. As he'd grown up, he'd never expected to have a figure at all, much less one his mother would have an opportunity or reason to compliment. He wondered what Mom would think if she knew that the lovely woman standing before her was actually her son. He couldn't decide whether she'd be any more shocked if she knew how little he was wearing under the dress.

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He turned to the direction he'd been traveling and led his parents down the hall toward the room where Lisa should be waiting. He heard his mother whisper to his father, "She's such a lovely girl, Donald. You know if we'd had a daughter, I would have wanted her to look just like this young lady."

Matt didn't let on that he'd overheard but muttered under his breath, "If I can't undo this, you may have gotten your wish, Mom."

Matt wondered what he would do if this condition between him and Lisa became permanent. Would he ever be able to explain the swap to his family, or would he and Lisa just continue their masquerade? The women at his architectural firm were not really treated the same as the men, somehow, and he didn't look forward to joining their number. Matt realized if he and Lisa never told anyone about how they became each other, that he would have to get familiar with a whole new set of relatives and co-workers. Lisa lived in another town and was a pre-school teacher or something like that. Matt wasn't sure he had the temperament to take her place and to deal with a horde of little kids day after day. He continued to hold out hope that he wouldn't have to find out.

Matt's gloved knuckles hardly made a sound as he knocked on the door to the chapel anteroom. He pushed open the door to see Lisa standing in the corner, her back to him.

"Hi Matt!" he said before Lisa could turn and open her mouth. "Your parents have been looking all over for you!" Matt stepped into the room and ushered his parents through the door.

"My par...?" Lisa began to ask, wondering why her parents would be at the wedding at all, much less looking for her, but stopped short when the unfamiliar man and woman entered the room. She understood immediately: Matt's parents! She also realized at once the favor Matt had done by announcing the identity of her visitors, and Matt gave her a sly wink to let her know that he was looking out for her.

"Hi!" Lisa non-committally greeted Matt's parents, not knowing if to call them Mom and Dad, or Mommy and Pop or something else entirely.

"Oh, Matthew!" the woman gushed. "You look so handsome!" Lisa found herself smothered in a heartfelt hug.

Matt's father was standing a little to the side. As Matt's mother stepped out of the hug, the elder Stevens offered his hand. "Well, you join the matrimonial ranks today, Matthew! Congratulations."

Lisa shook the proffered hand and felt her fingers compressed in the firm grip of the handshake.

"I say a tuxedo makes any man look sharp! Don't you think so, Miss?" Matt's father opined.

Matt suddenly realized that his father was talking to him.

"I'm sorry," Matt said, more sweetly and softly than he had intended. "What did you ask?"

"I was just admiring the cut of the tuxedo on Matthew," Matt's father explained. "I guess you girls like seeing the boys dressed up in these formals."

"Uh, ... well," Matt stammered. "I uh ..."

"She's a little modest," Lisa told Matt's parents, realizing the way that the question was phrased and that Matt was ill at ease due to the presence of his parents. "I'm sure she likes to see the men dressed as formally as the women."

"Well, we should get back out to the chapel before the ceremony starts," Matt's mother explained, quickly. "We just wanted to stop by and say good luck, dear." She kissed Lisa on the cheek, and Matt could see that his mother's eyes were becoming wet.

"You'll do fine," Matt's father said, "It's all downhill from here." He patted Lisa on the shoulder for good luck. Matt's parents stepped out of the room and were gone.

"Alone at last!" Matt exclaimed. "I've been trying to get a moment to figure out this mess we're in all day, and so far it's just been one thing after another!"

"Tell me about it!" Lisa commiserated. "I haven't had more than a few seconds to myself since I woke."

"Have you gotten any clues?" queried Matt.

"No!" Lisa frowned. "I was hoping you had an epiphany!"

"Sorry. All I know is that it's not something we can explain away with surgery or drugs," Matt patiently outlined. "Somehow, something supernatural happened last night that caused you and I to swap bodies. Call it magic. Call it a curse. Call it an evil spell. Whatever it is, I can't

Something Borrowed

explain it without ..." He paused when he noticed Lisa studying him. "What? What's wrong?" he asked with minor annoyance.

A bemused smile crossed Lisa's features. "Oh, nothing. I was just looking at you standing there with ribbons in your hair, makeup on your face, wearing high heels and a strapless dress. I was wondering what's going through your male mind right now."

"What's going through my mind is wondering how I'm going to get us unswapped before they start playing the wedding processional!" Matt snapped.

"You look so darn cute, do you know that?" Lisa joked.

Matt's expression became one of impatient exasperation. "I feel silly dressed like this," Matt admitted, "but I notice you're wearing a fairly unladylike tuxedo."

Lisa sighed. "I keep telling myself that it's a costume, and that underneath I'm still the same old Lisa."

"Except you have different chromosomes than yesterday, not to mention the new genital configuration," Matt pointed out.

"Don't remind me!" she boomed. "These stupid male hormones give me a hardon every time a pretty girl walks by."

"Pretty girls like me?" Matt teased leaning close to Lisa and sliding his gloved fingers against her neck.

"Yes! So cut that out!" Lisa reached between her legs to adjust her jockstrap after Matt's antics had caused a brief unwanted swelling there.

Matt got right to the point. "I'm aware that we don't have time to kid around, so I'm hoping being in a church will somehow help get us out of this situation. I'm going to say a few prayers for you and I to get our proper bodies before the ceremony, and I suggest you say a few prayers yourself. You're not agnostic or an atheist, are you?"

"Matt! I've taught Sunday school. I'll pray as hard as anyone for this to be over," Lisa responded.

There was a sharp knock on the door and Tom Bascome, the best man, entered. "Lisa! What are you doing here!?" Tom squawked. "I just came from the back of the chapel. Denise and her sister are going spastic

looking for you! They want to give you your flowers and last minute instructions. You really ought to get out there before the show starts!"

Matt shrugged and gave Lisa a worried look as he reluctantly shuffled to the door and was gone.

"I spoke with the organist on my way back here, and they're almost ready to start," Tom told Lisa. He stepped back from her and looked at her tux and judged it acceptable. The first few notes of organ music could be heard echoing in the building.

"The music is starting." Lisa mentioned, with resignation.

"That's our cue to get to the altar," Tom said.

Tom opened the waiting-room door and led the way to the chapel. It was a short walk from the anteroom, but Lisa said three prayers in those few dozen steps. She wanted to walk down the aisle with the rest of the bridesmaids, and not stand at the altar. There was nothing in her life she had ever wanted so much.

Quiet murmuring of dozens of guests was audible beneath the deep hollow tones of the pipe organ. Tom and Lisa quickly covered the short distance from the side entrance to the first step of the altar. Lisa glanced up at the stained-glass images of the Savior and the apostles and said another prayer, this time for Matt and not herself. A little altruism and humility couldn't hurt.

Lisa and Tom fidgeted for several minutes as the organ played and the pews filled. Suddenly, the processional started, and everyone turned to look to the back of the church.

The doors opened majestically, and a little flower girl appeared. She was no more than four years old, and she seemed apprehensive about littering the floor with the rose and daisy petals in her basket. She walked down the aisle sporadically scattering the flower fragments. When she reached the altar she ran to her mother with a big smile from a job well done. The ring bearer was next, carrying a pillow onto which someone had lightly sewn the rings that Tom and Lisa had picked up that morning. The little boy with the pillow and rings looked so adorable wearing the miniature tuxedo. He took his place near Tom and Lisa as the procession continued. Lisa smiled at the little boy at her side. He looked as uncomfortable being here as she felt.

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Next down the aisle came the maid of honor, Miranda. Lisa was amazed at how slinky Miranda made her gown look. She seemed to have a way with clothes that emphasized her sensuality. Lisa could sense her own libido receiving the signals that Miranda was broadcasting, and began to respond with stirrings of male arousal. Could nothing suppress these hormones? Lisa averted her eyes to block out Miranda's subliminal messages.

Following Miranda came the bridesmaids. There were five in all, including Matt. Lisa watched the short parade of maidens. They were all very beautiful in their identical gowns and fancy hairdos. They carried bouquets of flowers and had delicate wreaths of baby's breath in their hair, making them look like a procession of angels. The people in the pews murmured excitedly when the young women passed. Lisa was slightly disappointed not to be one of the girls being talked about. That was a moment she had anticipated for months.

The young bridal attendants were smiling: all of them except Matt. He had the most woebegone look on his face, and it was apparent that he wanted to be anywhere but walking around wearing a dress in front of friends and family. He obviously didn't realize that the only thing that made him look out of place was his unhappy expression. Lisa thought that Matt was at least as enchanting as the other bridesmaids and he certainly had done nothing to tarnish the natural beauty of the female body he'd acquired.

The women slowly made their way up the aisle and lined up alongside Miranda on the left of the altar. Matt caught Lisa's eye and mouthed the words "I'm sorry."

Lisa knew that Matt was blaming himself for the troubles as a result of his unfortunate choice of bed partners last night, but his contrition wasn't changing the fact that he and Lisa were still each other. "Me, too," her lips silently said back to Matt.

The organ struck up a fanfare and the congregation stood to watch the bride enter.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

'Til Death Do Us Part

Matt squeezed his eyes shut. "Please God," he murmured, "if you can help me now, please do something to make things right. I'm very sorry for what I did last night, and I promise never to stray again as long as I live. Amen."

"Shhhh!" Miranda loudly hissed into Matt's ear.

Matt hadn't realized how loudly he was praying until Miranda shushed him. Denise had just entered the back of the chapel arm in arm with her father. She wore a lace veil over her face that hung from a satin ring that circled her head. Taking small steps, Denise seemed to float down the aisle. Matt thought she looked so pretty.

Matt was feeling a combination of sadness, self-pity and frustration at the mess he was in. It was mere moments until the vows would be spoken, and he was still in the wrong body. It wouldn't have been too bad to become another man. He could have explained being another guy and everyone might even have understood. But, turning into a woman was just too implausible. So here he was, watching his betrothed come down the aisle to marry someone else. He silently prayed one more time and then crossed his fingers, closed his eyes, and wished with every ounce of his being for everything to undo itself.

Lisa was wishing the same thing with her eyes closed as well. She couldn't marry Denise! Well, she could certainly speak the words of the wedding vows, but she wouldn't mean them. If only this body swap hadn't happened, or if it had only happened on another day and not her best friend's wedding day, or if it hadn't happened with the groom! If only ...

The organ music ended as Denise kissed her father and stepped up to the altar to join her groom. The father of the bride stood at the front pew with Denise's mother. Tom patted Lisa on the back and stepped a few paces away from the altar, his job done.

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The ceremony that Denise wanted was simple and brief. There were no hymns and no long vocals by an unseen soloist. The minister said a few brief words about the sanctity of holy matrimony. He had a thick Hungarian accent and pronounced the word as "muh-TRIM-any". Once he'd finished his short lecture he launched quickly into the vows.

"Do you Matthew Stevens come here of your own free will today to enter into the bonds of holy muhtrimany?"

Lisa looked at Matt for guidance. Matt nodded assent.

"Uh ... I do," Lisa said, returning her attention to the pastor.

The minister turned to Denise. "Do you Denise Morton come here today of your own free will to enter into the bonds of holy muhtrimany?"

"I do," she quietly responded. She glanced over at her groom and smiled fetchingly.

The minister looked over at the little boy with the pillow standing next to Tom, and gestured for him to come forward. "The rings please?"

The ring bearer brought the pillow and the minister plucked the rings from the threads holding them in place. He held the rings aloft for all to see.

The minister proclaimed, "These rings are unending circles of gold. They represent not only the endless love of the Creator for all mankind, but the unending love and devotion between Matthew and Denise. These rings will remain on the fingers of the couple as a constant reminder of that love."

He handed a ring to Lisa. "Matthew, place the ring on Denise's finger and repeat after me."

Lisa took Denise's hand and put the ring on her finger. The ring had three medium sized diamonds on it, and sparkled in the sunlight spilling through the skylight above the altar. Lisa remembered the last time she had put a ring on any girl's finger had been at a slumber party when she was twelve and the girls at the party were pretending to get married. The reality and surreality of this situation was frightening.

The minister began, "With this ring, I do thee wed."

Lisa repeated the phrase, haltingly.

The minister handed the other ring to Denise. "Denise, put the ring on Matthew's finger and repeat after me," he coached.

Lisa was reluctant to give her hand to Denise...she briefly thought about refusing and calling off the whole wedding, but realized that she and Matt might become unswapped at any moment and that making a scene would embarrass Denise and Matt to no end. She had no right to ruin their wedding day. All Lisa hoped was that it wouldn't turn out to be her own wedding day.

Denise took Lisa's hand and pushed the ring onto her finger. Lisa marveled at how large the ring seemed compared to the ones she'd worn as a woman. The ring was huge!

"With this ring, I do thee wed," the minister chanted.

Denise looked into the groom's eyes, and practically whispered, "with this ring I do thee wed."

"Matthew Stevens, do you take this woman as your lawfully wedded wife, to love, honor and cherish, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, as long as you both shall live?"

Lisa's mouth became very dry, and she had a hard time swallowing. After a long moment she responded, "I ... I do."

The minister nodded. "And do you Denise Morton take this man to be your lawfully wedded husband, to love, honor and cherish for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, as long as you both shall live?"

Denise's voice was no longer a whisper. "I do!" she stated firmly and clearly.

The minister smiled. "Then by the power vested in me by the church, state and this community, I pronounce you husband and wife."

Lisa's heart sank. The vows were spoken, she was still male and she was now legally married to Denise.

The minister turned to Lisa. "You may kiss your bride."

Lisa had never expected to have to do this. She'd always assumed that Matt and she would get their bodies back somehow before this part of the ceremony. Lisa tried to stall, hoping for her prayers to be answered. Denise was becoming impatient though, and had already lifted her veil to speed things along. She was leaning in toward Lisa with her lips pursed

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and her eyes closed. Lisa closed her own eyes and prayed for a last-second miracle. Her lips touched Denise's, but no miracle occurred. Lisa was somewhat surprised as Denise slipped her a little tongue during the kiss.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I present the newlyweds Matthew and Denise!" the minister proclaimed as the kiss continued.

The people in the pews applauded and photoflashes briefly strobed from several directions as relatives took pictures of the just-wed couple. Matt closed his eyes in dismay and sympathy with Lisa. He knew she was not enjoying herself.

Matt pictured himself at the altar, kissing. He could imagine soft lips touching his, a warm delicate body against his, and the pleasant aroma of perfume as he leaned close. He was momentarily confused as he realized that he was not picturing Denise's face as the one he was kissing, but the face he'd worn since this morning. Why would he do that? Why not Denise's face? Wasn't he in love with her? He opened his eyes in time to see Denise and Lisa begin the recessional parade out of the chapel.

Denise walked slowly up the aisle on Lisa's arm. She leaned over to Lisa and whispered in her ear, "That wasn't so bad, now, was it? You just wait until we get to Hawaii! I've got some very sexy things in my suitcase!"

Lisa groaned inwardly and tried to tell herself that the wedding was just a bad dream. She told herself that she was still asleep in bed and that the daiquiris at the Throbbin's Nest caused this nightmare. There was no way she could have married her former college roommate. There was no way she could be a man. There was no way she could be living this horrible story.

She knew she was fooling herself, though. This was no dream. Lisa was awake, and she was a man, and she had just married her best friend.

Denise and Lisa traversed the length of the church and went to the bride's dressing room to wait for the church to empty. Tom came to the room a moment or two later and shook Lisa's hand.

"Well, you did it, buddy!" Tom grinned. "I had my doubts last night when you were passed out on my kitchen floor, but you did it!"

Denise looked at Lisa critically. "Passed out on the kitchen floor!? How drunk did you get last night?"

Lisa grimaced at Denise. "Would you believe me if I told you I don't remember?"

Denise's features softened. "Well, what matters is that you're here now, you're sober, and we're finally married."

Miranda knocked on the door. "The limo is ready to take you to the reception, and everyone is lined up on the steps to pummel you with rice. Let's not keep them waiting!"

Denise grabbed a purse that matched her gown from the dressing table and quickly kissed Lisa. "Ready?" she asked.

"No," Lisa said under her breath, but she and Denise left the church and raced down the steps as everyone tossed rice at them. They collapsed in the back seat of the limousine and the car sped away. Lisa could see the rice that had collected in Denise's hairdo, nestled in the little curls and tucked in the ribbons. Lisa herself had a few grains of rice in her short male hair, but the few grains that had insinuated themselves into her shoes were painful against her heels. She stared out the window of the limo as the scenery blurred past.

"What's the matter, Matt? You look preoccupied," Denise said, compassionately.

"I really don't feel like my old self today," Lisa replied.

"Well, just who do you feel like?" Denise joked.

"You wouldn't believe me if I told you," Lisa sighed.

"I don't know if we have time for a quickie here in the limousine, but would that cheer you up?" Denise offered, with a sultry purr.

"No!" Lisa snapped.

"I know," Denise consoled. "You're just overwhelmed by the enormity of it all. Were actually married, and that's a lot of responsibility. Miranda and I had a nice long talk on the ride to the church, and she helped me lose my anxiety. Try this: take a deep breath, and say to yourself 'everything is going to be all right.' Go ahead. Do it."

Lisa figured that she had nothing to lose. She closed her eyes and took a deep breath, and released it slowly. She quietly said, "everything is going to be all right."

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"Good," Denise coached. "Now say: 'nothing is too big a problem for me.'"

"Nothing is too big a problem for me," Lisa echoed.

"Very good," Denise coached. "One more. I will face my problems head on."

"I will face ... Where do you get this stuff?!" Lisa grouched.

"Never mind," Denise answered. "'I will face my problems head on.'"

Lisa took another breath. "I will face my problems head on."

"See?" Denise said with a smile. "Now don't you feel better already?"

"I guess so," Lisa lied.

"Just in time, too," Denise said, after a quick glance out the window. "We're almost to the reception hall."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Watershed

Tom drove Matt to the reception. Matt had ridden in Tom's clunker of an El Dorado many times, but this time, he'd discovered the erotic thrill of having certain parts of his anatomy vibrated by the shivers from the rumbling engine. Perhaps it was a sensation of the crisp petticoat against the bare flesh between his legs or the fact that this body just seemed to feel things more acutely. Whatever the reason, it was surprising just how much the trembling stimulated him, so Matt was glad that the trip was as short as it was. If it had gone on much longer, he would have been very embarrassed to explain a shuddering orgasm to Tom, without it sounding like a come-on. Pretty much anything a woman said to Tom was a come-on, and Matt knew enough to avoid anything even remotely sexual in his presence.

As it was, Tom had tried to cop another feel of Matt's breast during the drive, passing it off as an innocent check of the shoulder belt. Matt was a little concerned that if he didn't make a conscious effort to block the images out of his mind, he was getting slightly aroused from Tom's touch. The more he got into the moment, the more he began to wonder what it would be like to have sex now - with another man.

Matt had conscientiously avoided thinking that way all day, even when he was wearing the teeny weeny bikini and had seen some guys at the pool displaying the outline of their genitalia in their Speedos. Now, the more he visualized those guys, the more turned on he became - much to his dismay. He guessed that the feminine hormones in this body were subtly influencing his thought processes the way the hormones in his old body were triggering the unwanted erections for Lisa.

Matt used his old trick of thinking about baseball averages and trying to catalog the names of all of the American League outfielders to take his mind off his rapidly moistening crotch, and after a while the mental images faded.

Something Borrowed

Matt got out of the car at the hotel entrance, while Tom drove to the parking garage. Matt noticed that there were a lot of people in tuxedos and gowns at the hotel, but most were not people that he recognized from Denise's wedding. Matt made his way into the hotel, and through the lobby to the escalators up to the function room level.

Many of the people getting on the escalators seemed to be from the Far East. A few were speaking what seemed to be Chinese, although Matt could not tell one Asian language from another. He was aware that Asherton Heights had a large percentage of Asian residents that had come to America to work at the technology companies nearby. So, he reasoned by pure statistics, they were likely to be Chinese.

He lifted his dress slightly and stepped onto the escalator. The motion of the moving stairs made him unsteady in the platform heels, and he fell against the gentleman riding the stair above his.

"Excuse me," Matt apologized, softly.

The man turned around when Matt spoke and Matt could see that, like many of the people on the escalator, he was Asian. The man stared at Matt's chest for a moment before responding, "Ah. Chung Doh Wat."

"Uhhh ... okay," Matt said, not understanding the phrase and getting a little annoyed at the way the man was staring at his boobs.

"No, No," the man chuckled. "You have Chung Doh Wat."

"Who?" Matt wondered.

"No ... Wat," the man clarified.

"I don't know ...," Matt responded in confusion.

"Third base." The man smiled. "It's an ancient joke but funny nonetheless."

"I don't understand." Matt told him.

"The ornament on your necklace is Chung Doh Wat," the Asian gentleman patiently informed Matt.

"Oh! Is that something special?" Matt looked down at himself.

The man bent forward and was practically breathing down Matt's cleavage. "It appears to be authentic, too," he said, speaking into Matt's breasts. Just then, the stair carrying the man reached the top of the

escalator toppling him backward onto the floor and Matt fell over on top of him.

Matt checked the dress to be certain that it was nowhere near the place where the stairs disappeared into the mechanism, quickly crawled off the man and slid away from the escalator as more people tried to step over him.

The man stood and offered his hand to help Matt to his feet. Matt accepted the help and was surprised at the man's firm stance and strength considering his apparently slight build.

"Allow me to introduce myself," the man said, bowing slightly. "I am David Liu, Curator of the Sacramento Museum of Eastern Culture."

Matt extended his hand in a handshake, but quickly withdrew it when he was reminded of his wardrobe and gender by seeing his gloved arm. "I'm Mat ... Lisa Purcell," he said, correcting himself.

"An odd name, Matlisa," David said.

Matt blushed, realizing too late that he had not covered his error. "My friends call me Lisa," he told the man.

David nodded. "Lisa. You are dressed so formally. Were you married today?"

"No." Matt answered. He felt a renewed sadness that he actually should have been married, but wasn't.

"Pity," David observed. "You look pretty enough to be a bride."

"Thank you, Mister Liu," Matt blushed again. "So, this little charm is a ... ?"

"You may call me David," the man responded, "and the little gold disk appears to be a Chung Doh Wat."

"Chinese?" Matt guessed.

David nodded assent. "The name is from the ancient Chinese. And the Wat are considered symbols of good fortune."

"With the day I've been having so far, I could really use a bunch of good luck," Matt told him.

Something Borrowed

David pointed to the necklace. "What caught my eye was the engraving on the piece. May I?" He was already reaching up to Matt's chest.

"Does it make it more valuable or something?" Matt asked, holding the little object out for the man to examine.

"As I said a few moments ago," David explained, "this one appears to be authentic. There are only a handful of authentic ancient Chung Doh Wat pieces known."

"Wow!" Matt breathed.

David continued to examine the item as he spoke. "Despite my apparent heritage, I am not totally familiar with the legends of the Wat. But, as a museum curator, I do know that they date from several thousand years ago and are highly sought talismans."

"Because of the good luck?" Matt asked.

"Yes," David responded. "Could you tell me where you got this?"

"I ... I ... don't remember," Matt explained, shading the truth that he had no way to know when or how Lisa had acquired the medallion.

David shifted his glance to Matt's face. "If this is indeed authentic, perhaps you would be willing to sell it to my museum?"

"I don't think I could do that, without asking a friend of mine," Matt said as he realized he had no right to bargain away the item which really belonged to Lisa.

"Let me give you my business card," David told him. He fished a crisp white rectangle from his pocket and presented it to Matt.

"Uncle David!" an impatient young Chinese groom shouted, bustling over to where Matt and the man stood. "Excuse me, Miss, but my uncle hasn't been boring you with stories about his dusty old museum has he?"

"On the contrary," Matt answered.

The groom tugged David toward one of the reception halls. "Come on, uncle! We're all waiting for you."

David Liu nodded graciously in Matt's direction. "It was a pleasure to meet you, Matlisa. And may the Wat bring you good fortune." David turned and followed the restless young man into a nearby ballroom.

Matt tucked the business card next to his breast for safekeeping and hurried along to the ballroom where the reception was being held in Denise's and his honor. Or did it honor Denise and Lisa?

"Okay, Chung whatever, gimme some luck!" Matt murmured, holding the little disk up to his painted lips as he walked down the hallway. Although his platform heels were making his feet ache, and his leg muscles were becoming tired from standing on his toes, Matt was still surprised that he'd not fallen or appeared particularly clumsy in the shoes. He might have to write a story of putative fiction for the erotic story newsgroup on the internet and set the record straight about males being clumsy in high-heels after being transformed into women. After all, how many of the authors could honestly claim to have been males turned magically overnight into honest-to-gosh females?

Matt eventually came to the ballroom for the Stevens-Morton wedding reception. There were quite a few people in the ballroom that had simply avoided the ceremony and come straight to the reception for the food, drink and dancing. Denise and Lisa were lined up with Denise's and Matt's parents in the receiving line, shaking hands with the early arrivals and making small talk. In the short time Matt stood watching them, he noticed that Lisa was mostly nodding and shaking hands letting Denise do most of the talking. Lisa was a smart girl, Matt thought. That way she might actually pull this off.

He stood apart from the line and saw trouble approaching Lisa. It was his Aunt Cecelia. She was a handful even if you knew what to expect, and Lisa was a sitting duck. Matt hustled over to the line right as Aunt Cecelia came to Lisa.

"Why you must be Matt's Aunt Cecelia!" Matt exuberated. "I heard quite a few stories about you!"

The dumbfounded older woman wondered who this perky young girl was that had practically accosted her, but she retained her poise.

"Most of those stories are simply not true," Aunt Cecelia responded, haughtily.

"Aunt Cecelia!" Lisa shouted, hugging the woman she'd never met before that moment. As they embraced, she mouthed the words "Thank you" to Matt, who mouthed "You're welcome" back.

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Matt stuck close to the newlyweds and supplied a running commentary with Lisa and the guests that hinted the identity and relationship of the people.

"Are you Matt's cousin Wanda?" he would ask.

Or: "Matt! Tell me this isn't little Tommy, your nephew!"

Or: "Excuse me, but a fellow asked me to find a co-worker of Matt's named George Edmands. Are you George Edmands? The fellow was right over there ... oh, he's gone now ... sorry," he'd use another time. Each time Lisa adeptly picked up on the hint and responded to the relatives and old friends with generic small talk. Together Matt and Lisa made quite a team.

The line of well wishers soon ended, and the dinner service began. Matt had a seat on the dais near Denise, and passed the dinner without any opportunities for embarrassing lapses that would betray his or Lisa's true identity.

It had taken a while to get used to the perfumy, waxy taste that his lipstick added to each bite of food, but eventually he didn't notice the effect at all. Matt hadn't eaten since waking that morning, and he was surprised that he couldn't even finish the relatively modest portion of food served to him. He'd always had a healthy appetite, but he was full before the plate was half-empty. He noticed that Denise did not finish her meal, nor did any of the other bridesmaids. The reason had to be the size of his new stomach rather than the excitement of the day that limited his appetite. Maybe it was a good thing not to eat so much. All of the women on the dais had trim bodies, and obviously this was how they kept their figures so very watchable.

After the dinner, Denise walked out to the dance floor to dance a final waltz with her father. Matt watched her gliding across the floor in her white lace finery. Dancing next to the larger figure of her father she still looked like a little girl. Tom pushed Lisa onto the dance floor as the first waltz finished, and at that point, Denise symbolically kissed her father good-bye and went to Lisa's arms.

If it hadn't been so personally tragic to Matt, the sight of Lisa trying to lead and dance forward for the first time in her life might have been relatively amusing. As it was, she looked very clumsy and more than once she stepped on Denise's toes by ziggling when she should have

zagged. Eventually, Denise and Lisa stopped trying to waltz and just stood close and swayed against one another.

Matt hoped that Denise wasn't playing a little game with Lisa that she always used with him when they danced close. She liked to rub suggestively against Matt and encourage his body to physically react to her sexual provocation. In a dark nightclub, it wasn't too embarrassing to slink off the floor with sexual stiffening, but this was a well-lit ballroom.

Unfortunately for Lisa, she was discovering Denise's game and the fact that the male hormones were more than a match for a rational mind. The physical manifestation of Lisa's arousal was arriving whether she wanted it or not. As the second waltz ended, Matt's mother stepped in to dance with the groom. Denise gave Lisa a wicked grin as she gave way to her new mother-in-law.

Matt's mother noticed the evidence of Lisa's passion as soon as she replaced Denise. Lisa could immediately sense the older woman's uneasiness with the situation and felt her own cheeks redden in embarrassment, but was surprised as she heard, "Don't worry, Matthew dear. Your father had the same problem when we danced our wedding waltz when we were married. It's all right."

The music became more energetic with the next tune, and Lisa left the dance floor for a while. She stood next to Matt and watched the other couples dancing.

"I got a card from a guy on the escalator," Matt told her, as he retrieved the business card out of the top of his dress. "He wants to buy the thing on this necklace."

"The Chung Doh Wat?" Lisa asked, examining the card.

"Yeah," Matt told her. "You've heard of it? Did you know it was a rare good luck charm or something?"

"You had one too, I noticed," Lisa commented, opening the fabric between her shirt buttons to display the medallion resting among the hairs of her chest. "But I'd say it's a dud as a good luck charm. Between us, we had two of them and nothing helped us get unswapped. I would not call it good luck to mess up your wedding day like this! Besides, I don't want to stay this way!"

"Me neither," Matt reminded her. "You have it easy, but I end up putting up with all of the crummy girl stuff."

Something Borrowed

"What do you mean by that?" Lisa asked with a curious smile. "You act like being a woman is some horrible existence."

Matt had a worried expression as he replied, "to a person who has been male his whole life, it is! It'll probably take me a long time to get used to not being a guy. This might last the rest of our lives!"

Lisa responded, "I enjoyed being a woman up to this morning, and I certainly don't want to be male any more than you want to be female, but what can we do? You know, maybe we're just not letting nature take its course ... maybe there's nothing making us inherently uneasy but our own biases."

"You're saying I should just forget ever being a guy and try to be the woman I am now?"

Lisa shrugged. "We'll probably have fewer ulcers if we roll with the punches."

"I'll never be comfortable with this female body and the things that happen to a woman," Matt told her. "I can't imagine being attracted to men or being sexually active ... or being pregnant," Matt visibly shivered with the prospect.

"Is being female something to be afraid of?" Lisa asked. "I'm not afraid of anything about being a guy, and what you are experiencing must be as alien to you as remaining male is to me."

"Look," Matt pleaded, "you're a guy now. Guys don't get stressed about these things ... and that's why you feel that way. I never wanted to be a woman and I'm scared to death about it."

Lisa found a sort of twisted logic to Matt's observation. Women were generally the ones who were apprehensive about the future, and yet she now had an air of sangfroid. But then, as Matt had explained, Lisa wasn't physically a woman anymore. The only problem she had with Matt's line of reasoning was a nagging feeling that most women would be blasé about ever turning into men, but men seemed to lose their cool when faced with the prospect, however impossible, of becoming women; some sort of castration complex, maybe. This situation was not likely to ever happen to anyone, but men were perhaps frightened of the loss of masculinity while women were not particularly concerned with a change in their female status.

Melanie, one of the other bridesmaids, tapped Matt gently on his bare shoulder. "Lisa? There's someone over there who wants to see you. He says it's about your necklace." She pointed to the ballroom door, where Matt could see David Liu, standing next to another stranger, waving.

Matt pointed out the men at the door to Lisa. "That's the guy who gave me the card. You ought to come with me and show them the other one of these medallions. He said this one might be rare. Maybe the amulet you're wearing is valuable too!"

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Emerging Pattern

A broad smile crossed David Liu's features as Lisa and Matt approached. "Matlisa! I want you to meet someone!" he greeted them.

Lisa spoke into Matt's ear. "Matlisa?" she asked.

"Don't ask," Matt replied, before turning to cordially greet the men at the door. "Mister Liu!"

"David," the man corrected Matt. The person standing near David Liu was an older person of Chinese extraction with grey hair wreathing his slightly balding head. The older man's eyes sparkled with excitement as Lisa and Matt approached.

Matt began the introductions. "David. This is a friend of mine, and sh ... er ... he has one of those Chung Doh Wat things too."

"He does?" David asked with an expectant smile. He turned to the stranger at his side and the two conversed in quiet whispers for a moment.

"May we see?" David asked hopefully.

Lisa led the way out into the hallway where the dance music was muted and fewer people were milling about. She silently reached a finger into the neck of her shirt and hooked the necklace. She pulled the chain out from the collar to hang the little golden coin in the ruffles between her lapels. The eyes of the person accompanying David grew large.

"This is Henry Chin," David explained. "He is a professor of ancient Chinese history in Hong Kong. My nephew married his daughter today."

"Congratulations!" Matt and Lisa said simultaneously. Both Henry and David bowed in acceptance.

"Henry knows quite a bit about the legends surrounding the Chung Doh Wat. I happened to tell him how I'd seen yours at the escalator,"

David told Matt. "... and he wanted to see it first hand. In fact, he could not wait. I hope we are not taking you away from anything."

Matt shook his head no. Henry was closely examining the little medallion around Lisa's neck.

"I can most certainly say that this one is authentic," Henry said quietly. "It has the proper markings and appears to be the right size and shape."

He moved to Matt and gingerly lifted the little amulet out of his décolletage. Henry looked intently at the charm and hummed to himself.

"You were right," Henry said to David. "This too, appears authentic ... and very unexpected."

"Unexpected? So, what does that mean?" Lisa asked.

Henry stepped back and addressed the two young people. His accent was more evident than David's, but not so thick that he was difficult to understand. "There are many Wat counterfeits around. They are no more than costume jewelry. The inscriptions on the imitation pieces are sometimes modern Korean or Japanese instead of ancient Chinese. Sometimes, the symbols translate to nonsense phrases like 'Souvenir of New York City.' On the other hand, an authentic Chung Doh Wat is an instrument of powerful spiritual importance."

"Importance?" Lisa asked.

Henry's voice lowered to a whisper. "The legends tell of a time of magic long ago. It was a time of dragons and mystical spell casters. There was magic everywhere: in the trees, the land, the water, the beasts of the forest and even in the air; a strange power in need of proper channeling. The priests of the time eventually saw that intrinsic natural magic was disrupting the tranquility of the world and they set about to rectify the situation. They coalesced the restless swirls of occult energy and categorized the effects of each type. There were forms of harmful magic that were deadly and violent, particularly when concentrated: unbelievably destructive forces like famine, floods, and misery. These weren't simply misfortunes but powerfully evil supernatural forces. With divine help, the harmful magic was locked into amulets, which were cast into a bottomless abyss, no longer to trouble the world. The good magic was likewise captured within other amulets closely guarded by the priests so that the beneficial effect could be rationed and used only for the good of mankind. It is said that eventually the good magic faded from disuse

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and no longer has an effect, although some believe there is a faint echo of the power left to ... how to put this ... to nudge fate. The magic has been reduced to nothing more than the ability to produce good fortune. That is the legend of the Wat."

"So these amulets we have are those with the weakened good luck?" Matt asked, remembering the conversation with David on the escalator.

"In fact, no," Henry answered, somberly.

Lisa's face became a mask of horror and she pawed at the chain on her neck. "Then these are bad luck charms that somehow escaped destruction?" Her voice conveyed her fright at the prospect - a very unbecoming trait for someone who appeared outwardly to be male.

Henry motioned for restraint then quietly and calmly responded, "No. The legend says the truly evil magic was destroyed forever. However, in Chinese philosophy there is a fundamental dichotomy of good and bad. Strong and weak. Black and white. Yin and Yang. A sub-tenet of that philosophy says that within those disparate categories there are elements of their opposite number. In other words, there is some good in the bad magic, and some bad in the good. You might term this incongruity a paradox or 'inscrutability.'"

Matt was becoming confused and his frustration was beginning to show on his fair features. He nervously swept the bangs out of his eyes. "You said that these things can't have powerless good magic, and they aren't the destructive ones either."

"I did," Henry replied, smiling to calm Matt's apparent worry. "These pieces you and this young man have represent neither predominantly good nor evil power. They are from a long-dismissed third category of middle magic."

"Middle magic?" both Lisa and Matt asked.

"Equal parts of beneficial and detrimental, balancing each other out, but extremely powerful," Henry lectured. "The legends explain that the ancient priests could not bring themselves to destroy the middle magic, but could not prevent its misuse. Their solution was simple. The priests were rumored to have performed special rites to separate each of the types of middle magic into two equal parts and to put each part into a separate Wat talisman. By themselves the halves were totally inert, possessing no apparent magic without the matching half. The only way an instance of

middle magic could be invoked was to possess both pieces of the same spell before performing the rites to release it."

To further guard against villainy, the ritual for releasing each spell was different. The ancient priests dispersed the enchanted disks throughout the world so that only the whims of fate could bring two halves together. Since each amulet was powerless without its matching counterpart, they were not valued and were said to have simply disappeared."

"Sounds like the stuff of folklore to me," Matt opined.

Henry nodded his tacit agreement to Matt's suggestion. "Scholars have argued for centuries whether the middle-magic Wats were factual or a folk-myth. It was presupposed that all were lost or buried if they had indeed ever existed at all, since no middle-magic Wats were known to have survived. That is, until I saw these."

"I'm getting a bad feeling, here," Lisa said, eerily. "Are you implying that these two medallions are matching halves of one of those middle magic spells?"

"Yes, it appears so." Henry said, briefly smiling at Lisa. "And that is what is so intriguing. Not only have I seen indisputable truth that a Middle-magic Wat exists, but I've seen two of them, and remarkably, the two are the halves of the same spell! The odds against this are enormous! Hundreds of billions to one. See the symbols here?"

Lisa and Matt looked at the place on one disk where he was pointing.

Henry indicated a group of markings on one edge. "Those symbols are the same on both pieces, identifying the matching amulets. However, you need both amulets together to read the rest of the symbols which describe the spell and the means of releasing it."

Henry studied the tiny coins hanging around Matt and Lisa's necks, alternating first to one and then the other. His face became intently serious an instant later. "Have you two known each other long?"

"We just met each other last evening," Matt told him.

Henry digested that information and his smile returned once more. "You have not married each other, then?"

Matt answered right away. "No. Why?"

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Henry breathed a sigh of relief and chuckled. "If I believed in magic as strongly as the ancients did, and knew that two people were planning to marry and had the halves of this particular spell, I would have warned them to call off the wedding."

"You mentioned this spell in particular. Why? Is that important?" Lisa asked.

"The inscription on the medallions is weathered and difficult to read, but apparently the spell would be invoked by ... how can I put this delicately?" Henry blushed and whispered to David. The Chinese gentlemen spoke in whispers a few moments more.

David turned to explain to Matt and Lisa. "What my friend is trying to say is that the spell would be triggered by ... er ... sexual union between the two people carrying the Wat."

"First, it seems, they would have to be two people somehow tied together by a spiritual link," Henry explained. "The symbol for life-bond, an ancient form of marriage, is there, but the nearby symbols are too damaged to read. When the man and woman have ..."

"Relations," David interjected.

Henry nodded. "Yes ... Thank you. Relations, that is the second part of the key which would invoke the spell."

"Oh!" Lisa gasped audibly.

Henry ignored Lisa's outburst. "The magic would cause ... this is where it gets a little obscure. There are symbols for exchange and for knowledge. The markings are so indistinct that I cannot determine the whole meaning or the reason for their juxtaposition. Apparently the exchange would be fundamental to the being of the two bearers of the Wat - perhaps an uncontrollable urge to speak the unvarnished truth about themselves to each other: a sort of magic truth serum. The two people would bare their very souls. I can make out symbols for enlightenment, mischief and closure, which might mean that the spell would cause a difficulty that changes their lives; perhaps threatening the marriage or life-bond itself."

Lisa looked at Matt and knew that he was thinking the same thing. The exchange of knowledge was the transfer of the most basic element of their identities: their conscious minds. The two unlucky lovers had indeed triggered the spell by their actions last night and then became each other.

That could not have changed their lives any more dramatically, nor been a greater threat to the marriage between Denise and Matt. This ancient magic was powerful stuff!

"The symbols for enlightenment and closure are also metaphors for sunrise and sunset as well as birth and death, and in their own kind of obscure form might have any of those meanings," Henry elaborated. "The resulting ensorcellment might be permanent or may be in effect only until some defining moment in the lives of the two people negates the spell. I suppose the prospect of being compelled against one's will to reveal the innermost part of one's thoughts was horrible to the ancients; the ultimate invasion of privacy. However, the catharsis of knowing the whole truth about each other would likely make the marriage even stronger. That is the paradox of the middle magic: not wholly good, not totally bad, and what at first seems beneficial may be hurtful, and vice versa. If the magic were real, the spell would make quite an unwelcome surprise for newlyweds," Henry concluded.

"You're telling us!" Lisa exclaimed.

"Then it is fortunate that you two have not married each other, and doubly fortunate that such magic is only ancient superstition." David commented. "In your case, anyway, I'd call these things harmless."

"Yeah, real harmless," Matt muttered sweetly, masking the ironic twist in his voice.

David smiled broadly. "Since you possess not only certifiably authentic Wat specimens but apparently rare and matching ones as well, I would like to repeat my offer to buy the pieces from each of you, and at a very substantial dollar figure."

"No!" Matt and Lisa shouted in unison. Both David and Henry were taken aback by the immediate and vehement response from the young man and woman.

"Well, if either or both of you change your mind, please consider my offer." David handed Lisa a business card, shook her hand and bowed slightly to Matt.

"And thank you for the opportunity to see those very rare and unique items," Henry said sincerely.

"It has once again been a pleasure, Matlisa!" David concluded.

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The two Chinese gentlemen walked away excitedly discussing the rare artifacts they had just seen.

Lisa was the first to say what was on her mind. "Well Matt, now we know how we got this way!"

Matt sighed. "We know how we got into this mess, but Henry didn't mention a way to uncurse ourselves."

"Maybe we don't! He said it could be permanent. Maybe we have to stay this way forever," she said, dourly.

"Bite your tongue!" Matt squealed. "I don't want to be a woman for the rest of my life!" He turned away from her in disgust. He could feel the despair settling around him as he contemplated his life in female form. He looked away from Lisa and stared at the floor.

Lisa tried to console him, but she shared his loss of hope. There was nothing she could do to change the recent past, so all that was left was to make the best of a bad situation. With time, she might be able to accept being a man permanently. The prospect of being a woman sure seemed to be weighing heavily on Matt, though!

Lisa put her arm around Matt's bare shoulders, and pulled him close to her. Until a few minutes earlier she'd hoped that everything would work itself out, and that this situation would be a strange experience to look back upon and laugh about. Now that she was aware that it might last through her life, there was nothing to laugh at, and it presented a very different and uncertain future ahead.

"It's not so bad," she offered, masking her true feelings. "I'll eventually figure out how to do guy things, and I'm sure you'll do fine as a woman."

She spun Matt to face her and lifted his chin with her finger so she could look into his eyes. She was surprised to see that his cheeks were very wet.

"You're ... you're crying?" she inquired in amazement.

Matt silently nodded, and returned to looking at the floor, the tears dripping to the carpet. He hadn't cried since he was twelve. Now the emotions were coming easily, and he couldn't understand why. He not only was depressed but embarrassed that he could not stop weeping. Lisa

lifted his chin again, and she rubbed the tears off his cheek with her thumb.

"It's a good thing that you used waterproof mascara or you'd be a sight!" she joked, hoping to bring back Matt's smile.

Matt did not smile. "Oh! Lisa! I want to be a man! You may not want to be a woman again, but ..."

"Why do you say that?" Lisa demanded, abruptly.

"Look at you," Matt said, his expression and body language speaking volumes about his frustration with his own lack of control. "You're taking this pretty well. You're playing the role of groom so perfectly that no one suspects anything. You're cool and collected, and I'm having a breakdown."

Lisa paused as Matt's words sunk into her brain. He was right. She was upset and concerned, but she wasn't getting all weepy about it the way he was. She had been keeping it all bottled up without trying. Matt, on the other hand, was letting his emotions flow freely.

"Don't be so quick to judge from external appearances," she told him. "Inside, I'm all torn up. While it has been somewhat fun to be one of the guys for a couple of hours, I'm not happy about this at all! This isn't the way I pictured my life. I'd always had my heart set on having a couple of kids."

"You still can. With Denise," Matt glumly responded.

"No!" Lisa countered. "I meant being a wife and mother. I wanted to feel the glow of pregnancy; the tiny life growing inside me. I wanted to nurse my babies even if it meant getting up in the middle of the night to feed them. I saw myself as the gentle nurturer. But none of that is possible now. All I'll be able to do is watch while some other woman lives my dream. I'll admit you're right about not showing my emotion. But you know what? I think it's just harder for me to cry in a body that doesn't normally do that kind of thing."

"But, Lisa, I'm a man, and ... and ... and ... men don't cry!" Matt sobbed with renewed intensity.

Lisa pulled Matt close and rested his head on her chest. "Take it easy. First of all, the tear ducts in that body don't know anything about you being a man and I guess you're finding out how easily women's

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emotions just let go. Secondly, it's only a few days before my ... er ... your ... period is supposed to start, so the surge of hormones is probably inducing mood swings anyway!"

Matt lifted his head to look at Lisa, and rubbed his palm on his damp cheeks as he sniffled. He started giggling through his tears. "This is just swell! I'm a woman for twelve hours and I've already got PMS!" Despite the gloomy outlook, it seemed so silly to be suffering an affliction he'd never considered possible. He couldn't help but laugh.

Matt's giggling was contagious, and Lisa began laughing along with him. "You think you have it bad? I've been a man for the same amount of time, and I've just gotten married ... to someone I don't love!" For a moment at least, they had a laugh at each other's expense and were not feeling sorry for themselves.

Miranda's voice shouted from nearby as she stepped into the hallway from the ballroom. "There you are Matt! Get in here! Your blushing bride wants to cut the wedding cake!"

"It's the old ball and chain," Lisa groaned facetiously, triggering another fit of giggling for Matt. To Lisa, it was so good to see Matt's tears drying and to see him smiling again. She headed back to the ballroom and Matt followed.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Beginning Of the End

Matt stood near the other bridesmaids as everyone gathered to watch the happy newlyweds cut their cake. He was getting used to hanging around with the girls rather than leaning against the wall discussing automobiles and sports with the guys. Matt quickly learned the things the young women talked about when the men were out of earshot. He'd always imagined that women in general and young ladies in particular were sweet and demure, but discovered that they were not above making bluntly graphic sexual comparisons of the men in their purview. He was further surprised that the women used language even more explicit than that of his male buddies. So much for sugar and spice! The salty language he'd heard in the ladies' room had been shocking and totally unexpected. By comparison, men's language was positively virginal.

Matt watched as Lisa stood with Denise and posed for pictures at the cake. Then more pictures holding the ceremonial knife, then more with the knife poised over the cake. He watched them with increasing sadness. He'd long since dried his tears away on a napkin and the only evidence of his brief lapse of decorum was a slight redness to his eyes.

Denise's friend Melanie was standing next to Matt and she noticed his downtrodden expression. "Golly, Lisa, you sure look down in the dumps!" she observed. "What's the matter? You act like you've got a wicked crush on Matt or something! Give me a smile, girl!"

Matt guessed that Melanie had once been a cheerleader by her incessantly sunny attitude and ever-present grin. He satisfied Melanie with a forced smile and watched the photographer posing Lisa and Denise with hunks of cake poised at each other's mouth. Matt hoped that Denise would be mature enough not to smash the cake into Lisa's face.

Unfortunately, Denise did not meet his expectations. When the photographer told them to feed the cake to each other, Denise crammed the dessert into Lisa's mouth and smeared the frosting on the groom's

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cheek. Denise was unable to squirm away from Lisa's long reach, and got the same treatment in return. The surrounding partygoers laughed uproariously and the photographer snapped lots of pictures of the newlyweds covered in frosting.

Denise paused a moment to recover from Lisa's surprise retaliation before pulling the groom into a messy kiss. Matt could tell by Lisa's wide eyes that Denise had startled her.

Lisa was off-guard because Denise physically initiated a kiss although neither had an opportunity to swallow any of the cake. That was nowhere near as shocking as the intrusion of Denise's tongue, sliding its way through the frosting into Lisa's mouth, and she did her best not to flinch or give away her disgust. As she posed during the kiss for the photographer, Lisa could feel the light touch of Denise's fingers trailing up and down the inside seam of her trousers' leg. She realized without looking that Denise was able to hide her hand among the folds of her wedding gown and to secretly stimulate her groom in front of dozens of her relatives and friends. Lisa became annoyed as her willpower slipped away and her body responded automatically and enthusiastically to Denise's touch. This was like some X-rated snake-charmer act, and Denise knew all the right notes to play.

Denise broke the kiss and swallowed the cake in her mouth, seductively licking her lips for Lisa. Lisa swallowed, or more accurately, gulped the cake and smiled uncertainly at Denise. The photographer thanked the couple and went to load more film in the camera.

When the photographer had moved away, Denise leaned close to Lisa's ear. "Follow me, Dear," Denise said. "I'll help you get cleaned up."

Denise dragged Lisa out of the ballroom by the hand as the other people lined up for a slice of the wedding cake. The deejay began playing dance music again and a few couples stepped onto the dance floor.

Matt stood watching some of the people dancing and politely refused a number of offers to dance, including a few requests from guys who had been at the bachelor party with him last evening. He wasn't ready to surrender that part of his masculinity yet. There was always hope, however slim, that in a few days this nightmare would just go away; that he would wake up on the honeymoon bed next to Denise, and that Lisa would magically become herself once more.

Then again, he considered, this might never end. He wondered how long he should wait before getting on with life; before accepting that he was female forever. Surely it would be tough to ignore the start of a monthly cycle that Lisa hinted was imminent. Wearing a brassiere would be a constant reminder of his new sexual status, as would everyone calling him Miss Purcell.

If he was permanently a woman, what then? Certainly a lot in his life would change. He'd be shopping in different stores from now on ... using the women's public restroom. He knew that his buddies wouldn't treat him the same anymore. He couldn't be 'one of the boys' and go on backpacking weekends with them; the guys always swam and slept in the buff. They'd feel self-conscious with a girl hanging around, although Matt had seen those same fellows naked countless times - and even once had similar equipment of his own! In the back of his mind, he also recognized the potential that a bunch of drunk naked campers might violently force themselves upon the lone female in their midst. Matt shivered at the thought. Rape was never pretty.

And what about birth control? Until this morning, he had only two choices short of surgery: abstinence, or a condom. Now if he had sex without protection, he would be the one likely to become pregnant! Matt was aware of the wealth of options open to women; things like pills, implants, IUDs, sponges, creams, foams, and the diaphragm. Lisa was pragmatic enough to have gotten a diaphragm for herself. Matt wondered if he'd have the nerve to try inserting the little rubber device where he'd found it that morning, or if he would just practice abstinence.

Matt realized there'd be the monthly sanitary supplies to buy and use. Matt surmised that he'd probably have to start seeing a woman's doctor, too, so that the reproductive part of his body would stay healthy. The number of healthcare changes was depressing to consider!

Should he just abandon all hope and start thinking like a woman right now? Look at life from the feminine point of view? Should he quit waiting for the magic spell to revert or just foolishly keep looking for the end of the rainbow?

He chose not to decide on a course of action - at least not yet. He made an effort to smile, and watched the happy men and contented women dancing slowly with each other, and wished he could claim contentment for himself.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Performance Anxiety

Denise pushed past the large "Out of Order" sign on the door of the men's restroom at the end of the hallway and pulled Lisa into the tiled chamber. The women's restroom next door was also out of order, and that made this end of the blind hallway very deserted. The men's restroom was brightly lit, but quiet. It was so quiet, in fact, that the faint buzz of the fluorescent lighting was just as audible as the distant thump of the sound system in the ballroom or the gentle hissing drip of water leaking past the valves of the urinals that lined the walls. Of the three sinks, two were removed from the wall and piled in the corner with a few crates. Apparently, the hotel was renovating this restroom.

Denise pulled a paper towel out of the dispenser on the wall and wet it in the lone remaining sink. She gently wiped away the frosting on her face and then applied the same effort to Lisa's cheek. Denise's free hand rubbed playfully against Lisa's burgeoning erection.

"Oh! Matt!" Denise purred seductively, "I am so turned on! And I can feel that you are too!"

Lisa frowned. "Denise, ... I don't ... we can't ... you know, someone might come in while we're...."

"Nonsense!" Denise said, discarding the dirty paper towel and folding the top of her dress down to reveal her breasts. Her nipples were already standing out from her boobs as evidence of her arousal. She grabbed Lisa's hands and brought both up to cup the mounds. "Ahhhh, yessss! Gently caress them the way you always do. I love it, Matt. Your hands are so warm! That's wonderful!"

"Denise, this is very ... uh ... awkward...," Lisa protested, understanding at once that Denise had much more on her mind than just cleaning up.

Denise quickly pulled the cummerbund up onto Lisa's stomach, and began unfastening the buttons on the fly of the trousers underneath. "It'll

only take a moment, dear. Just keep doing what you're doing, but slower!"

Lisa did not want to consummate the marriage at all, much less in a public restroom! Despite her misgivings, Lisa's body continued to give the wrong messages to Denise. All the bride knew was that her new husband had an erection and she wanted to feel it inside herself.

Lisa tried everything to make her body behave, but the more she tried to disguise her arousal, the stiffer and more swollen she felt her sex becoming. Denise had by this time unfastened the suspenders and many of the shirt buttons. Lisa's trousers were in a pile around her ankles. Denise was running her fingers through Lisa's chest hair, and Lisa found herself unconsciously swirling her fingers on Denise's breasts. She knew exactly what Denise would enjoy, having very recently had similar breasts of her own, and couldn't make herself stop.

Denise reluctantly stepped away from Lisa and lifted her dress. She pulled her panties down her legs in one motion, and felt the cool air against the dampness of her aroused tissues as she stepped out of the briefs. She kicked off her shoes and returned to her groom to pull the jockstrap toward the floor and expose the object of her passion.

"Don't you think it would be really great to make love to me standing up?" Denise asked rhetorically. Lisa had heard her use that tone thousands of times. It meant that Denise had already made up her mind and just wanted someone to play along with her.

Lisa looked down to see that her cock was standing rigidly at attention and bobbing slightly with her rapid heartbeat. She recalled admonishing her own boyfriends about not being able to rein in their peckers when around her, and she was discovering how very little control those men had over that one part of their anatomy; it was as if it had a mind of its own!

Denise pushed Lisa against the tile wall and jumped up onto her, clamping her thighs around Lisa's hips and lowering her pelvis over the straining phallus. Lisa closed her eyes in disgust as she felt herself penetrating Denise's warm moist crack.

"Ooooh, Matt! This is so naughty! Don't you think so?" Denise asked as she wrapped her arms around Lisa's neck. The wedding dress was bunched in the area between their bodies, the stiff lace making a crinkly crunch when Denise began slowly lifting her body and sliding

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back down to engulf her groom's sturdy shaft. "Just think! We're making love for the first time as husband and wife and we're doing it in a public restroom. And it's a men's room, which is a real turn-on for me! I've never been in a men's restroom before!" Denise was smiling and gently cooing as she lifted herself up and down.

Lisa could not believe her own lack of control! What had she become? Her body was reacting autonomically to Denise's stimulus and causing Lisa to defile her best friend. This was happening out of pure animal lust, because it felt good, and not because she had any amorous feelings toward Denise. It just felt wrong on so many levels. True, Denise was throwing herself at Lisa like that other woman, Sheila; but, the more Lisa thought about what was happening, the more she became disturbed by her own behavior. This tumescence and impromptu mating with the bride was the way that some oversexed man might act - not a woman! This was stupid and insensitive and totally repulsive!

"Honey?" Denise asked, pausing in her up and down motion and staring purposefully into Lisa's eyes. "What's wrong? You're losing your stiffy! Is it me?"

It was true. The more Lisa analyzed the loveless sex she was having, the further her hardon wilted. Her distraction from the events continued and she felt her limp organ plop out of Denise's cunt. Moments later Denise slid off of her, frustrated, disappointed, and obviously worried.

"I can see there's something bothering you, Matt! It's the post wedding depression, isn't it?" Denise asked, slipping into her panties then stepping into her shoes. She pulled up the top of the gown and straightened the skirt as she stared despondently at the shrunken flesh at the juncture of Lisa's legs.

"No, Denise," Lisa said, firmly. "It's me. I can't do this ever again. I can't make love to you anymore."

The hurt expression that descended upon Denise was swift and unmistakable. She momentarily tried to speak but could not form the words as her mouth silently opened and closed. Tears welled up in Denise's eyes before she rushed, sobbing, out of the restroom.

CHAPTER TWENTY

A Helping Hand

Matt saw little more than a white blur speed past him as he stood near the ballroom dance floor. Denise ran directly into the arms of her sister, Miranda. The maid of honor comforted her younger sister and just let her cry. Matt could see Denise's shoulders being jolted by the sobs as she wept in her sister's embrace.

"Denise?" Matt asked, approaching the two sisters. "Are you all right?"

Denise turned to him, showing her red and swollen eyes. "Just go away, Lisa!" she cried.

"Lisa, you of all people should know how Denise is when she gets this way," Miranda said softly. "Just let us alone for a while, okay?"

Matt walked away disappointed. Denise was upset about something, and he felt so powerless to help her. Women were always comforting each other and the men in their lives, but despite the fact that he was ostensibly a woman now, Matt felt distinctly out of place and unprepared to give consolation to anyone. If he had actually been Lisa, he would have known, as Miranda said, to leave Denise to her sister. Lisa had spent four years, after all, rooming with Denise and probably knew as well as anyone how to behave around her.

Matt retreated to the edge of the dance floor. There he found Denise's young cousin, Pamela, a girl eleven years old or so. She was not yet beginning the physical transformation into adulthood, but her sweet face was full of youthful optimism and her eyes sparkled with wonder. She stood by herself, swaying gently to the music and watching the older girls and their partners slow-dancing. Matt could see the longing in her eyes. She wanted so much to be on the dance floor, to be held by a boy and to be enjoying herself like the other women. Pamela might not have the curves or smoldering sexuality of an adult woman yet, but it was

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obvious even to Matt that she had the deep emotional cravings of someone many years her senior.

"Have you danced yet, Pam?" Matt asked her, kneeling so his face was level with hers.

"No," she answered, not taking her eyes off the dancers.

"Why not?" Matt inquired.

"None of the boys want to dance with me," Pam said, finally turning to face Matt.

"Did the boys say that?" he asked incredulously.

"No," Pamela admitted, "but no one has asked me to dance."

"Oh," Matt said with a serious tone, as if there were nothing more to say on the matter. He looked over at a group of young gentlemen, roughly Pamela's age. The boys were looking uncomfortable in suits and ties, sitting together at one of the tables, drinking soda and fooling around with the centerpiece.

Matt nudged Pamela and pointed to the table of boys. "Why don't you ask one of them to dance?"

"Lisa!" Pamela shrieked. "I can't ask a boy to dance!"

"Why not? They don't speak English?" Matt joked.

"No, silly," Pamela giggled. "I can't ask them because ... well ... you know ... they're boys!"

"Oh. I get it," Matt said with mock understanding. "You don't want to dance with a boy. Smart choice. They're nothing but trouble."

"Girls aren't supposed to ask boys to dance," Pamela blushed as she offered her clarification.

Matt affected a surprised expression. "They're not? There's some rule that says a lady can't ask?"

"Well, no. There's no rule or nothing," Pamela allowed.

"Then what's stopping you?"

Pamela considered her reasons carefully before responding. "If a boy wanted to dance with me, he would have asked. They probably don't think I'm very pretty."

Matt looked into Pamela's face and saw someone who would be a real heartbreaker when she started to develop a figure. Despite her protests, Pam was pretty. She had long blond hair and a slender body. Her blue eyes were deep and clear. There was nascent beauty there that was sure to blossom in another year or two when her body began to mature.

"You *are* beautiful, Pam!" Matt told her.

"Not as pretty as you and the other bridesmaids," Pamela rebutted. "And Denise is really beautiful! I just look plain in comparison!"

Matt held her hand. "Take it from me, Pam, I didn't always look this way. In fact you'd be surprised if you knew what I looked like until recently. It's just nice clothes, a fancy hairdo and some makeup. That's all. What I'm trying to say is that I can see the very beautiful woman inside you that will come to the surface before you know."

"Really?" Pamela asked, biting her lip as she absorbed the compliment.

"Really," Matt confirmed. "Regardless of your looks, you're already the person you will be: a kind heart, a sweet disposition, loving, caring, and special. You'll be you tomorrow, and the day after, and the day after that. You just have to be happy with yourself and that's all that matters. See those boys over there?"

"Yes," Pam answered.

"I bet if you ask nicely, that one of them will dance with you," Matt told her.

Pamela studied the boys, and Matt could see her mentally ranking them by some unknown criteria, but likely not the sexual yardstick that the bridesmaids had applied to the more mature males.

"Do you really think one of them will dance with me?" the young girl asked.

"They're just a little nervous about talking to girls," Matt confided. "And they're afraid to ask you to dance because you'd say no. Trust me. I

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know lots about the way boys think, and you've got nothing to worry about. Go ahead. Ask one to dance."

"How do I do it?" Pamela asked. Matt could see a combination of apprehension yet determination in her features.

"Just pick one of them," he advised. "Walk up to him and say: 'I'd like to dance with you.'"

Pamela's face brightened. "That's it? And he'll say yes?"

Matt shrugged. "Maybe. Maybe not. But even if the first one turns you down, don't be discouraged. You just nicely ask another - and another. And then you know what? One of them will say yes."

"That doesn't sound too hard!" Pamela said.

Matt smiled at her. "It's not. And when you get on the dance floor, if you want a boy to keep dancing with you, just lean your head on his shoulder."

"Do I have to?" Pam asked.

"You do that, and you can whisper nice things to him while you're dancing. Compliment him. Tell him you think he's handsome. Tell him you like the way he dances, even if he's not very good at it. Tell him that he makes you feel very special. Pretty soon, if he's any kind of gentleman, you'll have him whispering nice things back at you."

"Ooooh," Pamela sighed. "That sounds dreamy."

"Doesn't it?" Matt replied with a smile. "That's all there is to it."

Pamela pulled her bangs out of her eyes, straightened her dress, and headed straight for the table where the boys were sitting. Matt watched from afar as Pamela approached one of the boys and engaged him in conversation.

"What's this? Advice from Auntie Matt?" Lisa's baritone asked from above and behind Matt.

He turned around to see Lisa towering over him. She offered her hand to help him off his knees.

"How long have you been standing there?" he asked.

"Long enough to hear the familiar sound of one woman opening her heart to help another," Lisa replied. "And doing a better job of it than anyone I've ever met."

"I'm no good at being a woman," Matt shrugged, offhandedly.

"You were to her," Lisa pointed to where Pamela and one of the well-dressed boys were stepping onto the parquet dance surface. The boy self-consciously put his hand around Pamela's waist and began to slow dance with her. Pamela wrapped her arms around her partner and fell into his embrace.

"Beginner's luck," Matt admitted, humbly.

"Don't be that way, Matt. You're special ... and I don't mean that because of how you and I got each other's body. When we first swapped, I thought you were rough and a little unfeeling, but I realize now that I was wrong. I couldn't see into your heart."

Matt blushed. "I guess I'll get lots of practice at being sensitive if I keep this body."

"... and you'll do fine." Lisa looked at the people on the dance floor and then at Matt. "How would you like a dance with the groom before he goes on his honeymoon?" she asked, suddenly.

"My first slow dance with a man," Matt said. "I don't know if I'm prepared to take that step."

"I'll let you lead!" Lisa stage-whispered, conspiratorially. She winked at him for emphasis.

Matt took a deep breath and considered her offer. If he was going to be a woman, there was no reason to live life as a recluse. "Okay," he agreed, "but you lead."

Lisa took his hand and stepped onto to the dance floor. She put her left hand behind his waist and held his left hand with her right. She pulled him close and began moving to the music. As she danced she became more comfortable leading. Matt tried to sense her movements, letting Lisa decide the direction and distance of each step. He followed her steps clumsily at first, but soon got used to guessing her intention and going where she led. As he became more relaxed, he leaned against Lisa more. Her strong arms supported him. He felt as if he was gliding several inches above the floor. Following her steps became more and more effortless.

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Every so often, Matt could see Pamela and her partner dancing at the edge of the crowd. Pamela had her head against the boy's shoulder with a blissful expression on her face. From time to time Pam would lean close to her partner's ear and when she pulled her head away, the boy would grin at her. She was a quick study. Matt smiled.

"Aren't you going to whisper sweet nothings to me like you told your friend to?" Lisa asked.

Matt frowned. "What do you whisper to someone who is walking around in your former body?"

"I don't know," Lisa shrugged. "How about 'you are the sexiest thing on two legs and you make me incredibly horny?'"

Matt pulled his head off her shoulder and looked her in the eyes. "Do you think I would say something like that to you?"

"Why not? I meant it just now when I said it to you!"

"Lisa!" Matt whispered. "You're not supposed to feel that way ... you're a married ... er ... person ... now."

"What's your point?" she asked.

Matt didn't know how to respond, so he just returned to resting his head on her shoulder as they danced. As he pressed his body against Lisa, he noticed that her lower body was reinforcing the erotic sentiment she'd expressed a moment earlier.

"Lisa!" he hissed, "Don't do this!"

"What?" she asked with genuine innocence.

"This!" Matt answered, gently poking her in the groin with his fingers.

"I can't help it, Matt. This body just does it all on it's own."

Matt looked into her eyes and saw that she was sincere. He knew well the way that hormones had a way of making their presence known at the most inopportune times. "I'm embarrassed to say your passion is having a similar effect on me," he told her.

Lisa stopped dancing and looked down at Matt. "It is?" she smiled.

"Yes," Matt hissed. "I can feel my nipples straining against the inside of the breast cups on this dress, and I'm starting to get juicy a little further south!"

Lisa pulled Matt back into a close embrace and continued dancing. She looked down at his cleavage. She could see the faint traces of goose bumps on the tops of his tits, which meant that he was very aroused. She could feel her stiff cock pressing against the front of her trousers and rubbing the inside of her supporter as Matt slid his body against hers. "You keep moving like that and we may have check into a room here at the hotel!" she joked.

"Forget it. I'll never have *girl* sex," Matt said flatly.

"Never?" Lisa asked. "Take it from someone who's been there. You don't know what you are missing."

Matt frowned. "I couldn't have sex with a man."

"Why not?" Lisa asked.

"Because I'm a man," Matt explained. "... and one man doing ... *that* ... with another is homosexual!"

"Okay ... but you're the curviest man I ever saw," Lisa smiled.

"Lisa! You know I meant that I'm a man in my mind. I close my eyes and I'm the same old Matt. I may have the female shape you were born with but I'm completely male in here." Matt tapped his temple with a gloved forefinger.

"So, then," Lisa countered, "what about me? Am I a man or a woman?"

"To me you're still a woman ...," Matt paused hearing the paradoxical words spring from his mouth. "Kind of."

"Okay. No matter how you look at it, I'm the opposite sex from you. So, why can't I give you your sexual initiation?" she whispered.

Matt stopped dancing. Lisa could almost hear the gears turning in his head as he thought about the ramifications of her offer. If he was still a man inside and Lisa was a woman inside, it was somehow more palatable. "You mean here? Today?" he asked.

"Yes. Right now if you want," she offered with a raised eyebrow.

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After a moment Matt simply sighed, pulled Lisa close and leaned his head on her shoulder.

Lisa began dancing again, and enjoyed the feeling of Matt's body as he relaxed in her arms. She was very surprised when less than thirty seconds later he brought his lips close to her ear and softly purred in a voice more feminine than he'd sounded all day, "All right. I'll do it - after this dance. But I'm only agreeing to this because you understand me. This will be my first, last and only time to have sex as a woman."

Lisa danced with more spring in her step and an ever-growing bulge in her pants. She knew the pleasure in store for Matt, and she felt confident that afterward he would eventually feel more comfortable in his new female role. This time, she would have no hang-up about being intimate in this male body. She knew that she felt a strong attraction to Matt, and not just because he had her old body. There was just an indescribable quality about him.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Moving Up the Food Chain

Tom Bascome tried in vain to catch the eye of the groom, who was apparently slow-dancing with one of the bridesmaids. It was that moment that he saw Miranda in the corner of the ballroom talking animatedly with Denise. Whatever the sisters were discussing, it seemed to have both women kind of agitated. Finally Miranda threw up her hands in apparent disgust and walked away.

Tom wandered over to see what was the matter. "Denise? Hey, kiddo. You okay?"

"No," the bride said with traces of sniffles a reminder of her recent crying jag.

Tom could see the puffiness around her eyes and offered her his handkerchief. "It's not right for a bride to cry on her wedding day," he said with compassion.

"It's Matt," Denise opened up to him. "When we were alone a few minutes ago, he told me he didn't want sex with me!"

"No! You must have misheard him or something!" Tom sat by Denise and looked into her red-rimmed eyes.

"He was pretty clear," Denise told Tom. "He said 'I can't do this ever again. I can't make love to you anymore.'"

"Whoa! That can't be right," Tom breathed, incredulously. "You two just got married! He said those words? It's gotta be a joke. Matt must be kidding."

Denise pouted. "I think I'd know if he was kidding. Besides, he's been acting strange ever since the ceremony."

"Matt's been a little wacko all day," Tom told her. "He hasn't been himself since the party last night. I think he's lost his mind."

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"All I know is that he doesn't like the way I look anymore!" Denise complained.

"Denise, that's impossible," Tom soothed.

"You think so?"

Tom looked her directly in the eye as he replied, "I know so! In my estimation, you're gorgeous!"

"Well then - am I losing my sex appeal?" she challenged.

Tom's gaze was one of adoration as he studied her. "Well, except for those red eyes and the runny nose, I'd have to say you're sexier now than I've ever known you. That wedding dress really brings out the woman in you."

Denise stopped sniffing and stared into Tom's eyes. "Then you still find me appealing?"

"Damn straight!" Tom answered. "If you and I were just married, I wouldn't be able to wait for the honeymoon. I'd be having my way with you under this table right now!"

Denise considered the unusually coarse compliment, and didn't speak for almost a minute. The song that the deejay was playing ended and after a moment another faster number began. "So how about it?" she finally asked, her jaw set with determination.

"How about what?" Tom asked, not following Denise's reasoning.

"How about you and me? Naked and sweaty. Right now."

Tom glanced around himself nervously. "Do you mean here at the reception?" Tom mentally pictured Denise dragging him under the table to make good on his braggadocio. His face reddened at the prospect of being caught having sex with Matt's new bride.

Denise lowered her voice. "I know a place, right near here. Follow me." She strode toward the nearby exit to the hallway, and a moment later Tom traced her steps.

The bride returned to the end of the hallway near the deserted out-of-service restrooms, where Tom joined her soon thereafter.

"There's nobody in there?" Tom asked, indicating the doors leading to the toilet rooms.

"Silent as a tomb," Denise responded. "So ... are you ready to make love to your best friend's wife?"

"Ready willing and able!" Tom said, patting the tented front of his trousers. "How about if we do it in the women's loo? I always wanted to know what it was like in there."

Denise silently nodded her assent. Tom led Denise to the door of the women's restroom and held the door as he ushered her inside.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Virtual Virgin

Lisa brought Matt down the remote hallway to the restrooms under reconstruction where she and Denise had their abortive tryst a few minutes earlier.

"Are you sure this is a good idea?" Matt asked, warily. "Someone could just barge in."

Lisa's reply was matter-of-fact. "As you can see, these huge signs announce both restrooms 'out of order,' and we're on a dead-end hallway, so there's no chance of any intrusion."

Matt held the door of the men's room for Lisa to enter. She started to walk past him and stopped halfway through the door. "You really must stop doing this," she joked, gesturing at the way he held the door for her. "Men are supposed to hold doors for women ... not the other way around."

Matt stuck his tongue out at her as she waited for him to precede her into the restroom. She was right, of course; from now on, Matt could expect the occasional gentleman to hold a door for him.

"How do we do this?" Matt asked, his soft voice echoing in the tiled enclosure. "I've always liked nice comfy beds or furniture for this kind of thing, and all I see is hard surfaces."

"I'll show you," Lisa offered.

"Should I take off my dress?" Matt wanted to know as he stepped out of his heels, then removed his gloves and rolled them up into one of the shoes.

"Do you want to undress completely?" Lisa inquired in response, hanging the tuxedo jacket on one of the paper-towel dispensers.

"Yes, I think so," he replied, making the decision.

"If it'll make you feel better, I'll take off all of my things too," Lisa offered. She removed her shoes and stood grinning at Matt.

Matt leaned up to Lisa's face and kissed her cheek. "You're sweet, but you don't have to do that!"

"I want to," Lisa said, snapping off her cummerbund, and not taking 'no' for an answer. "It's only fair."

Matt reached his arms behind himself. He'd noticed that with a slim woman's physique, he was limber enough to reach the zipper on the back of his own dress. He pulled the zipper down and felt the fabric loosen around his waist.

Lisa had removed her pants and was making quick work of the shirt, but by this time Matt was facing away from her. Lisa looked up in time to see Matt lift the dress over his head, and she first noticed the nylons, then the garter belt and then nothing but skin.

"You naughty young lady!" Lisa teased. "No underwear?"

"All of the bridesmaids went this way," Matt explained, speaking over his shoulder. He hung the dress atop one of the stall doors.

"I'm glad no one told me that," Lisa said. "I would have been aroused all during the ceremony thinking about it. It sounds like something Denise or Miranda would cook up, though."

Matt unfastened the garter snaps and rolled the nylons down his legs, still facing away from Lisa. He knew there was still a surprise in store for her. He pulled the nylons off and flung them over the stall door. He pulled the garter belt off his body and hung it over the dress. He was wearing nothing but the wreath of flowers in his hair and the chain around his neck with the Chung Doh Wat.

"I'm ready when you are," Lisa told him. She wore only her neck chain and its amulet.

"I'm ready, too," Matt replied, turning to display his surprise.

Lisa's jaw dropped and her erection seemed to point even more erect. "Bald pussy?" she asked.

"Like it?" Matt inquired in return.

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"I should say so!" Lisa responded, appreciatively. "I never thought it was something that would look good on me, but on you, it looks very erotic."

Matt's expression twisted into one of befuddlement as he tried to understand the logic of Lisa's last statement. Anything that looked good on him now would have looked equally nice on Lisa yesterday.

"Come here you sexy vixen!" Lisa urged, her arms wide.

Matt approached, pressed his body against hers and kissed her fully on the lips. He closed his eyes and for the moment could ignore the fact that he was kissing a pair of rough male lips. When he broke the kiss, he reached his finger up to her upper lip, which was beginning to show the beginnings of a five-o'clock shadow, and he rubbed where the mustache had been. He softly explained, "I thought shaving the pubic hair would be giving you a taste of your own medicine before I realized how permanent our exchanged-body status was. I kind of shot myself in the foot."

"You can see how it's affecting me," Lisa said, separating from him slightly and indicating her powerfully swollen pecker.

Matt reached his hand to Lisa's pelvis and ran his fingers lightly from the base to the tip of her cock. The organ was very warm against his fingers and he could feel that it was quite stiff and obviously ready to do its job. As he touched the male organ that he formerly owned, his current body reacted with a warm flush, a tingling in his tits, a tensing of his pelvic muscles, and an ever-increasing lubrication of his pussy. "You're affecting me too!" he agreed. He pressed his body against hers, and felt the tickle of her chest hairs against his very sensitive breasts. He sighed with pleasure and a vague sense of contentment.

Lisa reached behind him and cupped her hands under his buttocks, lifting him completely off the floor.

"Put your arms around my neck," she directed, bending forward to give him easier access. As she stood up, she lifted Matt up the front of her body. She was surprised at how light he seemed. She'd always thought her female body weighed too much, but with her new male strength, she discovered that it was not heavy at all.

Matt spread his legs to steady himself against Lisa as she lifted. His breasts slid upward against Lisa's chest and bulged above her shoulder when his hips became level with her waist. His head was thrown back so that she was face-to-face with the area just below his neck. Lisa's nostrils

filled with the scent of baby powder and Expression of Delight cologne, and she was approximately at eye-level with the little medallion that had started this whole mess, nestled in the shadowy valley between his breasts.

Matt wrapped his calves behind Lisa, and placed the back of his knees on the protrusions of her hipbones. Lisa slowly lowered his body and felt her hardon contact his moist and hairless slit. Matt held one arm around her neck and used his other hand to guide Lisa's cock to the center of his warm and throbbing vaginal port. Lisa could tell when the alignment was correct and gradually lowered Matt onto herself. He emitted an ecstatic moan as her stiff meaty prick slowly entered his slick and begging cunt.

Lisa was enjoying her first time in control of intercourse. As a woman, she'd let her boyfriends call the shots, and both Sheila and Denise had been the dominant partner in the liaisons this afternoon. Now that she could take things in a direction of her choosing at a pace she liked, the responsibility seemed more fraught with uncertainty than the boon she'd expected. In any case, she reveled in the sensations of a trembling, warm, slick and cozy pussy engulfing her pecker. This was infinitely better than anything she'd felt all day! She could tell that Matt seemed to be enjoying the feelings he was experiencing as well.

"I knew you'd get a kick out of sex as a woman," she told him.

"Okay ...," Matt conceded with a sigh. "I'll admit it feels fantastic, but it seems strange at the same time. I just can't see myself making love to any man."

"You can't? If you want to see it, just look down, then!" Lisa joked.

Despite the horrible pun, she was right. For all intents and purposes, Matt was having sex with a male penetrating him, and was enjoying it. This didn't seem deviant or 'dirty' at all, but almost natural. It felt very exciting to have a warm shaft sliding in and out of him, although it was a totally foreign sensation to Matt's brain. His generous lubrication allowed his body to slide up and down without much friction on the intruding column, and Lisa's rhythm was a combination of a quick lift and a slow drop, so that Matt felt the exquisite sensation of her member filling him slowly over and over.

Matt was able to concentrate on the muscles in his pelvic floor and use them to grip and release the part of Lisa that now made her male.

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"Are you doing that on purpose?" she asked.

"Doing what?" Matt responded innocently.

"Using your muscles 'down there' to stroke me?" she clarified.

Matt blushed. "Yes."

Lisa grinned at his ingenuity. She raised him nearly off of her, bringing the tip of her glans to Matt's vaginal opening, and then lowered him until their bodies met at the base of her penis.

Matt realized that each time his vulva hit bottom, the fuzz of Lisa's pubic hair grazed his bare labia. It felt so wonderfully tickly and sexy at the same time! Lisa had the tips of her fingers at the entrance to his vagina, rubbing the tender tissues there as she moved him up and down. Matt thought this felt so darn nice that he wanted to feel this way forever. He was beginning to experience a cuddly warm glow that made him feel good all over.

"I could marry you if one of us was not already spoken for," Matt breathily proclaimed, as Lisa lifted and lowered his female body in place.

"Do you mean that?" she asked with surprise.

Matt stared purposely into her eyes, as she continued her rhythm. "It's only been twenty four hours or so since we met, but I feel I've known you longer. You were quite a woman, and you should be quite a man. Denise is going to be so happy." He kissed her and immersed himself the symphony of sensations that flooded his senses.

"I was thinking," Lisa mused, "that if our minds stayed exchanged but you and I were married to each other, we'd still be able to see our normal families without telling them about our secret."

"You're right. I never thought about that," Matt realized. "Or together maybe we'd find a way to tell our families about what happened to us. We'd certainly be able to carry on this ruse easier if we were husband and wife."

"So if we never change back you'd actually marry a guy!?" Lisa commented, returning to Matt's surprising revelation.

"Not just any guy," Matt clarified. "Only you. I don't know what it is, but there is something about you that just attracts me... and don't get all Freudian about me falling in love with myself or anything."

Lisa maintained the steady lifting and lowering rhythm while her eyes surveyed Matt's face. "You really mean that, don't you? You'd marry me."

"I've never been more serious in my life," Matt confirmed.

"What about all of the things that come with being a married woman?" Lisa asked.

"Like what?" Matt inquired.

"Well, like having sex, for instance," Lisa reminded him. "As your husband, I wouldn't want to stay celibate and you said this was your first and last time for intercourse as a female."

Matt sighed. "I'd miss being the man in the relationship, but as long as I was with you, I wouldn't mind sex ten times a day."

Lisa could tell from Matt's small changes in expression that he was feeling the precursors of his climax. The waves of pleasure inside him were building slowly but surely to an eventual crescendo.

Lisa pressed the issue further. "What about children? I wanted kids. And if we had sex ten times a day..."

"I'd have children ... pregnancy, morning sickness, pain of delivery and all ... sure," Matt said with evident sincerity. He closed his eyes in a blissful smile as the pleasant sensations increased. His expression was very serene. Lisa was certain that he was being honest and open about becoming a mother although she was amazed at how easily Matt accepted a future possibility that men have never been conditioned to even consider. "After all," he continued, "women are expected to have babies."

Lisa was still stunned by Matt's sudden change of heart, and wanted to be sure he was not just saying what she wanted to hear. "Matt! Listen to yourself! Women have babies. But you're all male, remember?"

Matt opened his eyes and looked down between their bodies for a moment before lifting his head and closing his eyes once more. He smiled as he commented, "Your point about me being male would be a lot easier to accept if I didn't have seven inches of your cock sunk in my pussy right now."

That statement caused Lisa to chuckle.

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Matt gripped his knees around Lisa's hips and began to use his own muscles to lift and lower himself in a more pleasing rhythm. Once Lisa realized that Matt was using his own strength to pivot on her waist, and that she no longer needed to support his weight with her arms, she lifted both her hands to the task of massaging Matt's breasts.

"Do you like it when I do this?" she asked, gently kneading the breasts and compressing the nipples between her thumb and forefinger. Lisa noticed that Matt's breasts bounced sexily under her hands as he posted up and down on her.

"You know I do!" Matt responded. "After all, it's your former body. You know what used to feel good to you, so you just have to do those things to make me totally berserk."

Lisa smiled a wicked smile, confirming that he was absolutely correct. She was using all of the techniques she'd perfected on the countless evenings when she'd been sexually frustrated and alone. She was also keenly aware that Matt's conscious hip motion combined with his rhythmic pelvic tightening teased the heck out of her cock, and was driving her wild.

"I'll bet you're doing things to me that you wanted women to do to you all your life," Lisa told him.

"Guilty as charged," Matt admitted, "but that's the part of sex I've always liked: the giving of pleasure more than the receipt of pleasure. I really enjoy myself when my partner is on cloud nine."

Lisa slitted her eyes. "Ohhh, Matt! I'm on cloud nine, in seventh heaven, the outer limits, the doorway to nirvana, whatever you want to call it. This is fantastic! How about you?"

"It ... feels ... so ... gooooooood!" he sighed with a shuddering breath.

"You must be getting close to an orgasm," Lisa guessed.

"You ... bet ... I ... am ..." Matt panted, and suddenly he thrust his pelvis down onto Lisa, driving her prick deeply inside him. He wrapped his legs tightly around Lisa's waist. His breathing became a series of short gasps, and his eyes were rolled back into his head. He pulled his body tightly to hers.

Lisa could feel the involuntary ripples of his vagina spasming around her cock, and that was enough to trigger her climax too. She swiftly inhaled as she felt the powerful surge of her semen splashing into the depths of Matt's tender anatomy. Her knees almost buckled, but she maintained her stance and didn't drop him.

"Wow!" Matt's voice trembled, in a nearly inaudible whisper. "So this is what a woman feels when a guy gets off inside her! This is incredible!"

Lisa felt the glow of her own satisfaction surrounding her. Making love to Matt had been so natural and wonderful, compared not only to the strange episodes with Sheila and Denise that afternoon, but even better than the times she had sex as a woman. This seemed to go beyond the usual physical excitement to a plane of intense mutual admiration and fulfillment that she had never experienced before.

After a few moments, her erection was wilting quickly, but she wanted to savor the moment, and she held Matt tightly. He seemed to be lost in his own private ecstasy. His face was relaxed and very happy. His eyes were closed, and he had a broad smile on his lipsticked lips.

Lisa was smiling, too. If she was forced to be a man, this was the way to feel. Happy. Adored. Sexually fulfilled. This was what she'd imagined perfect love should be.

Matt finally opened his eyes. "Maybe being female isn't so bad," he said. He slid to the floor and off of Lisa, still engulfed in the afterglow. He felt so warm and appreciated. "I'd gladly accept being a woman, now that I have experienced one of the rewards!"

"I know I could handle being a man forever with loving like you just gave me!" Lisa replied in-kind.

"Would you hug me?" Matt asked.

Lisa put her arms around him and looked into his eyes. She saw him returning her gaze, as they stood in a nude embrace. Lisa could tell that he was at total peace with himself whatever the future may hold, whether he ever became male again or not.

"I love you, Lisa," Matt told her.

She realized that she loved him very much. His warm pillowy breasts pressed against her, swelling against her muscular chest as she

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held him tightly. "I love you too, Matt," she replied before she leaned down and pressed her lips to his.

Everything around them became warm. Very warm. Too warm. Before either Matt or Lisa could break the kiss, the room erupted in a deafening clap of thunder and a blinding flash of light.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Reversal Of Fortune

The searing whiteness faded only slightly. Her heart pounding and the adrenaline surging, Lisa could feel the cool smooth expanse of tile floor against her fingers and beneath her legs. Lisa searched with her hands for some sign of Matt, but he was not within reach. She eventually encountered a vertical surface ... a wall.

Lisa braced herself against the wall and stood unsteadily. The glare imprinted on her retinas made it difficult to see. She felt along the wall and encountered a warm set of fingers. She felt for the rest of the person but lost contact entirely.

"Matt?" Lisa spoke his name, but could not hear her own voice nor any response. Her ears were desensitized by the blast, enveloping everything in a shroud of sound-absorbent cotton. She instinctively reached up to feel for any blockage at her ears but could find nothing that might deaden the sound. Delicate earrings trailed along her fingers as she brushed her earlobe.

Earrings? She felt the sides of her head, and encountered long curly hair festooned with ribbons. She quickly brought her hands to her chest. Her breasts were back!

The familiar female plumbing she'd given up hope of reclaiming had returned as well, although now it was devoid of the surrounding hair and slightly tender from the recent lovemaking session. Her prayers had been answered! Things had resolved themselves ... a little late, perhaps, and certainly not before Lisa had given up all hope of being female ever again. But she was a woman once more, and if her hearing and vision ever returned to normal, everything would be perfect!

Matt first sensed the floor beneath him and the wall against his back. The surfaces were cold against his bare bottom, legs and shoulders. His vision unable to penetrate the infinite white haze, Matt slowly stood and

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felt along the wall for any recognizable feature. He felt a cool set of fingers touch his hand.

"Lisa?!" he shouted, but he couldn't hear himself. Maybe he was deaf. Maybe his voice made no sound. The hand pulled back from his. Was it really Lisa? Was she gone? He leaned in the direction he thought the hand had moved. Damn this white blindness!

Matt tentatively took a few steps and found nothing. An outline appeared directly ahead of him. It wasn't distinct enough to determine exactly what or who it was. He stumbled toward the shape, which began to vaguely resemble a masculine form. "Lisa!? Is that you?"

Matt stopped short as he painfully impacted the hard cold projection of the porcelain sink and he realized that what was slowly becoming clearer was Lisa's reflection in the mirror above the washbasin. He corrected his impression when he realized the all-too-familiar source of pain. It was his reflection, and he was no longer a woman. He placed his hand on his pelvic region and discovered that he was not mistaken. He was male once more, although a very sore one.

"Matt? Are you all right?" Muffled but audible, it was the sweet soprano voice that until a few moments ago Matt had thought would be his own voice for the rest of his life.

"Lisa?" Matt asked as he turned and saw her, still completely naked and now female and totally beautiful. The bright smile she wore improved her beauty several times over. She seemed to be unhurt, her vacant stare indicating that she was suffering the same visual and aural handicaps that he was. Matt picked her up and held her tightly in his arms, never wanting to let her go.

"What was that explosion?" she asked.

"Probably the Chung Doh Wat," Matt replied. "Chinese fireworks are very dramatic!"

Lisa looked puzzled. "I don't get it. Why did it wait until now to unscramble us?"

"Maybe we had to make love with each other again to realize the nature of our relationship," Matt hypothesized. He looked at his wristwatch. "Or maybe it's sundown outside, so there's a chance the spell ended by some sort of timer."

Lisa sighed. "Whatever happened, it put everything back right!"

"I don't know about everything being right," Matt told her.

Lisa pulled herself from his embrace. "What do you mean?" she asked. "Is there something that didn't undo itself?" She began looking herself and Matt over to figure out what she'd missed.

"Something big," Matt frowned. "Until today, I wanted to spend the rest of my life with Denise. Now that seems so foreign to me. I cannot imagine another day without ... you."

"I feel the same way about you," Lisa giggled, giving Matt a quick peck on the cheek and pressing her bare torso against him. "I love you, Matt."

"I love you, Lisa. And I mean that more than I can explain ... but what am I going to do now? I've been married about three hours to someone else. Denise is not going to understand it if I ask her for a divorce."

"How about an annulment?" Lisa suggested, suggestively wriggling in his arms, and enjoying the warm embrace.

"Fat chance," Matt sighed. "You know Denise. She'd sooner sprout wings and fly away."

"But, legally," Lisa chirped, "I married her, you didn't. No harm, no foul. What if we just told her ..."

"Nobody would believe our story of being each other," Matt replied, sullenly. "Only you and I know what happened, and I can't think of any way to get myself out of this situation."

Matt gave Lisa a quick squeeze and reluctantly stepped away from her. He helped her retrieve the dress from where he'd hung it on the stall door, and began searching for the pieces of his tuxedo.

In a few minutes, the lovers were cleaned up and dressed. Their vision and hearing had returned to normal, and anyone seeing them would not believe that these two had made passionate love to each other or had survived the resulting explosion which for some reason seemed only to be seen and heard by them.

Something Borrowed

Lisa wiped a bit of her lipstick from Matt's face, where it had rubbed off during their kiss. "I never complimented your hair and makeup while you were a woman," she said.

"Don't worry," Matt assuaged, "that's the kind of thing us insensitive guys forget to do all of the time."

"I suppose I was a little insensitive, at that! You looked really beautiful, and I guess that makes me feel really pretty right now," she smiled at him.

"The hair was done a beauty salon, ..." Matt began.

"Denise took you to a beauty salon?" Lisa asked. "So there was a rooster in the hen house! That must have been a hoot!"

"Let's just say it was ... enlightening." Matt offered. "I'd never had my hair styled, nor had a facial, or my legs waxed."

"What about the makeup?" Lisa inquired. "You did an excellent job for someone who'd never put on makeup before!"

Matt blushed. "Miranda did the makeup for me. And seeing the effect from this perspective, I have to say she knows her stuff."

"I thought so myself," Lisa told him. "I liked the look on you, and from the way you're staring at me, I guess you like the look on me."

"Definitely!" he confirmed. "You are a vision of loveliness ... an angel."

Lisa smiled at Matt's compliment. "It was kind of neat seeing the world from the point of view of the other sex," she said. "I know I won't jump to the same conclusions I did before, and will give men a little more slack when it comes to some things. I learned a lot, but I'm happy to have my body back."

"I agree on both counts," Matt told her. "I'll never think about women the same way again ... and I won't be able to get you or this experience out of my mind."

"Me neither," Lisa echoed.

Matt held the door open for Lisa as she stepped into the hallway from the restroom. "Well, you'll probably be going back to Kerrville," he

suggested, "and that'll be that, unless you visit Asherton Heights to see Denise and me."

Lisa paused when she heard Matt's comment and remembered something that had slipped her mind. "Er, I guess I should tell you about a phone call that came to your apartment this afternoon."

"What kind of phone call?" Matt asked.

"I talked to a guy named Charlie from where you work. He said something about your company winning a bid for the Kerrville Light Rail Station and how there was a good chance that you would be promoted to lead designer for the project."

Matt's expression was one of surprise and joy. "Really? Lead designer?"

"This guy Charlie said it was still unofficial but pretty much a sure thing. The project team is being relocated to Kerrville for a year, so if you're really the one chosen to lead the team, I might see a lot of you and Denise," Lisa explained, searching Matt's expression to see if he was as happy with the prospect as she. She found the pleasant smile of expectation on his features, as she'd hoped she would.

Matt took her hand in his, and brought it to his lips, kissing it gently. Lisa blushed, her sudden modesty surprising Matt considering that a few minutes ago they had been considerably more intimate with each other. He trailed kisses up her bare arm and eventually reached her lips.

Lisa broke the kiss a moment later. Her face blushed as she chided him, "Matt! You're married to Denise, now. Aren't you afraid someone might see us?"

Matt looked around and saw no one else in the deserted hallway. "Who cares? You're the one I love."

This time Lisa was the one to initiate the kiss, and she didn't care if her lipstick rubbed off entirely on his lips. She wrapped her arms around his neck and pulled his face tightly against hers. She loved Matt so much that her heart hurt.

"Oh! Yess! Yessss! Yeeessssss!" a woman's panting voice faintly reverberated nearby.

Something Borrowed

Matt and Lisa separated and looked at each other, quizzically. They both recognized the voice as Denise. They tried to locate the source and discovered the voice was coming from the nearby women's restroom.

"More! Do that more! Now, slower!" Denise's echoing voice commanded.

"Who is she talking to?" Matt asked.

Lisa shrugged.

"She is usually quite vocal when we're intimate," Matt told her. "But who could she ... ?"

"There's only one way to find out," Lisa replied, pulling Matt to the door of the ladies' room. Lisa cautiously pushed the door open and looked inside. She motioned for silence and slipped her head inside and withdrew immediately. She slowly inched the door open and gestured for Matt to follow quietly.

The inoperative ladies' room was in considerably better repair than the adjacent men's room. Perhaps the workers had already finished here, or maybe had not started yet, but in any case, the room appeared to be complete and the only evidence of renovation was a few cartons piled just inside the door. Matt followed Lisa as she noiselessly crept through the vestibule to the main part of the restroom.

The scene they encountered was one that Lisa and Matt had not expected. Denise was standing bent at the waist, her arms resting on one of the sinks. The skirt of her frilly lace bridal dress was piled onto her back, almost obscuring her head. Tom Bascome stood immediately behind her legs with his tuxedo pants around his knees. His front was against her bottom, slowly pistoning forward and back. Both Denise and Tom had their backs to the bathroom entrance, their eyes closed and were engrossed in their pleasure. It was obvious to Matt and Lisa what was happening.

Lisa and Matt looked at each other without a word and did not have to speak to communicate their thoughts. Matt waited until he was sure that Denise and Tom were into the home stretch of their passion before speaking.

"Tom?" Matt said loudly, and with as much pain in his voice as he could muster.

Tom froze in mid-thrust.

"Tom?" Denise's disappointed voice whimpered from beneath the layers of lace and silk. From the timbre of Denise's voice, Matt confirmed that he had correctly chosen the most frustrating point possible for stopping the action.

"Matt?" Tom asked, without opening his eyes or turning around, hoping against hope that he was hearing things and that Denise's husband had not spoken his name.

"Matt!?" came Denise's muffled voice. She maniacally pawed at the dress to see if her worst fears were realized.

"Denise!" Lisa exclaimed with mock disillusionment as the bride emerged from beneath the layers of fabric.

"Lisa?" Tom groaned, his face pulled into a grotesque grimace as he recognized another familiar voice.

"Lisa?!" Denise complained, standing up from the embarrassing position and smoothing her dress. Her motion caused Tom to withdraw and tuck his erection into his hastily lifted underwear.

"Denise." Matt intoned her name with disgust.

Tom's face was bright red. "I ... I ... this is not what you ... I can explain!" he babbled, lifting his trousers and turning to face his accusers.

"I'm disappointed in both of you. Particularly you, Denise," Matt stated. "And I thought you were my best friend and best man, Tom!"

Denise fixed Matt with a cold stare. Her voice was stern as she spoke. "Let's get one thing clear, Sweetie! Tom is twice the lover you'll ever be! And as far as I'm concerned he really is the *best man!*"

Matt was surprised to hear this from the woman who had so recently publicly pledged her undying love to him... or at least had pledged her love to someone she thought was him. "I don't understand!" he fibbed.

"I've found someone better. I'm going to get Daddy to arrange an annulment. Tonight if possible," Denise announced forthrightly.

"An annulment?" Lisa asked, trying hard to suppress a grin at the pleasant turn of events.

Something Borrowed

"Annulment?" the best man echoed, and looked into Denise's fiery eyes. "Does that mean ... ?"

"Yes," Denise told Tom, gazing back at him. "It can be you and me, legally, for the rest of our lives."

Matt tried to look as hurt as possible, although inside he could hardly restrain his elation at these consequences. "But ... what about us? ... our marriage?" he asked Denise.

Denise sneered. "Us? Our marriage was a mistake, Matt. You can't make love to me, so I don't love you any more. Randi was right. I need a real man: someone who knows how to treat a woman. Someone like Tom."

"Oh yeah?" Matt shouted, defiantly.

"Yeah!" Denise shouted right back. She angrily twisted the wedding ring from her finger and threw it directly at Matt's head. The diamond encrusted band arced toward Matt, but at the last possible moment Lisa fielded the ring handily.

Matt turned to face Lisa and smiled at her. "As soon as the annulment comes through, if you'd have me, I'd like to ask you to be my wife," he said softly.

"I'd like that a lot," Lisa answered in an even softer voice, and she smiled at the person she knew would understand her like no other.

Matt kissed Lisa and pulled her body tightly to his.

Epilogue

Denise's father pulled some strings and had the marriage annulled right at the hotel within an hour. All in all, the party was not a total loss, though. With the exception of Matt's relatives, Denise's reception guests ended up staying to celebrate her impending engagement to Tom.

As promised, moments after the annulment was proclaimed, Matt proposed to Lisa, she accepted, and they left the hotel arm in arm.

Matt never got to honeymoon in Hawaii. Instead, Lisa and he traded the airline tickets for first class seats that night on the red-eye to Las Vegas, where they married at a quiet little chapel in a quaint service that would serve until a more grand ceremony a few weeks later: a big wedding, with flowers and music and pageantry at a church, with Lisa's and Matt's families and all of their friends in attendance.

And they lived happily ever after.

END