

EVENING FALLS



Cynsure

COLLECTED FICTION

TRANSGENDERED FANTASY



WHAT HAPPENS

**when pretty young men are
CAUGHT in *girls'* LINGERIE?**

Cynosure Fiction
A DAY OF REVELATIONS



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A DAY OF REVELATIONS

Tracy Lane, 2002 – 2023

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PART ONE: DEPARTURES

1.

A light April breeze was gusting up the driveway as I helped my mother load her bags into her '57 Chevrolet. Mom had been a Chevy girl since her sophomore years, back when Elvis was still young and the Beatles were playing artschool socials in Liverpool. She'd aged well through the intervening decades, looking no more than thirty due to her fine bone structure and trim, svelte figure. People often told me I got my looks from her, right down to the opal-green eyes and platinum blond hair.

"You sure you'll be OK here all alone?" Mom asked as I passed a well-packed hamper through to the back seat, "I'll be gone for more than a week this time." Always the sceptic in matters of the heart, she was fretting that I'd be the victim of a home invasion or something while she was off spending Easter at Aunt Lizzie's.

"I'll be fine," I replied for the umpteenth time, straightening my spine with a series of audible clicks. That hamper had been heavier than I'd expected. "Stop fussing, Mom, I'm not a baby any more."

"You're *my* baby," she replied, brushing my hand with a feather-light touch, "and this'll be longest we've been apart, since ... well, I just don't like leaving you here by yourself. Sure you won't come out to Lakecrest with me? Elsie's looking forwards to seeing you again."

This last statement chilled the marrow in my bones. Mom's Aunt Lizzie was the stuff of nightmares; a woman whose merest glance could reduce grown men to quivering orthodontists. Then there was my cousin Elsie, a socially challenged cyber-geek with coke-bottle glasses and an eating disorder. Dinner with Dr Hannibal Lecter was preferable to a week with Mad Lizzie Newton and her nerdlinger daughter. Besides, I had *other* plans for the vacation.

"Sorry, Mom - I've got that history report due after the break," I answered, trying to hide my impatience, "Connie Radcliffe's coming over on Thursday to exchange notes, and I can't let *her* down, can I?"

"No, I guess you can't," Mom agreed thoughtfully, "in the meantime, Connie Radcliffe will be spending Easter with her *own* family; hunting eggs, eating home cooked meals ..."

"Jeez, Mom, I'm not going to starve," I interrupted, almost writhing with exasperation, "you've left me enough frozen dinners to last six months. I'm

eighteen years old, I won't burn down the kitchen. I know how to look after myself."

"Yes, I know," she said, stroking my cheek warmly enough to make me shrink with guilt, "I just can't help worrying. Eighteen isn't as old as you think it is, sweetheart. I'd never forgive myself if something went wrong while I was away ..."

"Nothing's going to go happen, Mom," I almost stammered, looking down at my feet. Like most teenagers, I felt totally mortified by maternal displays of affection. "I've got Aunt Lizzie's phone number inside. I promise I'll call you every night to let you know I'm OK."

"That won't be necessary, darling. I trust you." She gave me a tired, happy look and leaned forward to kiss me on the forehead. Her hair tickled my face. She had a clean, tender smell about her, a mixture of carnations and lipstick and Pond's hand lotion. A young woman-scent, despite her age. I fought down an overwhelming sense of embarrassment.

"All right," she said, running her fingers through my hair, "take care of yourself. I'll phone you up on Good Friday to see how you're doing." She turned away, opened the door and pulled out her keys. "No parties, no loud music and don't stay up too late."

"Yes, Mom," I replied automatically. She needn't have worried, I'd given up sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll for lent. Like I said, I had *other* plans for the long weekend. I stood back as she turned the key in the ignition, gunning the Chevy's engine the way she always did before a long trip.

"Have a good time with Connie," she called over the eight-cylinder roar, then fixed me with a mock-stern look: "but not *too* good."

I nodded enthusiastically, trying to look as innocent as possible – which, in fact, I was. Connie Radcliffe wasn't coming over to exchange notes (or anything else). The whole story - history assignment and all – was a lie, a red herring to legitimize my absence from the Manson Family Reunion out at Lakecrest.

"Bye-Bye, honey." Mom blew me a kiss while she backed the Chevrolet down the driveway, dual exhausts humming in deep resonance. I followed her down to the street, keeping clear of the car's wide turning circle. I lifted my right hand in farewell, doing my best to look mature and trustworthy.

"Bye, Mom. Say 'hi' to Elsie for me."

"Will do." She swung away from the curb, gripping the wheel with both hands, and thundered off in hail of gravelstones and exhaust fumes. Top down, hair flying in the April slipstream, she looked maybe half her age, a precocious young cheerleader on her way to the Big Game. I stood in the street waving goodbye until the Chevy vanished over the crown of Summerhill Road ...

And literally *bolted* up to the house.

2.

I was almost fainting with excitement by the time I reached the front door. It had been months since I'd had the place to myself, and I was trembling with expectation as I considered the day ahead of me. Locking the door with a swift, loud clack, I scampered through the living room, kicking off my sneakers without a second thought. I was free, alone to do whatever I pleased over the next four days.

Loosening my t-shirt at the waist, I hurried past the staircase, dodging though to the main hallway. My pulse slammed into overdrive as I imagined all those delicious satin treasures closeted away in the Back Room. The walls seemed to flash by in a strobing montage of frames, prints, and fashion illustrations.

The Back Room was a spacious, two-level extension with picture windows, spotlights and high ceilings. It was festooned with potplants, drawing tables, dressing torsos and sewing machines. Mom used it as both a design studio and a reception area when she was meeting with clients. It was a feminine, creative place, rich with her aromatic presence: scented bath oils; long departed roses; a touch of *Chanel*. I loved this room almost as much as I loved her.

The back wall was lined with mirrors. They dominated the studio from corner to corner, but were little more than a facade for the long, walk-in closet which housed my mother's private collection. Very few people even knew it was there, mainly because it contained the pieces she never intended to sell.

Mom's design sense leaned towards the strange and the fantastique. She often drew her inspiration from the excesses of fashion history – *La Belle Epoch*, French Rococo; anything with a Parisian flavour. Needless to say, it had been an absolute wonderland during my early childhood, seeding my dreams and igniting my most volatile desires. In the course of years, the Back Room had become my stage, the theatre on which I enacted my most secret fantasies.

Did Mom suspect? Possibly; there was very little she didn't know about me.

Halting by the wall of mirrors, I scrutinized my reflection critically, putting a slim hand to the back of my neck. Removing a sequined elastic binder, I allowed my thick, blond hair to cascade past my shoulders. The image in the mirror immediately began to alter. With my hair sweeping down in a shimmering arabesque, I looked small and fragile; a pretty teenaged girl in oversized blue denim.

A shiver swirled through my tummy like a dash of ice water. Quivering with delight, I threw off my t-shirt and jeans, tossing aside the meaningless vestments of my male identity. Turning back to the mirrors, I adjusted my hair to cover my slim shoulders, almost dizzy with anticipation. I felt short of breath, my thighs started to shake with high-wire tension. I was impatient to finish the change, eager to climb into my costume and begin the afternoon's performance. Stepping closer to the mirrordoor, I studied my face and figure for imperfections. There were very few, even at this range.

I was rather fortunate in this respect. Possessing a sexually ambiguous appearance, I could easily pass for female. I had the androgynous lines and huge, liquid eyes of the Waif. My Mother once remarked – in all seriousness – that I could have modeled girls' fashions on any local catwalk.

I padded over to the closet, reveling in my bare thighs, my smooth, ivory skin. It was so wonderful, so liberating, to shed my male identity. Nearly three months had passed since I'd emerged from my gendered prison; twelve agonizing weeks locked in a boy's rancid body, counting off the empty, interminable days. Well, all that was finished now.

3.

Stepping through the mirrordoor was like entering a world of whispering velvet shadows. The Walk-In was my portal to another realm, a place of enchantment and silken magic, a shrine to all things feminine. For me, it would always epitomize the exotic and the mysterious; the questions I could never ask, the knowledge I could never share.

My veins were throbbing with sultry heat, my belly felt as tense as a coiled spring. Aroused, exhilarated, I wandered naked along the rows of brassieres and corsets and garter-belts and bustiers and luscious, gleaming panties, my head spinning like a vortex. I was drowning in a whirlpool of shame, bliss, guilt - and longing. Longing; vast and endless.

Reaching the end of that tunnel of forbidden pleasures, I arrived at the Alcove.

The Alcove was Momma's private dressing room, a little salon housing her favourite pieces. Over the space of maybe a hundred visits, it had become my theatre of dreams. Its charm and fascination were bound up with its essential femininity; the room was heavy with the presence of woman. I could almost taste my Mother's perfume in the pastel-print wall paper.

The Alcove was set out like a 1920s lady's boudoir, furnished with art deco lamps and trinket boxes. A small but elegant make-up table stood at the far end of the chamber, its dark, enameled surface littered with cosmetics and picture frames. Next to the table was a hand-carved chest of drawers. It was an antique, over ninety years old according to my mother.

I knew from prior incursions that it was full of imported hosiery; French *Dior* stockings, Spanish thigh-highs, Italian lacetops. There was full-length mirror beside the chest and low, padded stool near my feet. Overhead, a flurry of European underwear hung from a customized clothing rack set into the wall. The Alcove resembled a high class lingerie store; tiers of shimmering unmentionables seemed to stretch off as far as the eye could see.

Mine.

All mine, for the next four days.

4.

Reaching up, I took a black garter-belt off a clip-hanger. It was an intricate web of midnight lace, woven into complex floral patterns. Six adjustable suspenders hung from the red-trimmed belt, their cleats covered with precious scarlet bows. It was an extraordinary piece; regular belts only have four garters, but my Mother has a passion for the unusual. Needless to say, it was hauntingly beautiful.

My breath caught in my throat as I fastened the luxurious fragment into place. It sat taut against my nipped waist, a translucent strip of sheer decadence. Cool, teasing fingers seemed to drift over my naked flesh as I started toying with the straps, stretching them down to mid-thigh, then releasing them with a satisfyingly loud snap! Moistening my lips, I sank into the sweet depths of my fantasy. I could almost feel my body change and melt beneath my gently probing palms...

Surfacing for air a few minutes later, I selected a pair of tan stockings from the chest of drawers. The choice of colour was an impulse; I normally wear black denier when indulging in one of my performances. But today was unique. In some obscure way, I was becoming aware that I was crossing some sort of boundary, one

I'd never realized existed until now. Placing my right foot on the padded stool, I slipped the hose over my toe and drew it carefully up my calf.

Attaching the stockings was a complicated process (particularly since the belt had an extra set of suspenders). My hands shook as I adjusted the straps into position. Cross-dressing is a kind of agony: a sweet, sensuous torment that leaves you breathless with yearning. The stockings seemed to soften the shape of my legs while accentuating their natural curvature. I smoothed them out against my thighs, tugging gently at the insubstantial material.

The racks above me were slung with lingerie of every description; slips and cammies, basques and corselets, French-cuts and bikinis. Rising up on tip-toe, I started searching through the hangers for a matching set of bra and briefs, one which would complement the garter belt perfectly. A minute later, I found precisely what I wanted.

Placing the brassiere on top of the drawers, I paused to study the underwear a little more closely. They were a pair of wickedly high-cut thong panties; diaphanous black satin edged with a brazen red trim. The triangle was a mass of insolent scarlet frills, the waist band was encrusted with tiny rosepetals. They looked almost insufferably naughty stretched between my fingers. And I couldn't wait a moment longer to try them on!!

A huge smile stole across my face as I bent over and stepped into the thong, wriggling my tushie as I slipped them up my slender, stockinged thighs. The lace brushed against the denier, sending a thrill through my entire nervous system. I looked into the mirror, simmering with rapture. This was the most wonderful part of my dressing ritual. Drawing on a pair of panties was like assuming an entirely new body. A soft, yielding body, pliant and sensuous.

I ran my fingers over my stomach, tracing little circles around my belly button. Lips parted in near-ecstasy, I began to undulate slowly in the mirror, my hair spilling down my chest like a blond avalanche. I closed my eyes, caressing myself with gentle, questing strokes. And once again, I experienced that sense of change – of transformation – as if my form was shifting and running beneath my fingers.

Long minutes rolled by. Time seemed to spin out into some infinite blue void, where I drifted on a sea of immeasurable joy. The whole world seemed to fold and bend around me, and for one infinite moment, I felt as though I were falling - falling so deep and fast that I would never stop.

Drawing back from the brink, I opened my eyes and leaned against the wall. Hangers clashed and fell from the rack; I ignored them. I was breathless with exhaustion. Large indigo flowers seemed bloom across my field of vision. I willed my pulse down to a more acceptable level, gradually collecting my wits. I'd visited the Alcove at least a dozen times over the past few years, and although I'd often felt its subtle magic, the sensation had never been this ... intense.

The mirror continued to hover beside the antique chest, daring me to peer into its crystal depths one more time.

And I did.

I was beautiful. More beautiful than I'd ever imagined, more beautiful than a boy has the right to be. A delicate, rose tint suffused my face, neck and shoulders. My lips looked darker than maraschino cherries. My eyes were wide, glittering emeralds flecked with diamond highlights. My trim, girlish figure seemed to have altered in the Alcove's muted atmosphere. Arms a little rounder, waist a little thinner, hips a little wider. Even my features - effeminate though they already were - seemed to have softened into an ageless, childlike pout.

If only I could look this way all the time, I thought wistfully, picking up the brassiere and sliding my arms through the straps. I'd wanted to be a girl most of my life, and I would have traded almost anything to have my wish granted. That was my concept of paradise, the image I took to bed with me every night: to suddenly wake up young, female and stunningly attractive. What more could a boy possibly want?

Reaching back, I clipped the bra into place, then made some minor adjustments across the chest and shoulders. Like the panties, it was a tight fit – far more constrictive than I'd expected. Mom was a small lady, never having worn anything bigger than an A-cup so far as I new. Nonetheless, her bras usually hung limp across my flat chest. By contrast, this one felt at least two sizes too small.

Still watching myself in the mirror, I swept my hair back over my shoulder to give myself an unobstructed view of the brassiere – and everything else I was wearing, of course. Striking a catwalk pose, I planted my hands on my hips and admired my reflection from a variety of angles.

And was struck speechless by what I saw.

PART TWO: SPECTACLE

5.

The girl looking back at me was utterly breathtaking. Her long, shapely legs bent slightly inward at the knees, their supple length exaggerated by the tense black suspenders. The red lace trimming the garter belt was garishly bright, as were the frills on her flimsy little panties. And strangely, in the dim lamplight of the Alcove, she seemed to have pert, ripening breasts filling out the low-cut bra she wore. The illusion was faultless. I was looking at a pretty teenaged girl in her underwear. No - I *was* a pretty teenaged girl in my underwear.

And yet, at the same time, the girl in the mirror *wasn't* me, not exactly.

Her face was captivating. Coy, tender, and totally innocent, the face of a Botticelli Venus. Her eyes were pools of demure laughter. She smiled, her teeth flashing brilliantly in the mirrored gloom, and I suddenly knew she wasn't as innocent as I'd first supposed. No: she was naughty, terribly naughty, and she reveled in it. I watched, fascinated, as she dropped me a teasing, little-girl wink, the kind that could bring a grown man to his knees weeping tears of desire. She was the most mischievous creature I'd ever seen, standing there in her bra and panties and nebulous tan stockings.

I turned completely sideways, examining myself in profile.

And realized something was wrong. No - not *something*.

Everything.

The girl in the mirror had *breasts*.

It wasn't a trick of the light; some hallucination sparked by adolescent daydreams and a rush of endorphines. Two small, perfectly formed breasts were straining the underwire cups to the breaking point. Smooth, alabaster flesh overflowed the flimsy black lace. My mouth gaped in open astonishment, my hands flew up to confirm what my mind simply couldn't accept.

I had breasts.

"Oh dear *god!!!*" I cried in alarm, stepping away from the mirror. There was no mistake. My hands were fondling a pair of lush, firm orbs; I could feel their

engorged tips swelling against my fingers. How could I have missed them before?! I should have noticed while I was putting on the bra, easing myself into the cups and re-adjusting the shoulder straps. It wasn't the kind of thing a teenaged boy could ignore - even a cross-dresser like myself. Breasts don't grow on trees, and they certainly don't bloom on pubescent males, no matter how effeminate they happen to be. My head was reeling in confusion. This was crazy. *I was crazy, I must have been.*

But I wasn't. Somehow, I knew I wasn't losing my sanity. This was really happening. I had undergone some kind of metamorphosis, right here in my Mother's dressing room. My entire body had transformed, altered - right down to the width of my hips, the texture of my skin, the contours of my lips ...

And a rather unpleasant thought occurred to me. A notion so frightening that I could barely bring myself to consider it.

"Mother of god", I whispered, looking down.

6.

Standing closer to the make-up table, I lowered both hands to my panties, gingerly hooking my thumbs through the hipstraps. There really was no other alternative. Sooner or later, I would have to find out how extensive the transition had been, whether I'd become completely female in every sense of the word. There were, of course, a thousand other questions crowding my mind, but they'd have to wait. Right now, there was nothing more important than this. I had to know.

Still, I hesitated. The implications were overwhelming. What if my fears were right? What would I do? How could I explain this to Mom (*Mommy*) when she returned from Aunt Lizzie's (*Liesa's*)? Maybe she wouldn't even recognize me - nobody would, I'd changed so much. No one would believe my story, they'd call me a liar, a freakshow. I'd end up in a padded cell! Things were happening too fast; I wasn't prepared for this. Only five minutes before, I had wished for just such a miracle (*if only I could look this way all the time*), but right now, faced with the possibility that I might be *trapped* in a female body ... I was afraid.

I wavered back and forth, trying to find a solution, and alternative, a way out of this insurmountable paradox. There was none. I was paralysed with fear, shaking on the verge of tears. Why had this happened to me? All I'd wanted was a holiday from myself, a chance to act out a few of my idle fancies. I was a boy for God's sake, a boy! I didn't want to be a girl!!

(yes, you do)

(no I DONT)

(yes you do: if only I could look this way all the time)

Inhaling a long, steadying breath, I stared into the mirror and began to ease my panties down. My heart was thundering in my throat (though with excitement or terror, I couldn't tell). The frilled waistband slipped down my hips with infinite slowness, revealing the truth an inch at a time. The newly exposed skin was very pale, almost white. I could see the traces of a bikini line curving down my lower belly.

I stood very, very still, hardly daring to breath. An inexplicable sense of calm was descending over me. I took the panties down another inch, revealing a haze of silky, blond pubic hair - so fine and downy as to be virtually invisible. From this distance I looked nude, untouched. Below this, the ivory flesh folded over into a tiny, dimpled cleft - pure, pristine, and absolutely virginal. And that was all I needed to see. I could already feel my features tainting with a fine, pink blush.

I was a girl.

7.

I sat down on Mommy's make-up chair - an unobtrusive art-deco piece I couldn't recall seeing before - and tried to make sense of what I'd just seen. Sliding my panties back into place, I felt drained, numb. My former panic had subsided into vacant shock. Something impossible had happened, something devoid of rational explanation. I should have been devastated, hysterical, yet all I felt was a listless torpor, bordering on indifference. Ten minutes ago, I'd been a boy. Now, in violation of all logic, I was a girl.

(and your point is ...?)

Perhaps I was simply thunderstruck - incapable of expressing any emotion. This was a revelation beyond all sanity, and my young mind had shut down, unable to deal with the conundrum. Maybe all my systems had overloaded at once, causing an intellectual short circuit. Well, whatever the circumstances, my trepidation seemed to have vanished as swiftly as it had appeared, along with the confusion and anxiety.

I sat and waited. Switching off the lamps, I hovered in the darkness, breathing

through a girl's lips. I gradually became aware of my body - my female body - as my pulse slowed and tranquillity began to flow through my veins like a cool, soothing balm. I could feel every inch of my form: the sensuous flow of my belly, the fleshy hollow at the base of my throat, the gentle throb of my nipples. And as the minutes trickled by like sweet molasses, I realized that I was not completely without emotion. Beneath my arctic detachment was a small geyser of warmth so subtle I hadn't recognized its existence until that moment.

It was *relief*.

I stood up, automatically checking my stockings, and stepped away from the make-up table. Despite the dread I'd experienced only ten minutes before, I was relieved. The miserable, crushing weight of manhood had been eliminated; decades of frustrated anguish and self-loathing erased in a single morning. No more guilt, no more shame, no more slinking around the house like a pervert. I didn't need to pretend any more. The masquerade was over.

Leaving the Alcove, I made my way back through the rustling tunnel of the walk-in. It flashed through my mind that the closet seemed to have doubled its length since I first stepped inside. It was an optical illusion of course, must have been. The mirror set at the far end gave the walk-in a impression of great distance; rows and racks sweeping off into infinity (then again, the ceilings seemed higher too, and there were no mirrors mounted up there ...).

I didn't give these spatial distortions much thought, however. I felt free, deliciously free and uninhibited. Unencumbered by the burden of a masculinity I'd never understood, my mood shifted once more. Relief turned swiftly to euphoria; I'd been liberated from my gendered prison, casting aside my false masculinity as easily as a snake sloughs its skin. The shackles were off.

The possibilities seemed endless. I would finally know the joy of being a woman. An entirely new world was opening for me; a world previously denied by an accident of birth. I was a girl; young and beautiful by any standards, and I could do anything I chose. Naturally, there would be problems to deal with; questions to ask and answers to seek - but those were concerns for tomorrow. Today, I would rejoice. Thus, I emerged from the closet.

Literally.

8.

Taking two steps into the Studio, I froze in mid-stride, bewildered for the second

time that morning. The (back)room looked bigger. No, not just bigger - gigantic. The dimensions had altered; space itself had expanded, thrusting out in all directions. I shook my head in mute astonishment - the room had been enormous to begin with: now it was colossal, monstrous, the size of a city block. Picture windows loomed as tall as skyscrapers, potplants waved their ferny heads below an impossibly remote ceiling. The carpet beneath my feet ran off as wide and open as a football field.

(carpet?? We don't have carpet in in the Back Room!!)

(yes we do. We've always had carpet in the Studio)

(no, we DON'T!!)

Pushing those nagging, conflicting voices to the back of my head, I continued to scan around the Studio, the Back Room, whatever it was now. The whole place looked unfamiliar. Things had been shifted, displaced. The furniture had been moved, ever so slightly. The curtains were gone, replaced by pale blue slimline blinds. Looking towards Mommy's workspace, I noticed a brand new IMac, a garrish lavender monstrosity complete with all the peripherals, seated proudly on an Ikea computer desk. This was unbelievable - my Mother had never touched a computer in her life, refused to even consider the option.

Even the light was different - sharper, brighter, more vibrant. Flooding in through four skylites (which hadn't been there an hour ago), it was a brilliant, midday radiance, not the ruddy gold of an April morning. The Studio's wallpaper blazed like a Surrealist painting, its colours demanding and strident. The room was virtually dripping with fluorescence, burning with summer fire.

In fact, there were colours I'd never seen before in my life - hues and pigments for which I had no name. I gazed around, slack jawed with amazement. My visual abilities had been jacked-up, amplified a thousand fold. Later, much later, I would understand this apparent miracle, but standing there watching the walls stream with iridescence, I was mesmerized with awe. I felt as though I'd been blind since birth, and that my sight had been restored in a welter of dazzling colour.

Then something caught my eye which drove all thought of the visible human spectrum from my mind.

There was a hamper sitting on Mommy's work table. An Easter hamper, much the same as the one she'd bought for Aunt Lizzie (*Leisa*). I walked over to the table, telling myself this couldn't be right. Despite everything else that had happened this

morning, I was reluctant to accept this one small inconsistency. It couldn't be the same hamper. I'd loaded it into the Chevrolet (*Caddillac*) less than half an hour ago. Damn near slipped a disk putting it in the back seat, I remembered that much at least.

But there it was.

Then: I heard the voice; high, clear and underscored with dry humour:"

And just *what* do you think you're doing, young lady?"

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PART THREE: REVELATIONS

9.

There was nothing I feared more than discovery.

The thought of my secret being revealed had haunted me almost as long as I could remember. Like most tranzies, I'd begun "voguing" in early childhood. Even then, I'd known it was something which had to be concealed at all costs. Cross-dressing is an activity which carries as much shame as it does joy. Part of it is the guilt imposed on the practice by mainstream society, but mostly, it's the overwhelming potential for exposure. And exposure is inevitable. Despite all the safeguards, escape routes and precautions you take to evade detection, you're going to be found out. One day, you'll miscalculate your margin for error. It may be a window left open, a scrap of black lace lying forgotten on the floor, or an insignificant lapse in your normal routine. The circumstances are largely irrelevant. Whatever the reasons, your secret is going to be disclosed. It's unavoidable. The subsequent humiliation is nothing short of devastating. It has to be the transvestite's worst nightmare.

Hearing her voice raised in counterfeit rage, I forgot everything that had happened over the past thirty minutes. Suddenly, I was a boy again, standing in the back room of our big colonial-style house in Summerhill. Eighteen year-old Benny Woodridge, high school senior and part-time sales assistant. Benny Woodridge; art school reject and complete romantic failure. Benny Woodridge; cross-dresser, auto-voyeur, and all round-sexual deviant, decked out in his Mother's underwear.

Her exclusive *designer* underwear, to be precise.

"Mommy!!" I cried, almost falling over myself as I swung around to face her, "Mommy, I ... I was just –" the words trailed off, my brain clicked into panic mode. How in God's name could I explain this?!

"Don't worry, I *know* what you're doing," she cut me off good-naturedly, "not as if it's the *first* time you've tried on my lingerie." She came towards me rolling her eyes in feigned exasperation, like a long-suffering parent dealing with a spoilt child. She was wearing the same blue jeans and printed top she'd worn in earlier in the day, advancing on me in quick, businesslike strides, her freshly blow-dried hair bouncing about her shoulders.

"You ... you *know*?" I asked incredulously. Her words didn't make sense. She'd never seen me dressed (or undressed) as a girl before. If she'd had even the

slightest suspicion, she'd never dropped so much as a single hint. For my part, I'd been meticulously thorough in covering my tracks for more than a decade. It was an obsession which bordered on paranoia.

"How did ... how did you find out?" I stammered in a breathless, little-girl lisp.

"Don't play coy," she answered, seemingly oblivious of my rising hysteria, "you've been raiding my wardrobe for years now."

She halted a few feet away, hands planted resolutely on her hips. Scrutinizing my trim, shapely thighs, she shook her head ruefully. I began to wilt before that critical stare, almost collapsing with embarrassment. I placed both hands over my panties in a desperate - and wholly unsuccessful - attempt to bury the evidence.

"Mommy, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to –" I started, feeling my face blazing the colour of a maraschino cherry.

"I've told you before," Mommy interrupted dismissively, "you can borrow my dresses any time you like, but my underwear drawers are strictly off-limits."

Reaching out faster than I could react, she took me by the arms and spun me around so I was facing the mirrors. My jaw dropped as I caught sight of myself once more: a slim, frail clad in little more than a whisper and a prayer. I looked like a child playing dress-ups with her Mother's corset and garters. Much younger than my eighteen years anyway. Thirteen, fourteen at the most.

(Oh Christ Oh god, I'm NOT a boy, I'm a WOMAN; no I'm a GIRL; NO I'm a LITTLE girl)

"Did you really think I'd let you wear something like *that* at your age?" Mommy was saying. She leaned over my shoulder, pointing to my reflection: "you've barely finished high school, Bianca. Now take off that ensemble before you tear the material. Those stockings alone cost over two hundred dollars. *Dior* originals."

What had she just called me? *Bianca*? My head was spinning with shock and confusion.

Her fingers touched my spine, settling between the shoulder blades. A moment later, my bra went loose as she unclipped the back strap with a classic one-hand snap. I stiffened in surprise, a cold thrill swept through my midriff, my hands flew up to catch the brassiere before the cups fell too far.

"*MOMMY!!*" I cried in alarm, "*what are you DOING?!!*" But I already knew what she was doing. She was undressing me, peeling away my fragile dignity in successive layers. I gaped in the mirror, eyes bulging until they seemed to fill half my face.

"A little late for false modesty isn't it?" Mommy laughed as she removed the bra and dropped it over the arm of the sofa nearby, "I must've seen you naked at least a million times." Again, her words confused me. Mom hadn't seen me nude since I was - what? Eight? Nine? But this woman wasn't my Mom, was she? And I *wasn't* Benny Woodridge any more.

My name was – what had she called me – Brenda? *Bianca*? Yes, that was it; Bianca.

Bianca Woodrow.

All of this streaked through my mind between two heartbeats. There was more: images and memories poised to swirl up from my subconscious. Thousands upon thousands of them; thoughts and words and recollections of a childhood I'd never lived. A veritable torrent of information. Far too much to process under the circumstances. Particularly since I was virtually swooning with shock.

My Mother was *disrobing* me in the middle of the Studio.

She was placing my lush, young body on open exhibition before the picture windows. Wailing in protest, I placed my fingertips over my small, ripening breasts, gasping as the cool morning air whickered around them. I had never felt so humiliated in my entire life.

Momma's hands fluttered over my waistline, and suddenly I was wearing nothing but a black lace garter-belt and a pair of flimsy, red-trimmed panties (and stockings, of course, two hundred dollar *Dior* originals many women would have killed for). I couldn't lift my eyes to the mirror, knowing how small and defenseless I must have looked. Forget the fact that most of my fantasies revolved around panty parades and public exhibitions. This was different; indescribably different. All the years I'd spent lolling about in my satin daydreams, I had never imagined that being relieved of my underwear could be so ...estatic. This was no fantasy. This was reality, and there was nothing virtual about it.

"Mommy, I can undress *myself!*" I complained, looking back over my shoulder, "I'm not a baby, you know!!"

"You're *my* baby", she replied offhand, her words bringing on an eerie burst of *déjà vu*, "now stop wriggling your hips and hold still." Before I could consider the Twilight Zone implications of her last remark, I felt her fingers looping through the waistband of my thong. A rush of gooseflesh spilled over my bare shoulders as I realized what she was about to do.

(she's going to PULL my PANTS down!!)

"Momma!!" I squealed in horror, "Stop it!! Don't!! I can get changed upstairs!!" But Mommy wouldn't hear of it. She had too much invested in this outfit (which had cost her close on a thousand dollars) to allow it to leave the Studio, much less entrust it to her daughter's inept care.

"No, you'll get undressed down here, Bianca. That's the price you pay for sneaking around behind my back." She slid the panties down with both hands, rippling the lace against my inner thighs. I inhaled sharply, caught entirely off guard by this impromptu striptease. I risked a glance in the mirror, compelled by an impulse I couldn't resist.

It was ironic: I'd never seen a girl this naked before. Yes, I'd had my share of centrefolds and videos and sleazy porn sites on the internet, but they were so obviously contrived that I'd never had much interest in them. This was different. This was real flesh, immediate and voluptuous. I wasn't simply looking at a girl, I *was* a girl; and the experience filled every one of my senses.

I stood with my palms crossed in front of myself, gasping like a fish while Mommy lowered the thong over my knees. I shimmied my thighs automatically, watching in fascination as they dropped lightly to my ankles. My pale, ivory skintones had deepened to the colour of a ripe strawberry. The suspender belt was way too tight, bulging out the soft tissue on either side of my waistline.

The thong was now coiled around my heels. Mommy patted my right leg just above the back of the knee, a signal I recognized instinctively, as if I'd been doing this all my life. I stepped carefully out of the panties, one foot at a time. Mommy draped them over the sofa, then turned back to me, beaming in parental amusement.

"All right, you can take off the garter-belt too," she instructed, absently gesturing towards my belly button, "and be careful with the stockings. Run a ladder through those and you'll be paying me back until Thanksgiving - next year."

Hesitating only a few seconds, I followed her directions, bending over to unclipped the suspenders. I had to bite my lip to suppress a fit of the giggles. I can't begin to

explain how terribly embarrassing this was, taking off every snip of clothing in front of my mother. My tummy tingled with warm, liquid pleasure. She was treating me like a little girl, reducing me to the level of a helpless child. And I was enjoying it.

I dispensed with the stockings, handing them over to Mommy with a demure smile, then reached back to unhook the belt. Waves of abject humiliation were surging through my bloodstream, my heart was ready to burst like an over-inflated balloon. My hands fell away to my sides, exposing my dainty, feminine cleft. What was the point in hiding myself now? There was nothing I could keep secret from her. I was melting, dissolving in a torrent of ecstasy.

"OK, come on", Mommy's voice was a remote buzzing in my ear, "we don't have all day. Aunt Leisa's expecting us for lunch at one." The words didn't quite register on my consciousness. I was aware she'd spoken, but all meaning was submerged beneath a tide of corpulent delight.

Noticing my lethargy, Mommy gave me a nudge towards the doorway, following through with a well-aimed slap to the posterior. Not a loving pat on the fanny, either. This was good, hard smack on the bottom, my reward for skulking around in her wardrobe like a thief. Instant justice: very hard, very quick and *very* sharp.

(OWWWWW!!)

A white-hot star of agony exploded across my right buttock; I shrieked in hurt and surprise, leaping forward at least three feet. The pain was immense, unspeakable, streaking halfway down my thigh like a bolt of lightning. I whirled around with a yelp, covering my fanny with both hands.

She had *spanked* me!! I gaped at her in red-faced shock. I couldn't believe it. She hadn't punished me like that since I was ten. Yet here I was, small, naked, eighteen years old - and she had spanked me!!

On the *bottom*!!

"Mommy!! That *hurt*!"

"It'll hurt a lot more if you keep us late", she replied, both eyes sparkling with warm-hearted threat, "now run upstairs and get dressed. I've laid your clothes out on the bed."

She started walking towards me, still smiling that gentle, indulgent smile, and I understood that she wasn't kidding. No, she was deadly serious: if I delayed my departure another two seconds, she'd put me over her knee and paddle my bare cheeks as if I were no more than six years old. No excuses, no questions, no second chances. And worst of all – there would be nothing I could do about event it.

Voicing a little scream, I turned and fled for the door, my hair whipping out in blond streamers. I scampered across the carpet like a frightened doe, a vivid, scarlet hand-print pulsing on my sleek, round haunch. Oh my gosh, how it stung, how it throbbed, a burning reminder of my juvenile status in the domestic hierarchy. Yet despite my searing discomfort, I was giggling. High and sweet and carelessly. I could hear my laughter echoing off the walls as I approached the staircase. Why was I laughing? No idea. Maybe I was hysterical. Maybe I'd finally lost my mind. Or maybe I was happy. Happier than I'd ever thought possible. An hour ago, I'd been male; a big, lumpish boy fumbling around in his mother's underpants. Now, I was a naked alabaster nymph gliding past a dozen open windows, my perfect body gleaming in the late morning sunshine.

I hit the stairs at a full run.

10.

My head was whirling by the time I reached the landing at the top of the stairs. It was all too much to take in; I was being overwhelmed by a tsunami of conflicting emotions. I wasn't crazy, I understood that much, but there was no way to explain what had happened to me over the past thirty minutes. Somehow, I'd slipped into an alternate universe where I'd been born female and my Mother was some kind of benevolent autocrat – same face, same voice, even the same personality in most respects, but darker, harder...stronger. A woman to be respected and obeyed, her every word heeded without question.

A tide of rising panic swept through my mind with cyclonic force. Memories seemed to be crowding in on me, graphic recollections of a life I'd never led. *Bianca's* life. I could recall intimate details of her existence stretching back to her earliest infancy, almost all of it closely intertwined with my personal history. Every decision, every thought and choice I'd made perfectly mirrored on this side of reality. Bianca and I *were* the same person, separated only by a few vagrant strands of dna. I was a boy, she was a girl, but in all other respects we appeared to be identical.

With the sole exception that *she* was a success.

In this world, Bianca Woodrow was an honours student, a prodigy, an over-achiever. *Her* mother had pushed her much harder than mine had ever pushed me, demanding far more and accepting nothing less. Bianca had never failed a test, never shirked a responsibility nor neglected a task. She hadn't failed the entrance exam at Chamberlain Center for the Arts. Quite the opposite – she'd passed with flying colours, one of the youngest applicants to qualify for a place in the program.

How had she succeeded when I'd crashed and burned like a stray Hindenberg? The answer was deceptively simple: her Momma had much higher expectations than mine. Failure was not an option in the Woodrow household; there was a price to be paid for each indiscretion, each miscalculation, each act of covert rebellion. Bianca's academic schedule had been meticulously planned in advance, along with her social life and domestic routine. No excuses, no evasions, no self-pity.

11.

The bedroom was set out almost exactly as it was back in Summerhill, with ceiling-high bookshelves along the left wall and a four-poster stretched out along the right. Adjacent to the bay window was my study desk, complete with its antique lamp and straight-back mahogany chair. A place for everything, and everything in its place, as Crazy Aunt Leisa would have said.

The colour scheme was slightly different – more subdued, perhaps – and the shelves were lined with 'girlie' things – barbie dolls, nail polish, music boxes and so on – but there was no doubting this was *my* room. The seal of my personality was stamped into every nook and cranny; despite seeing it for the first time, it felt familiar in ways I couldn't have put into words. That sense of *déjà vu* returned once more, rushing over me with devastating force.

I strutted across to the bed, looking down at the clothing Momma had laid out for me. As I'd expected, she chosen the most effeminate pieces she could find in my wardrobe. Shooting a cautious glance back at the hallway, I leaned in for a closer look.

Splayed out on the bedspread was a pair of soft cotton knickers and a matching cross-your-heart brassiere, the kind worn by teenaged girls barely out of middle school. Plain, functional and utilitarian in every sense of the word, they were a far cry from the flimsy lace lingerie Mom kept in the Alcove downstairs.

Neatly folded next to these was a bright pink sun-dress with wide, puffy shoulders and a thickly ruffled hemline. I crimped my nose in a kind of wry amusement. It looked like something out of a Japanese cartoon.

No way was I going to wear *that!* I had no choice regarding the underwear – there wasn't much else to choose from – but I knew that Bianca had a closet full of slim-fit jeans and designer T-shirts. A little too garish for my tastes, but better than this *cosplay* ensemble Momma had picked out for me.

I lost no time slipping into the bra and pants. There were no long, smoldering looks in the mirror or voguing along imaginary catwalks. I wanted to cover my nudity as quickly as possible, hide that sleek, adolescent figure beneath at least three layers of fabric. That vast sense of arousal I'd felt only minutes before had been replaced by a harrowing sense of urgency. If I was going to get a spanking, I wanted to retain at least one shred of dignity.

Once I'd climbed into the underwear (my fingers moving with unaccustomed speed as I clipped the bra into place) I traipsed over to the closet and picked out a bright yellow t-shirt and a pair of faded blue Levis. On impulse, I also grabbed a silky white cami-vest, barely noticing what I was doing. Looking back now, I suspect that Bianca influenced that particular decision. She seemed to be hovering deep in my subconscious, whispering instructions like a guardian spirit.

It took me all of thirty seconds to pull on the outfit, starting with the vest. Once again, my hands seemed to move with supernatural agility, as if I'd been wearing Bianca's clothing my entire life.

I caught sight of myself in the dressing table mirror. The jeans and t-shirt did nothing to hide my newly acquired gender. Bianca's figure was slim and rather fragile; nothing she wore could have concealed her child-like physique. Apart from her breasts, she might have passed for a twelve year old. I suddenly understood how her mother could exert such strict control over her.

Making some final adjustments to my ensemble, I began packing a few items into my tote bag – toothbrush, shampoo, extra sets of underwear, the sort of things I'd need for a long weekend on the East Shore. With Crazy Aunt Leisa. Oddly enough, the thought didn't bother me in the least. As a matter of fact, I was looking forward to spending time with my new relatives, particularly cousin Elsa. In this version of reality, she wore contact lenses and knew all the best raves in town.

"You ready yet, Sweetie?" Mommy called from downstairs.

"Be down in a minute", I replied, slinging the bag over my shoulder. Walking to the bedroom door, I turned back to look it over one last time. My new room. My new life. My new Mother.

This had indeed been a day of revelations.

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PART FOUR: AFTERMATH

12.

That was close on four years ago.

In the intervening period, I've completed my BFA and joined Mom in the fashion trade, interning as her part-time assistant. We've met with unprecedented success in the past six months alone, opening up two new studios in Heartsfield and Greenmeadows. I'm still the junior partner in the business, of course, but Mom recognizes my artistic abilities, even while refusing to acknowledge my age.

In line with my academic pursuits, I've devoted a great many hours researching the background of my adopted world. Initially, I thought I was living in a mirror image of my home town, but as each month passed, I began to realize that there were innumerable differences between the two. Most were superficial variations on names and locations – Aunt *Leisa* as opposed to Aunt *Lizzie*; Chamberlain *Heights* as opposed to Chamberlain *Downs*. Other discrepancies were more significant – Ireland being a republic, Columbia being a District and Canada being a Commonwealth, for example.

In many respects, the general histories were identical: two major wars in the Twentieth Century, military conflicts in Korea and Vietnam, the rise of digital technology at the end of the 1980s. Almost all of the leading figures have the same names – John F. Kennedy, Neil Armstrong, Germaine Greer and Steve Jobs to cite a few prominent examples.

I suppose that the *real* differences are far more subtle, but I see them virtually everywhere I look nowadays. I said earlier that my Mother seemed somehow 'darker' in tone – a shrewd, calculating entrepreneur who would gladly drive the competition out of business if it suited her purposes. She's still my Mother, still warm and kind and generous by nature, but she carries an edge of steel I'd never noticed before.

Everything seems darker over here. This is a world cast in shadows of anger and conflict, as the merest glance at the online press can readily confirm. The daily news revels in horror and violence beyond anything I'd previously imagined.

Mayhem reigns supreme at every level of society: from the highest echelons of government to the back streets of Hell's Kitchen. This is a far *bleaker* realm than the one I came from, a landscape blackened with hatred and drenched with venom.

Still, wherever there is darkness, there must be light. The contrasts between joy and sorrow are so vast that human speech cannot describe them. I've experienced both over the past few months, plumbing the depths of human emotion. Perhaps it was the shock of finding myself locked inside a female body, or perhaps it was the inevitable process of growing up – teenagers invariably suffer torment and rapture in equal measure.

Whatever the explanation, I've adapted to the demands of my new role. I have a far closer relationship to my Mother than Benny ever had with his. Yes: we squabble, we argue and fight like two scorpions in a jar, but the bonds we've forged between us are nothing short of indestructible.

Nor are those bonds confined only to my immediate family – Bianca Woodrow is far more popular than Benny Woodridge ever was. Back in Summerhill, I was something of a classroom phantom; a bland, nondescript boy who left no visible impression on the mind's eye. Here, I'm pretty, vivacious, outgoing; the cute little girl with the bubbly personality and the oversized folio perpetually clutched under one arm. All things considered, I seem to have gotten the better part of the bargain.

I have far more than just Bianca's memories. I've inherited her drive, her persistence, her ambition. Her prodigious artistic talent. Often, I look back and feel astonished at how little I accomplished as Benny. I realize now how much I *might* have achieved if I'd bothered putting in the slightest effort. Over in the Homeside, I was lazy, lethargic and self-indulgent; here, there seems to be no limit to what I can do. Perhaps, like Bianca, I've acquired a taste for success.

I've been granted a fresh start, a second chance that I'd be a fool to squander. Very few people are given the opportunities I've been handed, and I intend to make the best of an *extremely* good situation. The future is laid out before me like a boulevard of dreams, and there are no obstacles to impede my progress.

Strange then, how much I miss my old life.

As mentioned above, this is a crazy, kaleidoscopic world, a place of excess and excitement. Having been here so long, I probably wouldn't give it up, even if I could. All the same, there are moments when I wax nostalgic for the people I left behind. It's the final paradox I've had to face: the knowledge that everyone I know

and love is – at some level – a total stranger. Frances Woodrow isn't *my* Mother, Constance Radcliff isn't *my* best friend, and Leisa Newtown isn't *my* Aunt Lizzie.

The doubts and fears usually creep in around ten PM, after the day's work is finished and I'm getting ready for bed. I often look out the bay window into the night sky, winding down at the end of a long evening, when my mind is free to wander where it will. Almost inevitably, my thoughts circle back to the life I led as Benny Woodridge, and I catch myself wondering:

What's happening over there?

13.

During my first month, I made several attempts to return through the Mirrordoor, believing – no doubt naively – that the gate must swing in both directions. I reasoned that there had to be some kind of portal hidden away in the Alcove, an obscure passage between quantum realities, but my experiments always came to nothing. As I suspected, there was no way back. Perhaps the traffic can only flow one way.

I've spent many a sleepless night puzzling over this mystery. How did it happen, how did I manage to step sideways in time? What triggered the transfer, why did I come to this *specific* location in the space-time continuum? And perhaps most importantly: what happened to *Bianca*?

Initially, I reasoned that we'd undergone a complete transposition, swapped bodies through some momentary rift in the fabric of the universe. It seemed the most logical conclusion. However, a more frightening scenario soon occurred to me, one I didn't like to contemplate.

What if we *didn't* trade places? What if Benny Woodridge simply winked out of existence, vanished off the face of *that* Earth, never to be seen again? That would explain why I can't return, and the revelation haunts me in the dead of night. If my fears are true, then Bianca would have no host to occupy, no place to go. That would mean that I ... *overwrote* her, erased her consciousness, deleted her from this plane of reality.

In the warm light of day, I often imagine that Bianca is walking around in my old body, finishing the degree I never started and enjoying a life I could never lead. Sometimes, I actually *pray* that she made it to the other side, mostly because the alternative is unthinkable.

Of course, it's more than just Bianca I have to worry about. There's also my mother – my *other* mother, Fanny Woodridge; last seen disappearing over the crown of Summerhill Road more than three years ago. What is *she* doing now? How is she coping? Did I leave her all alone in that world? The thought of her coming home to an empty house, night after night, never knowing what became of her son...*God*, I hope they managed to find each other.

So many questions, so very few answers, and only the faintest chance that I'll ever know for sure. If, as I suspect, the door only swings in one direction, there's no way to tell what happened to my doppelganger. For the time being, I can only hope that I'll eventually discover the truth, one way or the other.

How? I suppose that's the only question that matters now.

In recent weeks, I've considered the possibility that there may be *others* like me out there, trans-dimensional castaways thrown up on the shores of the multiverse. I may not be able to go home, but there's no reason why someone *else* can't come *here*. For all I know, I might be surrounded by hyper-spatial immigrants. If I'm ever lucky enough to meet them, then maybe – just *maybe* – the answers to all of my questions might be forth coming...

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