



Cooper Kadee

Smile! Smile! Smile!

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Chapter One

The alarm rang. Nick Joanus groaned. Opening one eye, he looked at the glowing numbers on his bedside alarm clock: 5:00am. He sighed. He hadn't slept well. He'd had hot flashes and thrown his covers off, only to wake hours later shivering, yanking his comforter and sheets back over his body, curling up only to have it all happen again. His dreams had been filled with fear and confusion, though he couldn't remember them. He just knew he'd woken in starts, feeling scared and nervous. Now, he stared at that stupid, beeping clock, and cursed the day he'd agreed to get back together with Paul and Joe.

5:01.

Uggghhhhh! He pushed himself up on an elbow and reached toward the sleep button, determined to get another few minutes, but then he felt a swaying on his chest, and looking down he saw small breasts pushing out the front of his white tank top. His heart leapt with joy. Yes! Suddenly awake he hopped out of bed, feeling his little breasts bounce. His heart fluttering, he pulled his tank top off and looked at himself in the mirror, marveling at the sight of the soft little cones standing proudly on his chest. It felt weird and strange; he almost felt like he was doing something wrong, looking at porn or some naked girl he'd brought home, but these were *his* boobs. And, he was the first of his brothers to get his boobs, which meant he was the most mature.

Nick couldn't wait to rub it in, and he slipped out of his pajama bottoms and into a pair of panties, tucking away his shrinking boyhood, then wiggled into a pair of yoga pants. Finally, he pulled on a fresh tank top-- a tiny one with spaghetti straps that hugged his proud new breasts and clung to his shrinking waist. Then, he slipped into a pair of ballet slippers and grabbed his pink duffle bag he'd stuffed with stuff for dance class, before practically prancing downstairs, where he found Paul and Joe making smoothies, each one wearing matching yoga pants and tank tops. Nick noted their flat chests with a new sense of superiority. He thrust his chest forward, arching his back and pulling his shoulders back the exactly the way he'd seen countless girls when they wanted to draw attention to their boobs, only he was the proud owner of his own perky pair now. "Notice anything different,

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bros?"

Joe glanced over, did a double take. "Oh," Joe said. "Little bro got his boobies. Wow." He tried to seem so bored by it, but he couldn't hide the seething jealousy in his voice.



"Right?" Nick said, stepping away from the counter, keeping his shoulders back and his back arched. "Aren't they great?" He wiggled his shoulders making them sway and jiggle. He wasn't sure he'd ever been more proud of anything in his life.

"Big deal," Paul said, slitting his eyes. "We'll all get them pretty soon."

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"But I got them first," Nick said, rising on his toes and turning in a pirouette. "That means I'm more mature than you."

Paul huffed, tucking a strand of his lengthening hair behind his ear. "You're still a baby."

"Jealous much, flatty patty?"

"Shut up. I'm older than you," Paul said, gesturing down at his curvy hips and plump butt. "I have a way better figure than you do."

"But I have boobs so that makes me more grown up, *little sister*."

"Don't make me kick your skinny ass!" Paul said, lunging toward Nick, who gracefully danced away, fluttering around the kitchen on his toes, enjoying the feeling of his breasts as they moved with him. "I have to ask Charlotte for some bras."

"Yeah, well get some food into you. We have to get to ballet," Joe said.

"Yeah. Don't make us late again, slut" Paul said, filling the blender with the veggies and powder they'd been given to help them develop their figures.

Nick started to say something smart, but Paul turned the blender on, drowning out his voice, so he simply stuck his tongue out and danced over to the refrigerator, grabbing some kale and spinach and other stuff. He glanced over at Paul's firm, heart shaped ass, high and tight like a pony in his black yoga pants. Nick felt a pang of jealousy. Paul did have a super cute butt, like a really fit older girl. Nick's was round and pretty, but not banging, despite the hours he'd spent working on his glutes. Paul glanced back and caught Nick's jealous gaze, and smiled before turning back to his smoothie, shaking his hips side to side sassily.

Fine, bro, Nick thought. But I have boobs, so who's really more mature?

This was such a huge mistake, Joe thought, watching Paul shake his round, girly hips while Nick pranced around, shoulders back, proudly showing off his new boobs. We never should have agreed to become women. I never should have agreed to this. Picking up his smoothie, he walked out onto the patio that opened up off the kitchen and looked out over Malibu Beach, lit in purply silvers beneath the full moon that hovered on the horizon. He could hear the waves crashing against the beach in the distance. He sipped his smoothie, turned back and looked at his brothers. They all three had developed rounded, more feminine legs, thanks to the endless dancing lessons, yoga and the treatments they'd received. From this distance, his brothers looked like skinny teen girls.

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Their faces has softened as much as their bodies, with big eyes, plump lips, cute little noses. Joe looked at his own arms-- they weren't as small as a girl's yet, but they were an ever-shrinking embarrassment to a man, and he was a man, or had been.

Joe regretted it all. Felt terrified of the future that awaited him. What if it didn't work? What if their new record didn't hit? The tour didn't sell? The movie and TV deals Charlotte promised didn't materialize? They'd be stuck as girls, women, and still broke, only now they'd also be a freak show, an embarrassment to their family and to themselves. Maybe it wasn't too late to back out? They hadn't announced their gender change yet. With them moving into Charlotte's beach house, they'd been largely off the radar both because no one really knew they were here-- or cared. Was there some way to stop this terrible slide into girlhood?

Or was he just feeling insecure because his brothers were blossoming into pretty young women faster than he was?

He was the middle brother and took a moment to assess himself. He had slightly rounded and wider hips, and his booty had plumped up a bit and definitely looked more like a girl's now, though not as much as Paul's. He hid his frustration at Nick's blossoming, getting his little boobies first. It was frustrating, watching his brothers get their figures while he still looked quite boyish, but he had gotten very good skin, something he worked hard at, both with diet and getting body wraps and facials. His skin was soft and had a healthy feminine glow, and that's what he was clinging to so he didn't feel too inferior to his cute brothers. His figure would fill out, he knew it would, and they would all be full girls soon enough. And he would be as cute as his brothers. He had to be.

Or, he had to retreat back into his masculinity.

As soon as they finished drinking their smoothies, the three brothers grabbed their pink duffle bags. "I'll drive today," Nick said.

"Shotgun!" Joe said.

"What, you think you get to drive just because you have boobs now?"

"No, I just want to drive. You always get to drive."

"I'm the best driver, slut," Paul said.

"No, you aren't, you ditz."

"Guys..." Joe said.

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"God. You can barely even remember how to put it in park."

"First one to the car drives!" Nick said, racing past Paul, giggling.

"Cheater," Paul squealed, dropping his duffle bag and rushing after his brother, his shoulder length hair bouncing.

Joe sighed, picking up Paul's bag. It infuriated him how childish and immature his brothers were acting since they started changing. Why did he always have to be the practical one?

Paul got to their car first, slapping it and shrieking, "I win!"

Nick punched him playfully on the arm. "You cheated!"

Paul, who had the keys anyway, beeped the doors open, climbing into the driver's seat, while Nick dropped his duffle and bopped around to the passenger side, pulling down the rearview mirror and checking himself out in the vanity mirror.

"I called shotgun," Joe said as Paul pushed a button and the trunk popped open.

"Throw our dance gear in the trunk, girly," Paul said, starting the engine.

Joe did, then climbed into the backseat, crossing his arms and hunching over, pouting. "I called shotgun."

Charlotte had rented the boys a Kia Optima Hybrid-- the second most popular car among young women according to Forbes, she said, assuring them that when they came out as girls Kia would be one of their sponsors. The color was known as Snow White Pearl, and the car just looked-- cute, somehow, but not too ridiculously girly. The best part as far as the boys were concerned was the tinted windows. As much as they had been adapting to their changing bodies and developing more feminine personalities, they were all still very nervous and insecure about what it would be like when the world found out. It was one thing to have your fellow feminizing brothers see your boobs or your booty, but when everyone else saw not only their developing bodies but their girl's clothes?

It was really scary.

Cruising down the Pacific Coast Highway, the radio blasting Ariana Grande's "Side To Side," the boys bopped their heads and mouthed the words, trying to mimic the way Ariana pronounced her words:

These friends keep talkin' way too much

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Keep sayin' I should give you up
Can't hear them no cause I

I've been here all night
I've been here all day
And boy, ya got me walkin' side to side

Charlotte had them listening to all the hot female singers or, as she liked to call them, “your competition.” Dance Star Studios was just a couple miles from their beach house, and at 5:30 in the morning there was little traffic, so soon they were hopping out of their car, grabbing their bags and bouncing excitedly into the studio. Raquel “Rocky” Jennette, was in cobra position when the boys burst into the rehearsal room.

“Hey. Girly girls,” Rocky said, smiling brightly and hopping to her feet. She was a tall, leggy woman with a lean, dancer’s body the boys had all initially lusted after, but now increasingly admired and envied. “Hey,” the boys answered, smiling brightly and sliding up into the girl’s registers they’d been practicing and were required to use in public. Rocky greeted each of the boys with a motherly hug and a kiss on the cheek, stopping when she came to Nick, putting her hands on his shoulders and gushing, “Nicky! You got your boobies! When did this happen?”

Nick blushed and shrugged, proud and also a little confused that he felt so proud to have such a hot woman praise him for popping out a pair of boobies. “Just this morning, ma’am.”

Rocky pulled him in and hugged him tight, and Nick’s body tingled as he felt his soft little breasts press against Rocky’s. “You’re getting to be such a big girl,” Rocky said. Holding Nick at arm’s length and admiring the little cones pushing out of his tank top. “Oh, you’re adorable. Now, go and get dressed,” she said, turning him and giving him a pat on the butt. She saw that Paul and Joe, already slipping into their white tights and black leotards, looked sullen and she smiled to herself. The boys were jealous of their brother’s little boobies. How sweet! “You are all looking so good. I am so proud of all my pretty girlies.”

The compliment brought a smile to the boy’s smooth faces. Once they’d gotten into their leotards and ballet shoes, the boys tied their hair back and slipped into their tutus. It really wasn’t required for a practice session, but Rocky wanted them to embrace their “feminine power.” Finally, they gathered at the barre, doing their warm-ups in unison while Rocky watched and made small corrections and suggestions. Then, they formed a small triangle and began to dance, and dance and dance. Nick couldn’t help glancing in the mirror at every chance, admiring the way his breasts filled out his top, turning to examine

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his profile, feeling giddy at the way his back arched, his breasts thrust out. He felt he was the prettiest of the three and smiled brightly with confidence and pleasure at the thought.

The three of them were moving in perfect unison, raising their arms over their heads, lifting their legs and kicking, then twirling, all three of them smiling brightly, but the first hour was spent going through motions and routines they knew. After a brief break, they started to learn new, more challenging combinations, doing doe-like leaps in the air and landing as softly as feathers, twirling and leaping, kicking, spinning...

“No. No. Graceful, girls! Graceful! You’re moving like boys. Reset and go again.”

And they would start over, leaping and twirling, always smiling, until their calves ached, and their cheeks hurt, and they were drenched in sweat, but...

“No. Start again. This is ballet, girls. Ballet.”

They looked at each other, their eyes growing hard with determination. Paul held out his hands, and the three of them formed a triangle, gripping each other’s soft little fingers. “Okay,” Paul said, sticking with his girl’s voice. “Let’s nail this thing. Everyone focus, focus focus, and let’s dance our hearts out-- right now!”

Nick glanced at himself in the mirror, smiling at the sight of his little breasts.

“Nicki,” Paul squealed. “Focus.”

Nick nodded. “Focus,” he answered, using his own girl voice, which had settled slightly higher than Paul’s. “Yaaaassss. Let’s do this.”

“Prima Donna on three,” Paul said.

The boys put their hands in, Paul called “one, two, three” in his squeaky little voice, then they all chimed “Prima Donna!”, and pirouetted out of the circle before giggling and rushing back together for a sisterly group hug.

“Okay, girly girls, and I do love your sisterly little psyche sessions-- now show me what you got.”

The music started, and the three brothers started the combo, each one smiling brightly, each one moving in perfect unison, his moves as feminine and graceful as a doe, and they were all lost in the music and the movement, the pure joy of dancing in perfect harmony as a group, zoned in and reveling in the fluid and pretty motion of their blossoming bodies.

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The music stopped and the boys held their final pose, balancing on their toes, their arms raised in a circle above their heads, their smiles bright, wide and completely and totally real, their eyes sparkling with pride and joy.

Rocky waited, letting the boys hold, hold, hold... and then started clapping, and rushed forward saying, "That's what I call dance!"

The boys broke pose, clapping, prancing, giggling -- hugging and kissing-- overcome with girlish excitement and pride. They knew they had nailed it, but they all lived for praise from Rocky, and to have their teacher acknowledge what great dancers they'd become, it just made them all so happy they could cry—and Joe did, finding his tears flowing, wiping them back, and then Nick saw Joe crying, and his own eyes filled with tears, and then Paul saw his brothers crying and he started blubbering. The exhausted boys sank to the floor and hugged and cried. Joe glanced up through his tears at Rocky and said, "we're crying because we're so happy!"

"I know," Rocky said, smiling empathetically. "I mean, do you think you're the first girls I've ever trained?"

The boys showered, changed back into their yoga pants and tank tops, hugged and kissed Rocky goodbye, then bounded down to the car. "Um, what's next?" Joe said, tilting his head to the side. "I can't seem to remember anything!"

"It's fitness dementia," Paul said. "We must have burned, like, 2000 calories of something. Anyway...." He pulled out his iPhone, the pink jewel case sparkling. "Spa!"

"Can we get something to eat? I'm starving!" Nick said.

"You can get a snack at the spa, but make sure to track your calories," Paul said.

"Okay. MOM."

"You're such an annoying slut," Paul said, starting the car and pulling out.

"It's pretty weird to take a shower now that I have boobs," Nick said as if to himself.

"Oh god, *shut up!*" Paul said.

"No one *cares!*" Joe chimed in, equally infuriated.

"Well, it is...."

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Paul cranked up the music. Nick folded his arms under his breasts and pouted while the other two boys started bobbing their heads, smiling, mouthing along to Taylor Swift.

Because these things will change
Can you feel it now?
These walls that they put up to hold us back will fall down
It's a revolution, the time will come
For us to finally win

Nick couldn't help himself when the last verse came along, and slipping up into a crystalline soprano voice he didn't even know he had, he jumped in on the last line, which he loved to sing sooooo much:

And we'll sing hallelujah, we'll sing hallelujah

Paul pulled into the spa's back parking lot, the one reserved for guests who required discretion. The guard recognized the sticker on the windshield and raised the gate without even needing to speak to them. The sun was up now, and people were around, so the boys all slipped on their big, glamorous Elizabeth Taylor sunglasses, just to be safe. Then they hurried in the back entrance, where they were greeted by three pretty young women who smiled and said, "Girls! So good to see you!"

More hugs and kisses, and then it was off to change into short little robes and to sit for mani-pedis. The boys thumbed through women's magazines and chatted with the beauticians and each other about all the latest celebrity gossip and fashion trends while their nails were done. Their nails were not long—yet, though maybe a little longer than was normal for a guy, and after working on their cuticles and filing and shaping the nails, the beauticians coated them with a clear polish. All three boys held out their hands, fingers spread, turning them this way and that, admiring the way the light shone on their perfect nails.

The hours passed as they stripped and lay down to get their bikini waxes, following by mud baths and then facials, before they ended with massages. Charlotte had offered to have them work with male attendants, but they all felt more comfortable having girls give them their beauty treatments and watch as their bodies reshaped into woman's figures. Fawn, Mandy and Lili couldn't stop raving about Nick's boobs, and they also gushed over Paul's "cute little hiney!"

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Joe felt ignored—as usual. Why didn't anyone notice how soft and radiant his skin had gotten? When the day ended and the pampered, exhausted and glowing boys got back in the car to head to a meeting with Charlotte, the determination grew in Joe to call it quits. He was a man. He'd never wanted to be a woman. The whole idea to become a girl group had been insane. They never would have agreed if only they hadn't been so desperate.

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Chapter Two: The Past



Request Denied. Insufficient Funds.

Joe had stared at the ATM screen. He looked at his date, Kelly. They'd connected on

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Tinder. “Impossible,” he said. “I have plenty of money.” It was true. Or so he’d thought.

“I’ll pay,” Kelly said.

“No,” Joe said. “I can’t let you pay.”

“Why not?”

Joe raised an eyebrow. “Because I’m a man.”

“An old-fashioned guy? I like that,” Kelly said with a smile.

“I’ll just put it on my card.”

They walked along the beach to the Crab Shack and ate, laughing and getting to know each other. The meal ended. The waitress came back with his card. “I’m sorry, but your card was declined,” she said.

“That’s not possible,” Joe said. “Run it again.”

“We ran it three times, sir, and I am so sorry but...”

“I can...” Kelly started, but Joe held his palm out toward her, giving her an angry look. Then, he yanked his wallet out of his pocket, fished out another card and tossed it at the waitress. It spun through the air and landed on the ground.

Looking shocked and humiliated, the waitress knelt down and picked the card up from the floor. “I’ll be right back.”

“Stupid idiot,” Joe had said.

“Calm down,” Kelly said. “She’s just doing her job.”

“She’s embarrassing me! That’s not her job.”

“People are staring,” Kelly said.

Joe looked. Saw people gawking. A few had their phones out and were recording. “Shit,” Joe whispered, slipping his sunglasses on. He looked over. The waitress was talking to the manager, and they were glancing over at him with looks of concern. The manager walked over carrying the bill and Joe’s card. “I am so sorry for the inconvenience, sir. There seems to be something wrong with our system, and we don’t seem to be able to process credit cards. Would you possibly have cash?”

“Here,” Kelly said, paying the man. “Keep the change. And our waitress, Sarah?”

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She did a wonderful job.”

Joe clenched his jaw and shook his head. “I am never eating here again,” he mumbled.

The two got up and walked out. They had made plans to go and play putt-putt golf after eating, but as soon as they left the restaurant Kelly had said, “So sorry, but I’m feeling really tired. I better call it a day.”

“What?” Joe said, angry. “Is it because of that shit in there?”

“No,” Kelly said. “No. I had a... good time.”

“Well, can I get your number?”

“I don’t think so,” Kelly said, walking away. “Have a great life.”

Joe had stood, staring at her. *What the fuck?* he thought. *Did she even know who he was? How many women wanted him to fuck them? Bitch.* He’d walked back to where he’d parked his Silver Jaguar, stewing, wondering who he could call for a quickie and...

“What the hell?” he shouted, seeing a tow truck lifting the rear end of his car into the air. “Put that down, Motherfucker!”

The driver turned and looked at him with bored, basset hound eyes. He was a huge guy— like an *I live on muscle beach* kind of guy—with a day’s stubble and a smoldering cigar clenched in one side of his mouth. He dug a paper out of his back pocket and just said, “Repo.”

“Repo? Bullshit. This is a mistake.”

“I’m just doing my job, brother,” the man said, pushing past Joe and getting into his truck and pulling away.

Joe stood there, watching his car being hauled away. He had no cash and no credit and now no car. What the hell was happening? With no other options, he walked all the way home only to be greeted by a bright orange sticker on his front door. “Notice of Foreclosure.”

This has to be some kind of joke, Joe had thought, ripping the sticker down and throwing it on the porch steps. He knew it took time to foreclose, and so, letting himself into his house, he’d flipped the light switch in the foyer and... nothing. No power. “Fuuuuckkkkkkkk!” he shouted at the sky. “Fuuuuuuccckkkkkk!”

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He found his cellphone. Called the power company. A nasal voiced woman took his call. He gave her his information, and as he expected she said, “Your power was turned off due to lack of payment.”

“No. My bill was paid on time every month since I bought this place.”

“You will need to bring in your receipts if you want to dispute the billing history.”

“I don’t want to dispute the billing history. I want some fucking power!”

The woman had hung up, and Joe had stormed upstairs and gone to sleep in his cold, dark bedroom.

The next day when he checked his mail, he found a new birth certificate, and a letter reading “Dear Miss Joanus; In response to your request, we have corrected your birth certificate to accurately reflect your gender.” The certificate now indicated that Josephine Joanus had been born female. It listed his social security number.

Upon your request. What’s going on here? Joe wondered. And how long would it take him—and how much money he didn’t have would it require—to get the state to return him to the legal status of male?

“Identity theft,” Paul Paloma said, pushing a dossier over to Joe.

“Identity theft?” Joe said.

“Probably Russian. Very skilled. They cleaned out your bank account, maxed out your cards. They set up all kinds of phantom connections on your computer, so when you thought you were auto-paying your power...”

“They were stealing the money.”

“Yup.”

“So, there must be a way to correct all this.”

“Yeah, but it takes time. Maybe a long time in this case.”

“Why?”

“The hackers were smart. The way they did this, it looks like you blew all of your money over the last few months on strippers and hotel rooms, champagne and yacht rentals. You’re going to have to prove these charges did not come from you, which is hard

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because in the past you have spent a ton of money at all the businesses they used.”

“Shit. Well, what am I supposed to do in the meantime? I have no cash.”

“You got family?” he asked. “Your brothers, for instance?”

“A pair of assholes.”

“Do any of those assholes have a couch?”

“My brothers and I had a very unpleasant ending to our band. The last year had been fueled by Jack Daniels and cocaine, and we fought—I mean really fought. Paul slashed me with a knife. I gave Nick a concussion. We have scars and bruises from those days. I call them now and tell them I’m broke? They’ll just laugh in my face.”

“You might be surprised.”

Joe was. Because when he finally swallowed his pride and called first Nick, and then Paul, he found the same thing had happened to them. Identity theft. Cleared out. The brothers talked over the phone. Cried. Apologized for being such assholes. They decided to get together in person. Nick was still dating some sitcom actress, and she fronted him some money, which he wired to the other two so they could make the trip, and they met at Mel’s Diner, the greasy spoon in the valley—it was a place they used to eat with their parents, back when they were just three kids writing songs in their family basement.

They didn’t have a plan. It just seemed like a good idea to see each other, compare notes, see if they could mend their broken relationships, maybe put a tour together, make some money. They ate, talking about their troubles, and Paul broke some bad news.

“I talked to Abe. He said, and these were his exact words, I couldn’t book you right now if you bought all the tickets.”

“Seriously?”

“He says there’s no interest.”

Nick and Paul seemed stunned by the news, but Joe wasn’t surprised. No one was downloading their old songs. They weren’t trending anywhere on social media. He gone from being mortified at the thought that everyone was going to find out about their financial problems to being mortified that no one cared about their financial problems. “So, that’s it? We’re screwed?” he’d said.

And that’s when Charlotte had appeared, like an angel.

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“Paul, Joe, Nick,” she’d said, placing a business card in front of each of them. The cards were black, with gold lettering that seemed to flicker as they read her name and title: Charlotte Arkane, Consultant. The boys looked at the card, then up at HER. She was tall and blonde, perfectly put together, from her shoulder length hair to her subtle, professional make-up, to her black dress, silver brooch and black, knee length boots. The bag she had slung over her shoulder was also black and gold, but it wasn’t a purse. No, this woman was not the purse carrying kind. She came armed with a laptop.

“We already have a manager....” Paul started, but Charlotte cut him off.

“Abe Kaplan,” she said. “I know him well. Give me five minutes. Five. And if I have not convinced you I can change your lives forever, just tell me to leave, and I will leave.”

They looked at each other. Shrugged. “Take a seat,” Paul said, sliding over.

Charlotte slid gratefully into the booth. Joe noticed she didn’t smile. Didn’t seem surprised. She just pulled her laptop out of her bag and flipped it open, positioning it so they could all see the screen. She was wearing a lot of perfume, Joe noticed, thinking it was the first imperfect thing about her. It was so strong he felt light-headed, dizzy. The screen on her laptop had flashed with some kind of crazy kaleidoscope pattern, and they had all stared until it vanished, and then she went into some power point. To this day, Joe could not remember what she’d said to them, only that they sat and talked for several hours, and then when the diner was finally closing, they were shaking hands and agreeing to not only sign on as her clients, but to come and stay with her in her Malibu Beach House while they all worked to clear their financial problems.

Still singing along with the other boys—now it was Rhianna—Joe crinkled his nose. It was all too strange. Too convenient that she’d shown up at the dinner that night, just when they were all so desperate. What had they talked about? Why couldn’t he really remember? She must have planned this sex-change scheme all along, he thought. She had to have!

But, then, how to explain that he’d been the one who’d suggested it in the first place?

They’d piled into Charlotte’s Escalade that night, just kind of lost in a haze, grateful that someone had come along who seemed to have a helping hand to offer. “Buckle up,” she said, and they all strapped themselves into their seats. Charlotte put on some kind of

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new age, meditation music—zithers and chimes and otherworldly humming sound, and Joe had drifted off to sleep, only waking when he'd heard Charlotte's voice coming through the gauzy haze of his sleep, saying, "Three."

The boys opened their eyes. They all felt wide awake, calm and secure. They followed Charlotte into her palatial beach house—it was all pink and purple pastels. "Nice house, but kind of girly," Nick said.

Charlotte had patted him on the cheek and smiled. "You'll get used to it." She showed them to their rooms, and promised to see them in the morning.

Joe had looked at his room. It was tastefully decorated, albeit a bit feminine. It was white, with peach trim that matched the furniture, of which the large, queen sized bed caught Joe's attention. Climbing under the peach comforter he fell into a deep sleep, the best sleep he'd had since the whole identity theft fiasco had begun.

He woke in the morning to the smell of freshly brewing coffee and bacon. His stomach rumbled, and he climbed out of bed to find he was naked. What the hell? He didn't remember taking his clothes off, and looking around the room, he couldn't find them. He struggled to remember what had happened. Had Charlotte maybe dropped in for a late-night snack? He looked in the dresser and found a peach colored speedo, but nothing else. With a what the hell it's better than nothing attitude he slipped into the trunks, then checked the closet where he found a short cotton robe, which he pulled on. It only came to mid-thigh, but at least it was something. He went downstairs, where he found Paul and Nick wearing matching robes, gathered around the kitchen while Charlotte cooked. "Morning, sleepy head," she said.

Joe gladly accepted a cup of coffee, and noticed the same chimey meditation music was playing that he remembered from the ride. "You play this all the time?" He asked.

"A lot of the time. It helps me focus my chi. You'll learn to like it," she said.

They ate, and then Charlotte grabbed her things. "I am off to work, boys. The house is yours. You might want to go and lounge around the pool."

"Okay. Great. Thanks," they responded.

As soon as Charlotte left, the boys looked at each other and laughed. "Is this fucking amazing or what?" Paul said.

"I know, right? From the dump to the Ritz," Nick said.

"It's weird, though, right?" Joe said. "I mean, why is she doing all this?"

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“Because she smells money!” Paul said, punching Joe on the arm. “And I do, too.”

“Pool?” Nick asked.

“Yeah, but first some booze.”

They searched around. Found nothing but wine. Figured, what the hell?

Charlotte had an infinity pool that overlooked the beach and the ocean. The boys lounged around the pool, swam, and lay in the sun working on their tans. At one point, Joe said, “Can we change this music to something cool?”

Paul shrugged. “I’m actually learning to like it.”

“Me, too,” Nick said.

Joe shrugged. “I guess I will, too, then.”

They whiled away the day. When Charlotte came home she actually made dinner for them, and after they ate they gathered together to watch a movie in her home theater: *The Fast and The Furious*. The boys were totally into it, and wandered off to bed feeling blissed out and satisfied.

Back in his room, Joe peeled off his trunks, then found some white cotton pajama bottoms and a soft, cotton V-neck t-shirt laid out on his bed. He pulled on the pants, which only came down to and then flared out a little at his knees—*Charlotte is not a good judge of size!* he thought, pulling on the t-shirt. It was super soft and comfy, and he once again crawled under his peach comforter and drifted right off into a deep, restful sleep.

Charlotte smiled to herself in the morning as the sleepy boys filed downstairs in the Capris and t-shirts she’d ordered from Victoria’s Secret. They looked so cute!

The next few days followed the same pattern. Charlotte cooked breakfast, and they all ate together. The boys went out to the pool and tanned, sipping wine and chatting, then watched a movie. After a few days of what Charlotte called “boy movies” she insisted it was her turn to pick, and after some playful objections they all curled up on the couch and watched *Casablanca*. Joe was surprised to find himself sniffing, more than once fighting back tears.

That night, he found he couldn’t sleep. The movie had resonated with him, something about the doomed romance, and Bogie had been so cool, suave, and he’d put the girl’s feelings before his own. It filled him with new and confusing feelings—happy and sad and something else he couldn’t name. After tossing and turning for what seemed like

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hours, he thought, “I should read myself to sleep.” There had been a stack of magazines in the closet—he’d noticed them the first day, and he got up and picked them up, carrying them back to his bed. “Shit,” he thought, sitting cross legged in his Capri pajamas, leafing through the magazines. Vogue. Cosmopolitan. Elle. All women’s stuff. He lay back down, hugging his pillow. He’d just have to suffer through it. Hope that sleep came. He waited. And waited. Finally, with a frustrated moan, he sat up, turned on his bedside lamp, grabbed a copy of Elle and started reading.

He opened his eyes, sat up, and a magazine slid off his chest. Women’s Fitness. It was open to an article on Ten Great Moves To A Sexy Butt. Hunh, he thought, skimming over the exercises, thinking “women.” He dropped the magazine and, climbing out of bed, took a leak, then, looking in the mirror, he ran his hand over his two-day’s growth of stubble. It looked dirty and gross. Opening up the medicine cabinet, he found a pack of Venus for Sensitive Skin disposable razors- pink and white. Women’s razors. Well, it made sense. Charlotte was a woman, but a razor was a razor. The shaving cream was the same brand—Gillette Venus, and when he squirted some into his palm, Joe’s masculinity recoiled. It smelled very girly. He looked at himself in the mirror. No, he thought, looking at his dirty, disgusting stubble. That has to go, girly or not.

He worked the shaving cream into his beard, picked up his pink Venus razor, and cleaned the offending growth off his face and neck. When he finished and looked at his smooth, clean shaven face he felt a rush of euphoria and pride. “You look cute as hell,” he said, examining his face, touching his smooth skin with his fingertips.

Downstairs, he found all his brothers had also shaved. “Looking good, studs,” Paul said. “Guess we all got tired of that hobo face.”

Charlotte stroked their cheeks and gushed with praise over how cute they looked. “Why would you hide such beautiful skin under gross hair?” she said, running her palm along Joe’s soft chin. “Oh, I just love a smooth-faced boy!”

“Thanks for making breakfast,” Nick said as he turned on the water and started cleaning the dishes. Paul took a sponge and wiped down the stove, while Joe grabbed a broom and swept the floor. Charlotte watched, bemused, as the men cleaned and tidied, blissfully unaware they were wearing women’s clothes. They were all getting to be so adorable. “You boys should go out to the beach. The salt water is good for your skin.”

“Better not,” Paul said. “Someone might recognize us.”

“So what?” Charlotte said.

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“Well, things aren’t exactly great right now,” Joe said, adjusting the straps on his t-shirt.

“Well, I have an idea for how we might just fix that.”

“What do you mean?”

“It’ll be my little surprise! Bye!”

“Bye!” the boys chimed back.

When he went back upstairs to change into his speedo, Joe hesitated, looking at the pile of magazines. It would be good to take something to read, but his brothers would give him so much shit. He stood, struggling, then finally said, “fuck it” and grabbed a few of the magazines, clutching them to his chest as he made his way downstairs to the pool.

When he got there, he found Nick was in the water, floating on his back with his eyes closed, while Paul was on a lounge, also eyes closed, soaking in the sun. He felt ridiculous having worried so much about his magazines. The other boys weren’t even paying attention. Looking at the two of them, he was impressed with how tan they’d all gotten, each of them sporting a healthy bronze glow now-- they all looked so sexy! But, what did not look sexy were all the wiry hairs on Paul’s legs, Nick’s chest.

Joe looked at his own legs and crinkled his nose, then just thought “Oh! Well!”

Laying on his tummy, he flipped open his magazine and started reading an article entitled, “10 Make Up Hacks You Need to Learn NOW!”

Eventually he rolled over, and lay on his back, sipping his white wine and digging into an article about dealing with a controlling boyfriend. He heard water splashing as Nick climbed out of the pool, then Nick said, “Elle?”

Joe glanced over the top of his magazine. “It was all I could find to read.”

“Gay,” Nick said.

“Shut up,” Joe answered.

“You are gay,” Paul said. “I would rather stare up Satan’s asshole than read some girl’s magazine.”

“So don’t read them,” Joe said, determined to stick to his guns on the grounds that the only thing worse than reading a girl’s magazine at this point was letting his brothers bully him into not reading a girl’s magazine.

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“So don’t read them,” Paul said in a squeaky voice, mocking him.

The boys lay out, chatted. Nick eventually grabbed one of Joe’s magazines. Joe smiled to himself, pretending not to notice. After a time, Paul relented and grabbed one as well. “You’re so gay,” Joe said in a squeaky voice just like the one Paul had done earlier.

“Shut up,” Paul said. “I’m just so bored.”

“Hmmff,” Joe said, going back to his article on getting perfect lashes.

The day drifted along. The boys tanned. Joe, on impulse, set his magazine down, got up and started to do some lunges, he wasn’t sure why. He just thought it would be good to move around.

“That’s a good idea, bro,” Nick said. “Mind if I join?”

“Not at all!”

Pretty soon all three were doing lunges, then squats and skater jumps, working their legs and glutes before an intense 20 minutes of ab work, butterfly kicks, crunches, bicycles. Finally, sweaty and tired, they all canon-balled into the pool, giggling and laughing while they dunked and splashed each other.

That night, Charlotte brought a “friend” home with her: Meghan Polonyce, the celebrity stylist who had her own show. “This is my surprise,” Charlotte said. “Meghan is going to dye and style your hair, so people won’t recognize you!”

“I don’t know,” Paul said, tugging at his mop of unruly hair. “Will that really work?”

“Oh, yes,” Meghan said. “Because nobody will expect the Joanus Brothers to be blonde.”

“Blonde?” Joe said, shaking his head. There was something essentially feminine about blonde hair, he thought. Men with blonde hair always looked girly to him somehow. And for a guy to dye his hair blonde? “No,” he said. “No way.”

“But Joe, you told me just the other day you wanted to go blonde,” Charlotte said.

“No, I didn’t....” Joe said, but his voice trailed off because suddenly he did remember.

“Right in the kitchen while you were sweeping up,” Charlotte said.

“I remember that,” Nick said.

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“I did say that, didn’t I?” Joe said, smiling as Charlotte’s words turned into a memory. Yes. He’d totally been thinking about going blonde for, like, forever. “What’s gotten into me?”

“It’s okay,” Meghan said, taking Joe by the hand. “It’s normal to be nervous. It’s a big decision to go blonde. I’ve had girls get up and run out of my studio right before I was about to dye their hair.”

“Well, I am sure Joe isn’t going to run out like some silly girl,” Charlotte said.

“Good. Then let’s get started.” The boys sat. She lifted up a plastic container filled with a golden dye. “What’s in this bottle,” she said, “is going to change your life.”

When she was done, the boys stared, stunned at how much their new blonde hair styles changed the way they looked. “You’re right. Nobody will recognize us,” Paul said, looking at himself in the mirror, his blonde hair shimmering. Meghan had given the boys golden blonde hair with platinum highlights. They’d all had shaggy, curly brown hair before. She’d straightened and styled their hair now into a classic chin length pageboy, with bangs that swept across their foreheads.

Joe ran a hand through his bangs as he looked at himself, turning his head side to side, watching how the light glistened in his bright golden hair. He thought the haircut made him look like a girl, and he wasn’t wrong. The treatments he and the other boys had been receiving had feminized their faces, but it had so far been subtle enough they hadn’t noticed. Now, with his softened features framed by a rounded, feminine haircut, the change was emphasized. He wanted a change. “These pieces of hair are getting in my eyes,” he said. “Can you make them shorter? Also, maybe the sides?”

“This haircut is hip and cool, trendy and happening,” Meghan said, tousling his bouncy hair, which even after being tousled just seemed to pop back into place. “You look cute.” All three boys nodded. They liked being cool, trendy and happening. It was so important. Cute was vital, too. They needed to look cute if they wanted to be popular again.

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“The bangs will keep people from recognizing you, sweetie,” Charlotte added. “Plus, you look like rockstars again.” Looking at the three of them with their matching bobs, she thought they already looked like sisters. She just wished she could speed up the process, and a smile spread on her face as she imagined the three of them with their breasts and curvy figures, prancing on stage in stiletto heels. It was so hard to be patient.

The boys, despite feeling a little uneasy, just went along with what Charlotte told them, as usual. They all thanked Meghan, and Charlotte. All three boys had misgivings about their new look, but they trusted Charlotte and knew she only wanted what was best for them. After that, it was dinner, Mean Girls and off to bed. Joe lay on his stomach,

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hooked his heels together and read his Cosmo, chewing on his index finger. The article was all about relationships and how important it was to show the people we love how much we appreciate them, through everyday actions. Joe found himself nodding as he read, thinking he needed to do something to show Charlotte how much he appreciated all she had done for him. As his eyes grew heavy and he found himself drifting off to sleep, an idea popped into his head. He would get up early and surprise Charlotte by making breakfast.

Charlotte pretended to be surprised when she came down to find Joe scurrying about the kitchen, cooking bacon and cracking eggs. “Wow. Joey, this is so thoughtful of you.”

Joe smiled proudly. “I just wanted to show you how much I appreciate all you’ve done for us.”

Charlotte brushed his bangs from his eyes, ran her fingers along his soft, smooth, freshly shaven jawline. “You’re just a sweetie pie and oh, your skin is so soft.”

“Thanks,” Joe said, giggling.

The routine followed the same pattern for the next few weeks, with the boys spending their days tanning and working out by the pool, and exercising, concentrating on their legs, glutes and abs. The work and their lack of appetite combined to cause them to lose muscle from their upper bodies, giving all of them more of a slender, lean look to go along with their bronze skin and shimmering blonde hair. They were obsessively reading women’s magazines all day and at night before bed, and the nightly movie with Charlotte had become a girl’s night out, with every film being from the must-see canon of women’s films. The boys were now taking turns making breakfast and dinner, and of course they were doing all the cleaning as well—just a simple little thing they could do for their savior.

Charlotte occasionally mentioned different plans and deals, and the boys all nodded and smiled, quickly losing interest and turning to their now incessant chatter about celebrities and the latest drama on Dance Moms, a show they had discovered one rainy day when they couldn’t sit out by the pool -- and had now become obsessed with.

They had also all begun shaving their legs, chests and underarms, having come to the conclusion while chatting by the pool one day that body hair was soooooo gross. “Girls shave for us,” Nick had said. “So, we should, like, totally shave for them, right?”

“Obvs,” Paul said.

“Shave for them, shave for us.” Joe had heard himself say, pleased, because he had

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soooo badly been wanting to shave his legs. Of course, none of them had so much as flirted with a woman since they'd moved in with Charlotte, but that thought never entered their pretty little blonde heads. The boys even bonded by agreeing to shave each other's backs. Meanwhile, Kaitlyn Jenner was in the news, and the boys often talked about how brave she was, and how she'd gotten her own television show.

"Ahhh-mahzing," Nick had said.

Charlotte watched it all, pleased at the progress her little bronzed beauties were making. They were finally ready for the next phase, and so she told them all one day how she would be having a pool party for a bunch of her friends that weekend. "There are going to be some very cute and available single girls," she said.

The boys were all excited. How fun. A pool party. And the idea of having a chance to meet some girls and maybe finally get laid was very exciting. All three were feeling very confident about their new looks, thanks to constant praise from Charlotte. "Um, just one sec?" Joe had said. He was wearing his speedo and the short little white robe.

"Yes, sweetie?"

"Can we, like, um get some regular clothes or whatever?"

"It's a pool party, silly. Everyone will be wearing swimsuits."

"God," Paul said. "You're such an airhead."

"What a ditz." Nick added.

"Shut up, sluts," Joe had snapped back.

Charlotte couldn't help herself from laughing, then seeing the hurt look on Joe's face, she said, "Oh, honey, I am not laughing at you. I am just so happy you boys came into my life."

"Charlie," Paul said, giving her a hug.

And then the other two joined in. They were all so lucky Charlie had found them!

That week, Nick and Joe stared as Paul came down to the pool wearing what was clearly a woman's bikini bottom. The tiny pieces of purple fabric stretched across his butt and covering his groin were linked by loops of stainless steel.

"Um, can you get any gayer?" Nick said, eyeing Paul over the copy of Bridal Magazine he'd been reading.

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“Yeah, bro, what’s with the bikini? Why not just wear some panties?” Joe said, setting down his copy of *Eat, Pray, Love*.

“It’s all I could find,” Paul said, with a shrug. “Besides, it’s not any skimpier than your *speedos*.”

“Yeah, but it’s for *girls*,” Nick said.

Paul curled up on his lounge and took a sip of white wine. “You guys should totally read this article on gender norms? It was in *Ms. Magazine*? It, like, totally opened my eyes in, like, such a new way?”

“What are you talking about?” Nick said. “You ditz!”

“The thing is, this article proved, like scientific proved, that gender is an illusion.”

“What does that, like, even mean?” Joe said, shaking his head.

“It means boys can wear bikini bottoms and anyone who doesn’t like it can just-- Shut! UP!

“You shut up,” Nick said.

“No, I mean like—Shut! Up! Did you know Brad and Angelina are getting a divorce?”

“Omigod! What?”

And with that, the bikini was forgotten as the boys chattered excitedly about the latest, juicy gossip.

Cooper Kadee

Chapter Three

The day of the party, the boys changed their usual routine, abandoning their tanning early to give the house a super good cleaning. Then they all showered, fussed with their hair, slipped into their bikini bottoms and gathered around the pool, waiting for Charlotte and her guests. Each of the boys, having come to the conclusion that he was a male feminist who rejected gender norms, had a bikini bottom on with the metal loops, but of a different color; Paul's was purple, Nick's was lime green, and Joe's was banana. The metal loops glinted as they moved. The party had been scheduled to start at 7, but it was 10 after, and no one had arrived. All three were getting nervous, hoping Charlie was okay.

Finally, the doorbell rang. The boys looked at each other. Paul shrugged. "I'll get it," he said, getting up and going to the front door. As soon as he opened it he was swarmed by a large group of women, who casually acknowledged him as they walked into the house like they'd been there a million times. Joe, peeking from the patio turned to look at Nick, who was idly paging through a copy of Vogue. "Oh, my god."

"What?"

"No one is wearing swimsuits."

Nick's mouth dropped open. "No!" He dropped his magazine and hurried, peeking into the room from behind Joe. The room was full of women who were dressed in formal business attire, much like the clothes Charlie often wore: expensive, fashionable slacks and blouses, accessorized to project confidence and power, or else knee length dresses and heels. Paul scurried back through the group of women in his bikini, smiling awkwardly. "No one else is wearing bathing suits," Paul hissed as he reached his brothers.

"We noticed," Joe said.

"What are we going to do?" Nick said.

Just then, they saw Charlie making her way through the growing crowd, pausing to greet a few people here and there. As soon as she stepped out onto the deck, the boys surrounded her, hysterically gushing about their swimsuit issue.

"Hush. Hush. Hush." Charlie said. "Everyone was supposed to wear swimsuits. I'm so sorry, but I really need your help."

"What?"

Cooper Kadee

“The caterer brought the food, but something happened, and she has no staff. Would you boys, pretty please, help out?”

“Um, okay?”

Charlotte took a position and watched gleefully as the three nearly naked boys took trays of hors d'oeuvres and glasses of wine and carried them through the crowd, offering them to the ladies. As planned, the girls talked about the boys as if they weren't there, making comments about their bodies:

“Boy, purple panties has a really tight little ass, doesn't he?”

“Like a mare. I bet you could bounce quarters off that butt!”

“Wow. What a pretty face. I bet he never has to pay for a drink.”

“I would do him. Yeah, he's a little skinny, but I like 'em that way.”

“Show me that pretty smile, sweetie.”

“He looks good coming and going.”

The women also freely squeezed the boy's butts, or put their hands on their chests or biceps, squeezing and caressing. Charlotte nodded with satisfaction as she watched the pained, embarrassed smiles spread across the boy's faces; sheepish smiles. They were smiles more like a defensive cringe, and she'd seen it on the faces of women many times. The boys were reacting to their objectification with smiles and giggles, and Charlotte felt giddy watching them learn to be objectified, to accept it, even to begin to take a perverse pleasure in their degradation. It would be a very useful skill for her little cuties when she finally turned them into teen queen pop tarts.

Once the serving ended, Charlotte thanked the boys, hugging and kissing them. Then, she introduced them to her “single and ready to mingle friends Isis, Diana, and Kali. They talked for a while as a group, and then paired off. Joe found himself sitting with Kali, listening intently while she talked about women's rights in India. She was so beautiful and fascinating. He couldn't remember a time he'd been so immediately mesmerized by a woman. He felt she was impressed with him. He just might have a chance to get laid.

Charlotte watched and saw something else. Kali gracefully crossed her legs at the knee and ankle. Joe perfectly mirrored the move. Kali put her hands on her knees and arched her back. Joe put his hands on his knees and arched his back. On the other side of the room, Diana cocked her head to the side and talked with her little hands waving in the air. Nick, staring into her eyes, cocked his head to the side and waved his hands in the

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same way. Meanwhile, Isis was doing girly little shoulder shrugs, raising her hands at her wrist, standing with legs crossed, and there was Paul, standing with his legs crossed, shrugging and giggling right back. The imprinting was going fast, and Charlotte was pleased. Things would begin to progress much more quickly now.

Back on the other side of the room, Kali stood and started walking toward the front door. She was walking heel to toe, her arms held out away from her sides, swinging in counter point to her steps, putting a little extra wiggle in her hips.

And Joe stood and walked after her, heel to toe, arms away from his sides, waving. Watching him eagerly mimic Kali's feminine walk, his bikini clad butt wiggling, the little metal rings at his hips flashing, Charlie covered her mouth and snickered. It was just too adorable.

Kali caught Charlie's eye as she held the door for Joe. The women exchanged a little nod. Joe probably thought he was about to get laid, the poor little thing. Instead, Kali was about to fully wake the budding girl inside him.

Kali pumped up Beyonce on her car's satellite radio. She shook her shoulders side to side, made little wave gestures with her free hand and sang along, a big smile on her face. Joe mimicked her every action, sliding into his falsetto so he could even match her voice.

I love it like XO
You love me like XO
You kill me boy XO
You love me like XO
All that I see
Give me everything
Baby love me lights out
Baby love me lights out
You can turn my lights out

Joe was barely aware. He was totally focused on Kali, drinking in every movement of her face and body, every nuance of her speech. The days and days of suggestions and conditioning had kicked in, and he was imprinting on her, subconsciously wanting to become her. He had no idea it was happening, only that he had never felt so happy.

They kissed in the car, then Kali got out and ran to her apartment, laughing, Joe running behind. Once inside, she kissed him again, pushing him against the wall, burying her hands in his blonde hair and yanking it. Joe giggled.

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“Omigod. I totally want to try something. Will you do it?”

“Okay,” Joe answered, still mimicking her voice.

“Yaaaaaasssss,” Kali said, taking Joe by the hand and dragging him to her bedroom, sitting him down at her dressing table and flipping on the round, soft light bulbs surrounding the mirror. “You’re going to look so sexy and fuckable,” Kali said, grabbing a tray with different colors of foundation and holding it next to Joe’s face.

“Wait, what?” Joe said, figuring out finally what she had in mind.

“I’m going to give you a make-over.”

Something wasn’t right, and Joe found himself shaking his head slowly. “Um, no. I, like, don’t think so? Let’s just make out or whatever?”

The smile left Kali’s face. “Joe, I thought you were a feminist.”

“I am,” he said.

“So, what’s your problem with putting on some make-up?”

“I just... it isn’t... I don’t feel like it?”

“Joe,” Kali said, slipping into his lap. “I promise you so many kisses, but you have to show me you aren’t some kind of chicken boy who’s scared to explore his feminine side. Don’t you want my body?”

“Yeah,” Joe said, staring into her eyes again, becoming entranced, all his macho resistance melting away. “I do want your body.” Kali was leaning in, their faces getting closer and closer. Joe parted his lips, closed his eyes. He could feel her breath on his face. Her perfume was swirling around him, making him lightheaded. He could almost taste her...

Kali slipped off his lap, giggling.

Joe giggled, too, though he was furious. “Come on,” he said, reaching out to grab her.

“No, no,” Kali said, waving her finger. “You want this sugar, you have to let me make you pretty.”

“Babe.”

“I spent an hour doing my face for you,” she said. “Can’t you at least do just as

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much for me?”

Joe was struggling so hard. He wanted to please her, to fuck her, but he also hated the idea of letting her make him “pretty.” All that male feminist shit was one thing when he was just hanging out with his brothers by the pool, but now here he sat wearing a bikini, and a girl was trying to make him wear lipstick and he was—maybe?

“Wait,” Kali said, annoyed that Joe was being so difficult. “Sit on the bed. Watch.”

Joe sighed with relief and scooted back onto the bed. Kali slipped into the chair at the table, and sitting down, she found a tube of lipstick and puckered up, sensuously applying a wet, red color to his lips. Joe was watching, his eyes feverish. She saw his lips were puckered and he was mimicking her motions, putting on imaginary lipstick. When she got done, she licked her lips and smiled before picking up her mascara wand and, her mouth hanging open, showing off her white teeth and pink tongue, she began to stroke her long, curly lashes. Joe felt like he would explode.

“Okay,” Joe said. “Fine. Do it. Just, please, hurry. I’m horny as hell.”

He eagerly hopped back into the chair. Kali clapped and said “goodie!” and Joe did the same.

Kali worked carefully, using a base very close to his skin tone—which, thanks to the treatments was closer to a Korean woman woman than a Northern European. She went heavy on the eyeliner and mascara, giving him raccoon eyes and thick, damp lashes. With his dark skin, she decided to use subtle eye shadow in browns and silvers that would make his eyes pop but which only other women would notice. Finally, she dusted some tan color called “toast” just under his cheekbones, which were actually quite sexy. He was facing away from the mirror, but Kali couldn’t hide her giddy excitement as she downplayed everything masculine about his features and softened them while highlighting everything feminine. Joe was desperate to see, and terrified to look, and his heart raced when she said, “Close your eyes. Then, I will turn you around and you can look.”

“Goodie,” Joe said, then added, “my heart’s gonna pound right out of my chest!” He closed his eyes. Kali turned him around, and said “open your eyes, sweetie.”

Joe’s mouth fell open and he just stared at the beautiful woman looking back at him. “I... uh... me... that?”

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Kali clapped again, bouncing on her toes. “You look perfect!” she said, wrapping her arms around his shoulders and leaning in, so their faces were side by side. This was her favorite moment, she thought, in working these awakenings. When the guy looked in the mirror and saw a woman looking back at him. She could practically hear his male ego crumbling as the realization sank in that the main thing keeping him from looking exactly like a girl was not testosterone, but his lack of Clairol Products. “You’re a perfect girl,” Kali said, tousling his blonde hair.

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Joe could see he looked just like a girl, and on top of that he was shocked to see how much he now looked like an Asian girl. He'd been blinded to how drastically his face had changed, but now he saw nothing of himself but only this mysterious, pretty girl with pouty lips, big, bright eyes and a tiny little nose. The sight of him as her scared him. "Can we undo this now?"

"We could, and then you could go home and whack off. Or, you can come with me right now, and we can kiss all night."

"It was not much of a choice, and Joe instantly decided the chance to get hot and heavy with Kali was worth the price of lipstick. "Door number 2."

Joe followed Kali into the living room. They curled up on the couch and kissed for a while, holding each other. Joe couldn't seem to get himself ready for sex, but Kali didn't care, so they just kept kissing and hugging, and then after a while they were entwined, and just staring into each other's eyes and talking about their lives and dreams and all those things.

Finally, Kali said, "Joe. I want to tell you something. Promise you won't get mad."

"You can tell me anything."

"Okay. Here goes. I think you're a woman."

"What?" Joe said, starting to get up, unnerved by what she'd said.

Kali pulled him back down. "No. Wait. I mean it as a compliment. I really think you might be a woman, Joe, and a really pretty, happy one just waiting to let herself live her truth."

"Just because I let you do my makeup?" Joe said.

"Not just that. It's everything. Your bikini, the things you told me, how happy you seem living the life of a pool bunny."

"Pool bunny?"

"You know what I mean."

"Kali. I've been married. I've had lots of girls."

"Did you ever think the reason you couldn't keep any of those girls was because deep down inside, you were a girl?"

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Joe was shaking his head, even though what Kali was saying somehow made sense to him. Maybe that was why things had always been so screwed up for him, why he'd been such a lousy husband? The room seemed to whirl around him. He fell back, staring at the ceiling.

Kali climbed on top of him and looked down, her earrings dangling from her ears, swaying, flashing. "Did you ever hear of The Secret?"

"The Secret?"

"It's a book, Joe, and it explains how whatever happens to us? We made it happen. We wanted it to happen."

"I don't know what you're saying."

"You told me your identity was stolen? That someone even changed your birth certificate so it said you were female? Remember?"

"Yeah," Joe said hoarsely.

"What I am saying is that you wanted that to happen. You needed that to happen. You made it happen, because you are a female, and you always have been."

Joe started crying, his mind a storm of conflicting feelings and emotions. "Omigod," he said. "It's true. I am a woman, and I have always been one."

He wrapped himself around Kali and buried his head on her shoulder, weeping, and she held him murmuring, "It's fun to be a girl. You're going to love it." Kali felt so powerful. She loved working these awakenings, taking these sexist assholes and making them into women. Bye, bye, Joe, she thought. No one will miss you.

Joe woke up at 4:30. "Omigod!" His heart was racing. "Kali? Kali?" He was on the couch. A blanket had been thrown over him. He got up and went to her room, found her sleeping in her bed. He shook her, gently. "What?" She said, pushing the hair out of her eyes.

"I have to get home. It's my turn to cook breakfast."

"Can't someone else?" Kali said, though she was already getting up. She knew whatever this compulsion was, it had been programmed into Joe, and the poor little thing would go bananas if he didn't get home to perform his domestic chores.

"No. It's really, really, important? Okay?"

Cooper Kadee

Kali noticed that Joe was standing and talking just like she'd modeled for him. It was still in his own register, but his enunciation had taken on the sing song patterns of a female. She got up, her head aching, and said, "Come on," driving him back to the Malibu Beach House, giving him a quick hug and a peck, and then watching, bemused, as he rushed back inside in his little bikini, his arms waving, butt wiggling. *I expect a nice little bonus is coming my way*, she thought, wondering when Joe would remember he was wearing make-up.

Joe hurried into the kitchen and got the coffee going, then frantically began to grab stuff out of the refrigerator; salmon cream cheese, eggs and cream. He planned to make omelets, and he was super relieved when Charlie came down, dressed to the nines, as always. She ran her hand through Joe's hair and looked at him, smiling. "Joe. I am so proud of you."

"What? Why?"



"Exploring your feminine side. Your eyes are popping!"

"Oh," Joe said. "No."

"Joe, I just said it's great. You should wear make-up more often. You look amazing."

"But my brothers will make fun of...?"

"What?" Paul said, coming through the front door, bleary-eyed and hungover. Joe stared. Paul's face was also made-up, and he looked crazy pretty, too. But in addition, he was wearing a pair of Daisy Dukes, a sunflower tank top that read "Girl Power" and a pair of strappy, white, platform sandals. In addition to his clothes, his walk was all

Cooper Kadee

girl now as he'd imprinted on his girl as well.

"Looks like someone had a wild night," Charlie said.

"Omigod," Paul said, rolling his eyes. "I got so drunk I stripped off my clothes and went skinny dipping. The waves washed my clothes away, so now...." He gestured down at the women's clothes he was wearing. "I mean, I didn't want to wear her clothes. What else could I do?"

"You had no choice," Charlie agreed with a smirk. "Looks like you both decided to have a little fun with make-up," Charlie said. "I'm so proud of the two of you, rejecting silly gender norms, taking risks, trying things."

"Thanks," Joe said, running a hand through his hair and giggling.

Paul finally really looked at Joe. "Damn, bro," he said. "You actually look pretty cute."

Joe laughed. "Cuter than you, at least."

"I wouldn't go that far."

"Wonder where Nick is?" Paul said.

"Did he go home with someone, too?" Joe said, looking over at Charlie.

Charlie shrugged. "I didn't see any of you leave. I was mingling, then one minute I turned around and you'd all left. Those girls were great, right? Didn't I tell you?"

Both boys seemed to suddenly get very self-conscious at the mention of the girls, and Joe went back to cooking, while Paul said, "I'm gonna run upstairs and see if Nick is still sleeping."

"I'm right here," Nick said, coming in from the garage.

"Where are you coming from?" Joe said, looking the boy over. He was wearing a powder blue nightie and pink bunny slippers. His face had also been done up, and his hair had been pulled and tied into little pigtails that stuck out from the sides of his head.

"Diana just dropped me off," he said, seeing everyone looking at him funny. "She just loaned me this, so I would have something to wear."

"Okay, but you look incredibly...." Paul was almost going to say "gay," as had been

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his habit for his entire life, but instead he shook his head, an Image of Isis appearing in his mind, and he did a little shoulder shrug and said, “adorable.”

“Adorable?” Nick said, looking down at his bunny slippers, then back up.

“You do look, like, so cute,” Joe admitted, mincing around the kitchen.

Nick flushed with pride, and a strange sudden surge of emotion. “You look cute, too,” he said. “I mean, just like a girl.”

“How weird that we all ended up getting our faces done last night,” Joe said. “It’s kind of like, freakily just.... Wah wah Wah wah.”

“I don’t think so,” Charlotte said. “No. Not at all.”

The three boys turned to her, waiting for her to go on, all their stances mirroring those of the girls they’d imprinted on—hands on out-thrust hips.

“You all had this awakening, recently, where you realized you were feminists, right? This is a perfectly natural next step for you.”

The boys nodded. “It’s more than that for me,” Joe said. He wanted to tell about his realization that he was a woman.

“Oh, it always has to be more or different for you,” Paul said, picking up a piece of onion left on the counter and throwing it at him.

“Every time we are about to bond, you have to ruin it,” Nick said.

They were half teasing, half not, but Joe lost his nerve, and, besides, the first omelet was ready. They ate. Charlotte gave out her hugs. As she grabbed her laptop and headed for the door, she saw the boys were already moving into action, cleaning up the kitchen. She didn’t even have to tell them to clean up after the party. They would all go nutty with such a mess around.

Once the house was clean, the boys cleaned off their make-up, and headed down to the pool. Joe opted for one of his speedos. He felt like he needed to hide his womanhood from his brothers. They would just laugh at him. They all gathered around the blue waters of the pool, happily reading their magazines or chic lit novels, but now they stopped every now and then as their phones buzzed with texts from their new BFFs. They eagerly texted back.

Kali: Did u tell them?

Cooper Kadee

Joe: NO!

Kali: U need to!

Joe: Not yet!

Kali: Check this out:

Joe: K.

He clicked on the link. A video by the KPOP band Wonder Girls popped up. Joe frowned. *Kali likes this crappy music?* He remembered the tour. Those girls had been such airheads. They sucked so bad. But Kali was his friend, so he decided to be a good friend and watch the video and pretend to like it to make her happy. He stuck in his earbuds and clicked, thinking maybe he would post some nasty comments, but as soon as the video started, he found himself mesmerized. There was a bass beat, then some cute, catchy electronic, and the girls were doing such great dance moves, and their outfits were so cute....

As soon as the video ended, he texted back, “LUV!” With three emoji hearts.

Kali: Girl? I told you. So! Good! Check out more!

Joe: Yaaaaasssss!

Joe got lost in the videos. He didn't *love* all of them, but he *liked* all of them enough, and he found himself mentally dancing along with the girls, mouthing the words, all sorts of kooky emotions bubbling in his little blonde head.

Paul and Nick's girlfriends had them looking in other directions. Nick was clicking through make-up tutorials, while Paul found himself watching videos all about fashion, with a special emphasis on what was hot for Korean girls these days.

All three of their phones beeped at 1PM, and the boys stopped what they were doing and got up, forming a triangle. “Okay, boys. Side lunges! One... two... three....” All three had big, bright smiles on their faces. They all loved working on their legs and butts. It was so super fun and so functional.

Cooper Kadee

Chapter Four

After their latest spa, today, the boys drove over to Charlotte's office for what had become a weekly meeting. Charlotte's secretary, Leslie, a nattily dressed young gay man who was as cute as he was organized, led them to the conference room, gave them each a bottle of water and said, "Charlie will be in to see you in a moment."

Paul and Nick started to spin in their chairs, kicking the floor so they rolled backwards, whirling, both of them giggling like schoolgirls. Joe just sat and stewed until Charlotte came in, took one look at Nick and said, "Girl got her bumps!"

Nick giggled.

"Come here and give Charlie a hug," she said, and Nick jumped up and ran over, throwing his arms around her, feeling his soft little breasts press into her full, C-cups. Charlotte put her hands on his shoulders and held him at arm's length. He was a little shorter than her now, which pleased him for some reason, and she gave him a once over and said, "You are becoming such a beautiful young woman."

"Thanks," Nicki said, prancing back to his chair, giving his brothers a sassy look and a swing of the hips.

"I'm going to take you shopping for your first bra to celebrate!" she said. "And I will do the same thing for you girls when the time comes, so don't be jealous of her."

Paul and Joe exchanged chagrined looks. "So, I have some exciting news for all of you. I think the time has come for you to get back into the studio."

"Awesome sauce." Paul said, clapping.

"Yaaaaassssss!" Nick chimed in.

Joe sat there, saying nothing, while the other two exploded with excitement, peppering Charlotte with questions—where? When? Who will we be working with? Omigod, do we have any new songs? What should we wear?

"Girls! Girls!" Charlotte said, wishing she'd programmed some sort of be quiet and listen order into their brains. "I will have Leslie text you all the details. You'll start tomorrow after your dance class."

Cooper Kadee

“Goodie,” Paul said, still clapping. “Omigod, this is so great.”

“No,” Joe said, sitting forward. “I’m not going to do it. I’m not going to do any of this. I want to be a man again.”

Nick and Paul looked over at Joe, shocked. “What the hell, bro?”

Charlotte raised her hand. “It’s okay. Let your sister talk.”

“I’m not his sister. I’m *his* brother.”

“You can’t wuss out on us now, you pussy,” Nick said. “This is just like you.”

“I can’t believe you are calling me a pussy when you have tits.”

“Because I’m not scared to be who I am.”

“You’re a man. A grown man. That’s who you are.”

“Nick. Paul. Excuse us please.”

The boys hesitated, but Charlotte gave them her angry glare, and they both stood up and walked out.

“Tell me what’s going on,” Charlotte said.

“I did. I want to be a man again. This,” he gestured down at his slender body, “was a mistake.”

“You came to me, and you told me that you were a woman. You asked for this.”

“You.... Tricked me somehow. I never wanted any of this until I moved into your house. You did this somehow. You.... brainwashed me.” Joe was crying now, slamming his fist on the table for emphasis.

Charlotte shook her head. “No, Joe. No. How could I do that? How could anyone do that?”

“I don’t know, but you did. Somehow. I know it. You’re probably the one who, like, stole my identity or whatever, too.”

“I think this may have a lot more to do with Nick than me,” Charlotte said.

Joe looked at her. “What? Because he got his boobs? Like, I don’t even care at all about that. His boobs aren’t even that big.”

Cooper Kadee

“But he has breasts now, and Paul has more of a figure, and you are a middle child, so you have always felt left out and under-appreciated and now it seems like your brothers are getting their figures, and they are getting more attention, and it makes you want to run away, right?”

She handed Joe a tissue. Joe dabbed at his tears, shrugged. “I guess.”

“Look. I already promised Nick I would go shopping with him today, but how about you and I go shopping tomorrow? We can talk and maybe I can help you through this?”

“I guess,” Joe said again. “Or whatever.”

“Good. Great. You know I was a late bloomer, too, Joe? I was skinny as a rail until eleventh grade. I thought I was going to end up looking like Olive Oyl.”

Joe giggled. “You?”

“Yeah, well, the summer before my junior year *this* happened,” she said, gesturing down at her voluptuous body. “You are going to fill out. I promise. So, for right now, enjoy being where you are because, believe it or not, it can get tiring hauling around these puppies.”

“Okay,” Joe said. “Can I go now?”

“Sure, but give me a hug, first.”

Joe came around and accepted the hug, and then Charlotte took his hand and walked him out to the waiting area, where both Nick and Paul sat, their legs primly crossed as they skimmed through women’s magazines. “Can I keep this?” Nick said, holding up the copy of Teen Vogue he’d been reading.

“Of course,” Charlotte said.

“Are you okay?” Paul said, standing up and looking at Joe.

Joe nodded. Paul could see he’d been crying.

“Let me pass this one off to you,” Charlotte said, giving Joe’s hand to Paul who took it and stepped in to give Joe a sisterly hug.

“And you, little devil, are coming with me.”

“Yaaaaaaaas!” Nick said.

“Bye, Charlie,” Paul said as he led Joe away. “Thanks for everything.”

Cooper Kadee

“Yeah,” Joe said. “Thanks. Really.”

The two got in the elevator, while Nick and Charlotte waited for the next one. “So, missy, are you excited about getting your first bra?”

“Yeah,” Nick said, blushing. “Pretty much.”

“It’s a special day for a girl, and one you will always remember. I can’t wait. I’m happy for you.”

Nick was super-excited. Ever since he’d realized he was a woman, he’d been dying to get his breasts and to be able to not just wear a bra, but fill a bra. And, yet, now that the day was here, he also felt a little sad. It was a rite of female passage, and as much as he had accepted that he was a woman and wanted to be a woman, he also kind of missed the boy he’d been, the life he’d had. He kind of got how Joe might be having second thoughts, actually. His whole life he’d loved looking at boobs, playing with boobs, imagining himself playing with boobs. But he had also felt kind of sorry for women and the fact that they had to have boobs, and to wear bras and all that stuff.

And it had always been a point of pride for him to whip his shirt off and swagger around the beach bare-chested. He’d loved showing off his hard, muscular body.

Now, he had breasts, and he would be wearing a bra, and his days of swaggering around the beach shirtless were over. From here on out, he was just another girl, and he would have to keep his puppies covered. Wouldn’t all of his exes be having a field day with that?

He and Charlotte picked out some bras. Nick found himself blushing and giggling the whole time. Charlotte led him to a changing room, and she came in with him. “Take your top off, and I’ll show you how to put your bras on.”

Nick shook his head, feeling very bashful as he stared at his feet. “I can figure it out.”

“Don’t be silly. I know you’re shy and self-conscious. I was a girl once, too, you know. Now, come on.” She grabbed the hem of his tank top and started pulling it off him. He raised his arms over his head while she pulled it off, and then his breasts were bouncing free in the cool air of the department store, and his nipples immediately got hard. He self-consciously crossed his arms over his breasts feeling overcome by conflicting emotions, embarrassed; Charlie was a beautiful, full-bodied woman, and he felt ashamed for her to see his breasts, and for her to see that his boobs were so much smaller than hers.

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Charlotte held the bra toward him, and he was forced to take one arm off his soft little breasts, and then the other as Charlotte began to guide him through the process. The bra was white cotton, with a little pink bow at the yoke. He slipped his arms through the straps, and pulled the bra up until the cups covered his little boobies, and then he reached back and struggled for a minute to clip it in back. As soon as he did, he felt the bra soft material cupping his breasts, lifting them, and he looked up proudly at Charlotte and said, “I did it!”

Charlotte gave him a hug. “Good girl. How does it feel?”

“Weird? Good? I think.”

She turned and had him look at himself in the mirror. She wanted his self-image to continue to evolve, for him to see and accept himself as a young woman, and when he first saw himself in the mirror—the delicate bra straps across his shrinking shoulders, the white cups hugging his soft little breasts, giving him a cute little bit of cleavage that rose up prettily above the pink bow, he shook his head at the incongruity of it. He was standing with one hip to the side, and in his yoga pants and ballet slippers, he looked more like a girl than the man he’d been, and the shock made him shake his head, and for a moment he wanted to run away from the image, but then something clicked, and he thrust a hip out to the side, planted a hand on it and said, “I’m getting cute.”

“You sure are,” Charlotte said.

Nick started to take the bra off, but Charlotte said, “No. Keep it on. I have the tag to pay for it.”

When he pulled his tank top on, his bra straps were showing, and he tried to hide them, but they seemed to be slipping out, riding on his shoulders at a different angle. “Don’t worry about it,” Charlotte said, opening the dressing room door. “Girls flaunt their bra straps these days. It’s sexy and cool.”

Nick liked being sexy and cool. He lingered at the mirror, now checking out his profile, swiveling his butt back and pushing his breasts out, then fussed with his hair until Charlotte said, “You look great. Now, come on.”

Nick felt proud and feminine as he walked through the store wearing his first bra. It was, like, so cool. They found some sports bras for him, too, all in girly colors, and then Charlotte gave him her credit card and sent him up with a pile of bras and the ticket. As he approached, the cute salesgirl gave him a double take, and he thought—*omigod. Does she recognize me?*

Cooper Kadee

But the girl smiled and said, “I feel like I know you from somewhere?”

Nick smiled and, in his girl voice, said, “Yeah? I get that a lot. I just have one of those faces.”

She looked again as she scanned the bras. “No. I think I must have just seen you here before or something.”

“Probably. I come here a lot.”

“Okay, well, thanks, Charlotte,” she said, reading the name off the credit card.

“Oh! No! That’s my.... Mom,” he said, gesturing back to where Charlotte was standing, watching the whole thing.

“Cool. Your mom is really pretty.”

“Thanks!” Nick said, taking the bag from her and hurrying away, glad that he’d escaped being recognized.

They drove for awhile, and then Charlotte said, “Did you call me Mom?”

“Um, I guess,” Nick said, looking out the window, idly fiddling with one of his bra straps.

“Do you want to call me Mom?”

“Well, I saw this article? And in it, anyway, it said that a lot of young women now—I guess it’s a trend? They’re calling their mentors Mom, so it seemed kind of cool.”

“I think it’s great. I would love it if you called me *Mom*.”

Nick smiled, still staring dreamily out the window. “Okay. Like, then, thanks, Mom.”

The next morning after dance class, the boys were giddy as they drove to the recording studio. “Our next record should, like, totally rock like so hard,” Nick said. “We can freak everyone out, and they’ll be all, like, they became women, yeah, but they still have balls.”

“Omigod. I was thinking the same thing,” Paul said. Totally.”

“Bros! For the first time in a long time, we are so totes thinking the same thing,” Joe

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said. "It's so awesome."

"I can't wait to have a guitar in my hands again!" Paul said.

They arrived at the recording studio—a kind of shabby brick building on the edge of town, with grass growing between the cracks in the parking lot. They parked, hoping out of the car, and then this is how what happened next appeared on ZMZ:

"You guys have something you claim is huge, right?" Harvey Levin says, smirking. "But since it also involves the Joanus Brothers, I kind of have a hard time believing you."

"It's freaking unreal," Max says, his hat on backwards. "We caught up with the Joanus Brothers, and it looked, I am serious, like they were turning into girls."

"Girls?" Harvey says, faking shock as the crew all chuckled, someone shouting out, "No way."

"Yeah," Kelly says. "They were dressed like girls and everything."

"Dressing like girls? Probably just looking for some publicity, right?" Harvey says.

"No, dude. There's more. Nick had boobs."

"Boobs? As in jugs? As in melons?"

"Yah, and he was wearing a bra," Kelly says-- and we heard the women on set all gasping and murmuring. "I used to have a crush on him."

"Okay. Now you have me interested," Harvey says, as always acting like it was all new to him and he didn't approve the segment in advance.

Cut to:

Video shot from the window of a car parked on the street. Grainy "real world effect" in play.

The cute, pearl-white Kia pulled into the parking lot. The doors pop open.

"That's them," Max says.

"Yeah." Kelly adds.

Joe gets out first. He and all the boys wear yoga pants that hug their rounding

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bodies. Each boy wears white deck shoes and a pink tank top, over-sized Elizabeth Taylor sunglasses with pink frames. Their blonde bobs glitter in the sun.

“It’s a girl’s haircut and he’s skinny,” Harvey says. “Their faces look different, but the body? Nah. He doesn’t look much like a chick.”

“Just wait.”



The camera is moving now as the cameraman gets out of the car and runs toward the Joanus Brothers, who haven’t seen the ZMZ crew yet.

Nick hops out next, circling around to the open trunk. His virginal white bra straps are bright against his slender tan shoulders, and his tank top is tight across his breasts.

“Oh, my God,” we hear Kelly say.

“Okay. Those are boobs,” Harvey says, and we hear the ZMZ crew laughing and calling out stuff like, “ouch” and “crazy.”

Paul gets out of the car and pauses to reach down and pull up his pants, causing him to arch his back, swiveling his hips and sending his butt back—it is a plump, heart-shaped behind, and someone says, “Nice ass, bro.”

“Joaanus Brothers.” We hear Max shouting as the camera gets closer and closer. “Hey, guys.”

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The Brothers look, their mouths falling open in shock, but they quickly recover. They are on camera and that means they need to smile, smile smile. Each gives the cameraman and smile and a pose. Then, they begin to hurry off, grabbing their pink duffle bags.

“Tell us about the new look,” Kelly says.

“Are you getting Jennered?” Max bellows. The camera man is moving in close, and the camera plunges down for a close-up of Nick’s breasts.

“Jennered!” Harvey shouts. “Trademark that.”

“It’s called transitioning,” Kelly says.

“Who cares?”

“No comment,” Nick says in as close to his old male voice as he can manage, slinging his pink duffle bag over his shoulder.

He and Joe start to walk toward the studio. The camera starts to follow, and both of them have graceful, feminine gaits, their little butts wiggling, their arms held out and away from their sides, but then Paul steps into the frame. “We’re working on a new record,” he says. “Have to get in the studio.” His tank top is cut to flatter a girl’s figure, so it tapers in at his slender waist and ends above his round, girlish hips.

“Are you guys transitioning?” Kelly asks.

“Are you turning into chicks?” Max shouts.

“No,” Paul says, turning and walking toward the studio. “That’s nuts.” The camera again drops down to focus on his plump, heart-shaped bottom.

“You have a really cute butt,” Kelly says.

“Thanks,” He says, smiling back over his shoulder before disappearing into the studio with a wink.

Back in studio.

The ZMZ group whoops and cheers. “They are clearly in transition,” Harvey says. “This is a huge scoop. Well done.”

“Paul has a better ass than I do,” one of the girls says, forlornly.

“And Nick has better jugs,” Max shouts.

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“Be quiet.”

The crew all laugh.

The camera goes to Harvey who shakes his head. “Who’s their manager these days? Ru Paul?”

Everyone laughs, except for Kelly, who says, “Grow up, idiots.”

Cut to commercial.

Back to that morning right after the ambush, the boys ran into the studio, threw down their bags and then all grabbed each other. “ZMZ,” Nick says, feeling almost hysterical.

“How did they know we were here?”

“I’m freaking,” Paul said. “The whole world is going to see us like--- this.”

“What is my -ex-wife going to say?” Joe said, breaking from the group and plopping down on an old leather couch.

“Or mine,” Paul said.

“Everyone is going to know I’m turning into a girl,” Nick said, suddenly embarrassed by his breasts, his body, the feeling of his bra on his shoulders, across his back. He was thinking of all his past girlfriends, as well as all the dudes he’d known and hated who would probably laugh at him now.

They all had known this day was coming, but they still weren’t emotionally prepared for it, though Charlotte had trained them all to deny any change in the eventuality that anyone pulled something like ZMZ.

“I’ll call Charlie and let her know,” Paul said, digging his phone out of his duffel bag. Nick went and sat by Joe, nestling up against him and putting his head on his shoulder. Joe tousled his hair. “Omigod,” Paul said into the phone. “ZMZ just ambushed us in the parking lot.” He listened. “You what? Charlie, how could you? I don’t... okay. Okay.”

He put her on speaker and held out the phone. Charlotte’s voice crackled. “Hey, girlies. I just told Paul, and I want you to hear it from me. I tipped ZMZ off.”

“What?” Joe and Nick said, immediately feeling betrayed and confused.

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“We all knew that eventually you would need to go public, and that it would have to be while you were still recognizable as your old selves, right?”

“Yes, but you could have told us!” Joe shouted.

“I didn’t want it to look fake, and I was worried if I told you your reactions might not seem real, and we would get less traction if it looked like some kind of planned stunt.”

The boys looked at each other, shrugging. It pretty much made sense.

“You all denied it, right?”

“Yes.”

“Good girls. I have this all covered. We’re going to keep the media guessing, and that’s going to build big buzz. Now, jam out. Have some fun. We’ll see how this all trends and you are all going to be so excited. It’s gonna be huge, and we’ll have everyone talking about the Joanus Girls”

The boys cheered the last part, and when the call ended they looked at each other in silence for a time. “Well, I guess we really are going through with this,” Joe said. “No turning back now.”

“Duh,” Nick said. “For me there was no turning back from the day I got my boobs.”

“God.” Paul shrieked, sliding into his girl voice. “Stop talking about your stupid little boobs.”

“Yeah, like, really?” Joe said, and on impulse tweaked one of Nick’s nipples.

“Stop!” Nick said squealing and jumping to his feet, covering his boobs with his arms.

Joe and Paul giggled.

Nick went into the studio, where instruments had been set up for them. The drum kit was a sparkly pink color, of course, and the guitar and bass guitar were both pink with polka dots. He sat down at the drums, grabbed the sticks and started up a beat. His little boobs were bouncing as he drummed, which he hadn’t anticipated, and kinda found annoying, but he figured he would get used to it.

Hearing the beat, Joe and Paul ran into the studio and grabbed their guitars, throwing the straps over their shoulders. The straps were black, with the word BRATZ emblazoned on them in neon pink. Joe found a baseline, riffing off what Nick was doing,

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and then Paul laid down some licks, went to the microphone and started to sing, just making up words that came to his mind, and all in his clear, high, girl's voice:

ZMZ
You're nothing to me
ZMZ
You're NOTHING TO ME!

Just a creepy old guy and with a loser brigade
Who drank a little too much loser Kool-ade
You never did anything you'll never be anyone
You think tearing people down is, like, totally fun

Now, the other two boys joined in, lending their own pretty voices in three-part harmony:

ZMZ
You're nothing to me
ZMZ
You're NOTHING TO ME!

Paul slid right into a guitar solo, shredding like he hadn't in years, and the other three pounded and thumped away behind him, supporting what he was creating, smiling, excited to be back making music. They just freeform jammed for awhile after that, letting the music take them where they wanted, Paul and Joe jumping up and down with their guitars, staring into each other's eyes, and then they wrapped it up, finding an ending together.

Paul and Joe rolled onto their backs, while Nick threw his sticks in the air. "Omigod!" he squealed. "We're back!" He ran around from behind the drums and threw himself onto Paul, who felt a little weirded out feeling his brother's breasts pressing against his chest, but he accepted the hug and kiss on his cheek, and then Joe jumped on top of Nick, and Paul cried out, "You're crushing me."

And then they rolled apart, and were all just giggling and laughing and happy to be making music together again.

They spent the next few hours jamming, doing a lot of their old songs, but now in a key

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that suited their feminine voices and identities. Did a couple of their favorite cover songs, including “Poor, Unfortunate Souls” from Little Mermaid, with Nick on vocals, but when they finished Nick crinkled his nose. “I sound too much like a girl now to really make that work,” he said. “Ursula is more of a woman.”

“You can sing Ariel’s songs now,” Joe said.

“Yeah and wear a seashell bra—*cause look at me, I have boobs!*”

“Shut up!” Nick said, but he actually felt pretty flattered they thought he could sing as prettily as Jodi Benson. He’d been on Broadway and loved to act, and his eyes suddenly went wide as he gasped. “Omigod. I could play Elphaba now.”

Joe and Paul looked at each other. “Maybe that’s enough for today?”

“Yeah. Nick is getting loopy.”

“I *could* so play Elphaba, once I am done transitioning.” Nick said, haughtily.

“Never,” Joe said.

“Why not, miss know-it-all?”

“Because you’re *such* a Glenda.”

When they got home, the Beach House was dark. The boys looked at each other curiously. The sight of the house looking all dark and deserted gave them chills, bringing back memories of their recent traumatic experiences with identity theft. They grabbed their duffels. The door was locked. Paul unlocked it, and they made their way into the dark, murky living room.

“Surprise!”

The boys all grabbed each other, Nick in the middle, Paul and Joe to either side, their hands raised defensively. The lights came on, and they saw a room full of people, smiling and clapping. There was a banner hanging from the ceiling that read, “Happy Coming Out Day.”

Charlotte emerged from the faces in the crowd, her arms outstretched. The shocked and surprised boys all plastered smiles on their faces and fussed with their hair, accepting a group hug from Charlotte, who whispered, “You’re all so brave.”

For the next couple of hours the boys mingled, smiling and giggling, accepting hugs and congratulations. Everyone was super encouraging, and lots of the guests were offering

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them advice, from hair and make-up tips, to ideas on fashion. Diana, Isis and Kali were there, and of course each boy managed to find some alone time with his bestie, where he was able to drop his pretty smile and really talk about how afraid he was about what the future held, about what life would be like as a woman, and how people were going to react.

“The people who matter will love you,” Kali said to Joe, who was sitting on his bed, hugging his knees to his chest.

“And the ones who don’t love?”

“They are the people who don’t matter.”

“But what if our new record doesn’t sell? What if no one buys tickets to our tour? Then, I’ll be stuck as a girl, and I’ll have no money, and no way to make money, and people will laugh when they find out I’m working as a stripper on Sunset Boulevard.”

“Whatever happens, you will survive, and I will be there for you, and Charlotte will be there for you. The only way you end up working as a stripper, honey, is if you decide you want to.”

There was a sudden loud cheer from downstairs.

“What is it?” Joe said.

“Let’s find out,” Kali said, grabbing his hand.

The two ran downstairs, and the crowd had gathered around the flat screen TV. On the TV was the YouTube webpage for ZMZ. The headline for the feature video read “Girls Gone Joanus?” The video wasn’t playing. Kali pulled Joe along to the front of the crowd, where he was soon immediately joined by the others, gathered around Charlotte, who pointed to the screen.

“What? Was it good?”

“We don’t care about good or bad,” Charlotte said. “We care about this!” She used a laser pointer to highlight a number beneath the video. 1,004,237. “The video has only been up less than an hour, and you silly, wonderful little girls already have over 1 million views.”

Joe, Nick and Paul all squealed and leapt joyfully into the air, not even aware that each of them had defaulted to a perfect ballet leap. The crowd cheered and applauded. They were such good dancers. They hugged their each other, their BFFS, any random person who appeared in front of them. It was soooooo, sooooo good. They were about to

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be, like, really famous. Again. And it was—like, bananas.



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Chapter Five

In the morning, when Paul came down to do his turn making breakfast, he found that Charlie had arranged three pair of pumps on the counter, all a bubblegum pink that reminded him of his favorite lipstick from Sassy Girl. His heart fluttered at the sight of shoes, and he picked up one and stroked the smooth, cool leather. *Oh, my god*, he thought caressing the heel. *I never thought it was possible to love a shoe but—wow.*



He couldn't resist. Slipping out of his slippers, he slipped into the pumps. Holding his arms out to his sides for balance, he took his first tentative, tottering steps in high heels, smiling brightly as he did so. His legs and ankles were very strong from all the dance classes, and his balance was amazing, so he quickly adapted to the heels and was soon busily making his way around the kitchen, cooking up a pretty little storm.

Today's outfit consisted of a flouncy ballet skirt and an off-shoulder crop top showed off his round, pretty little shoulder. Now with heels, his already big, bouncy booty looked even more amazing, and when Charlotte came down, she said, "You do look great in the kitchen, babe."

Paul giggled, lifting one foot and adjusting his heel. "I love

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these shoes.”

“And they love you back. Your legs and ass look even sexier.”

The other boys came down and squealed and fussed delightedly over their first pair of heels, slipping them on and practicing walking around, giggling and smiling proudly as they navigated another female rite of passage.

As they ate, Charlotte said, “I do have some bad news, girlies. Today will be your last ballet class for some time.”

The boy’s faces dropped. “NO! WHY?”

“You’re going to have to learn to dance in heels for your upcoming tour. You’ll need to learn modern dance moves. Ballet is not about the heels.”

“I don’t know that we’ll do *that* much dancing?” Nick said. “I mean, I’ll be playing drums, and they’ll have their guitars.”

“Yeah,” the other boys agreed, nodding.

“You’re going to need to dance and move in heels, girls. I have this all planned out. You need to trust me.”

Nick bit his lip.

“We love ballet,” Joe said, hooking hair behind his ear. “I just—I don’t think I can give it up.”

“Wait,” Paul said. “What if we do both?”

“Ballet and modern dance?” Charlotte said.

“Yes. I mean, we all love to dance, and that way we could, like, so totally get awesome dancing in high heels, but we can also keep doing ballet!”

“It will cut into your studio time for now,” Charlotte said.

The boys looked at each other. Shrugged. Chimed “Okay!” in their pretty little voices.

“Well, you are going to be very busy girls with dancing, tanning, studio. Are you sure you’re up to it?”

“Yes! Yes! Yes!” They all nodded vigorously, their blonde hair shimmering.

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“Okay, then. I just want to keep you ladies happy. I’ll make the arrangements.”

“Thanks, Mom,” Nick blurted out.

The other boys looked at him cockeyed, but then just shrugged their little shoulders and went back to practicing in their heels.

Hours later, as soon as they finished up their first dance lesson in heels, the boys sat down, slipped out of their pumps and sighed, rubbing their feet and rolling them in circles, trying to loosen up their tight ankles and calves. Mincing around the kitchen in heels was one thing; dancing, turning, rolling your hips and stepping in time? That took a lot of work. Their early attempts had not been graceful.

“I’m putting my deck shoes on,” Paul said.

“Me, too. I don’t think we should wear heels for our first video. I mean, they are super cute and so sexy, but it isn’t really the rock and roll image, right?”

“We can keep practicing in them and stuff and wear them out to the Grammys,” Joe said.

“I wonder what outfits Mother will pick out for us?” Nick said.

“Omigod. What is this ‘mother’ all of a sudden?” Paul said.

Nick told them about the article and the trend of young women calling their mentor mother. “I like to always be on the latest trends and whatever, so I’m doing it,” Nick said.

“I didn’t know it was trendy,” Joe said.

“No! I just thought you were being a dork!”

“As usual, bros, I am, like, so totally on point when it comes to style. When are you going to learn?”

“God. Go buy some bras of something,” Joe said.

The phone rang. Paul answered, and his face lit up. “Guys. Charlie has a producer set up to meet us at the studio. We’re going to record a single in one day. It’s going to be, like, so punk rock.”

“What song? Which producer?”

“I don’t know. Grab your stuff and let’s roll.”

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When the boys pranced giddily into the studio, they were met by a tall, slender woman wearing a wide-brimmed hat, black leather jacket and ripped jeans. She had big, brown eyes framed by large, turtle shell glasses, and bleach blonde hair, but her features were Asian. She had an aura of cool, hip authority, and looked over the boys, assessing their bleach blonde hair, Capri jeggings, femininizing bodies. “Joanus Girls,” she said, deciding to break the ice. “I am your producer, TokiMonsta. Are you ready to get to work?”

“You speak English?” Joe said, automatically using his girl voice, which was higher pitched than TokiMonsta’s.

“I was born and raised in Los Angeles,” TokiMonsta said, slightly annoyed.

“Oh. Sorry.”

“Here,” she said, handing each one of them sheet music with the lyrics and the notes for their singing parts. “We only have a few hours, so get into the studio. I’m going to go to the control room, and I’ll play you the song, so you can hear your parts.”

“Do you want us to just approximate the instrumental part?”

“There won’t be time for that. I have created the music tracks. You girls just need to sing,” TokiMonsta said, turning and walking away.

The boys went into the studio, looking over the lyrics and grumbling. The song came on, and they read along, crinkling their noses in disgust at the breathy feminine singing, the bright and brainless bubblegum pop music, and the words:

I only saw you as a friend
I only thought you were cute
Don’t know why, I don’t know why
But I am getting attracted to you

When you comforted me when I was struggling
When you listened to my stories
Maybe you, I’m loving you
My heart moved little by little

How, how, how should I tell you?
Do you hear me that I’m fallin’ in love
It’s only you in my head, I keep missing you

I guess I love you, yoo-hoo
I only see you, yoo-hoo
I want to meet you as a lover and not a friend

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Please look at me, yoo-hoo
I can't take it anymore, yoo-hoo
More than yesterday, more than today, I will love you tomorrow, oh my love
Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah
Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah
I just wanna be your love

In order to look good for you
I bought clothes and went on a diet
Yes I do, oh yes I do
Do you know my heart?

What if I lose you?
What if you don't like me?
Maybe you, I'm loving you
I have so many thoughts, I can't fall asleep

How, how, how should I tell you?
Do you hear me that I'm fallin' in love
It's only you in my head, I keep missing you

I guess I love you, yoo-hoo
I only see you, yoo-hoo
I want to meet you as a lover and not a friend
Please look at me, yoo-hoo
I can't take it anymore, yoo-hoo
More than yesterday, more than today, I will love you tomorrow, oh my love

I want to hold your hand
And walk on this street with you together
It's only you, really, now I want to tell you
I mean it, really, please know my heart
I want to always protect you
By your side

I guess I love you, yoo-hoo
I only see you, yoo-hoo
I want to meet you as a lover and not a friend
Please look at me, yoo-hoo
I can't take it anymore, yoo-hoo
More than yesterday, more than today, I will love you tomorrow, oh my love
Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah
Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah

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When the song ended, the boys looked at each other, shaking their heads. Paul put a big, bright smile on his face. “Um, like, this is, like, interesting and everything?” Paul said. “But, we were wanting to go in a sorta a different direction?” He finished with a little shoulder shrug and a giggle.

“Let’s give it a shot, girls,” TokiMonsta said flatly into the intercom. “Alternate on lead for the versus. Harmonize on the chorus.” She started her track playing, and her new arrangement of the music sounded, impossibly, even more girly than the original. The boys glumly looked at the music and shrugged despondently.

“Smile. Think cute, pretty thoughts.”

The boys all smiled and when the time came, Joe jumped in on the first verse, chirping away prettily in his soprano voice. He sounded good, and Nick and Paul felt their competitive spirits rising, and so they in turn smiled as prettily as they could and brought the perkier energy they could muster.

“Not bad,” TokiMonsta said when they finished. “Again.”

“Let’s try something else,” TokiMonsta said after the second try, which was actually worse than the first. “I’m gonna put the video on the monitor. Dance along with the girls of Secret and sing. I think it will help.”

“This is going to be ridiculous,” Paul said.

“I think we should just like walk out and be like—No! Way!”

“I don’t know,” Nick said. “Mother picked this out for us, right? Let’s just do it, and we’ll see what happens.”

The video came on. It was a live version, meaning the girls were lip synching while doing their little dances, which the boys imitated, feeling ridiculous as they swiveled their shoulders and hips, tossed their hair, did little “single girl” knee bends, made little fists under their chins and shook their butts and engaged in all manner of girly moves, but doing the moves they all began to feel fluttery and girly, and their pretty smiles were no longer painted on, but were actually the bright smiles of girls having fun, and their voices took on a bright, fun, feminine quality that couldn’t be faked.

As soon as it was done they broke out into a fit of giggles, hugging each other and falling to the ground. TokiMonsta shook her head. She hadn’t expected the Joanus Brothers to be such--- girly girls. Hadn’t they been men and professionals? It was like working with a bunch of teens. But, the take had been really good. She could probably

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just call it a day, but, she found it so funny to watch them dance, she really wanted to capture that, so she turned on the studios cameras and said, “Girls. That was amazing. You are soooo good. Let’s just do it one more time, with dancing, and just totally have fun.”

“Kay!” They called back, getting to their feet and striking the same pose the girls struck at the start of their video: legs crossed at the ankles, hands clasped behind them like schoolgirls. The music started playing, the boys turned on their toes and started to giggle before getting into the song, their singing filled with feminine joy and perky pep, and they occasionally broke out into smiley giggles throughout the song, which TokiMonsta loved and decided to keep. The video was choreographed and precise, the girls in the video dancing in unison, making little fists next to their faces, tilting their heads side to side as they danced. The boys followed along, big, happy smiles plastered on their pretty faces. When they finished, the boys tilted their heads back, all dimples and bright, eager eyes, striking the same legs crossed, arms behind their backs pose they started with.

“Ladies,” TokiMonsta said. “You just recorded your latest #1 hit.”

The boys squealed so loud TokiMonsta ripped off her headphones, ears throbbing.

When the boys came bopping back into the Beach House, there were still some hours of good sun, so they all ran up to their rooms and changed. Paul and Joe came down first in their string bikini bottoms- electric green—and then Nick proudly flaunting his *two-piece* string bikini—neon pink, the top tied firmly around his puppies. “I guess my days of sunbathing bare-chested are over,” he sighed, as if talking to himself.

Joe and Paul ignored him. Joe was on his phone, alternating between texting Kali—he seemed to communicate in all emojis now—and checking out what people were posting about The Joanus Brothers on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and the comments they were posting under the YouTube video. They were getting so much attention, and some of their old songs were surging up the iTunes charts. Paul had decided to write a new song, but he, too, couldn’t stay off his phone, constantly picking up and checking social media, texting his bestie. None of them could really concentrate on anything else, and the recording session had already been drowned out in a teen girl estrogen haze.

They didn’t even hear Charlotte open the sliding glass doors or realize she was there until she said, “Hey, girls.”

“Charlie.” They all sat up and looked at her expectantly,

“TokiMonsta sent me the track.”

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The boys waited, curious as to what she would say. They all three hoped she would tell them how much she hated it. “I sense you have a concern,” Charlotte said.

The boys looked at each other, then over the tops of their sunglasses at her. It was silently agreed among the girls that Paul would speak for them.

“Um, it was really fun and Toki was so cool, and you found a fun song and everything...” Paul said, trying to find a cute way of saying what he wanted to say.

“But?” Charlotte said.

“It isn’t exactly the kind of song we think our fans might like,” Joe said.

“Girls,” Charlotte said. “We are going to build a whole new fan base for you, bigger and better. This song is for them, not you. It’s an invitation to them to love you.”

“Whaaat?”

“You talk about how you used to just see them as a friend. You talk about them being there to listen to your problems. You sing, I want you for a lover and not just a friend? I bought new clothes and lost weight for you? The song tells listeners that they are part of your journey, that you are doing all this for them! It gets them to invest in the new you, and become more devoted than ever! Plus, it is super cute.”

“But, I thought we were going to deny being in transition? To confuse people?” Nick said.

“You are. When the song comes out, you will have a press conference and say you did the whole thing to poke fun at the idea you’re turning into girls. We’ll get weeks of free publicity out of this.”

Their mouths fell open. “That, like, is soooo smart,” Paul said.

“I’m blown away. For realz, Mom,” Nick said.

Joe shrugged. “Amazeballs.”

“When does the song come out?”

“One week. We’re getting everything in place so we can maximize the impact and monetize.”

During the next week, all three boys kept getting skinnier and shorter, but at the same time their legs somehow seemed to be getting longer. Joe thought he looked like a

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stork, and when he put on his yoga pants and looked at his legs, he felt so proud of how long and pretty they were. Meanwhile, Paul kept blossoming, and with him now strutting around, his puppies sticking out, Joe not only felt more self-conscious than ever, but found himself barraged with flatty patty taunts from his blossoming brothers.

He smirked with glee when Mom told them they would have to hide their boobs for the press conference. It would be very hard to convince anyone they weren't turning into girls if they arrived swinging their breasts around for all to see.

The morning the song came out on iTunes the boys all gathered in the living room in their yoga pants and pumps, and they played the song and danced along, perfectly recreating the choreography from the video while Charlotte watched them wiggling their hips and tossing their hair. She applauded and laughed with them at how silly and girly the dancing was, then said, "But that could sell a lot of tickets, girls. A lot of tickets."

Their outfits for the press conference were designed to create confusion. Paul wore a plaid, collarless pocket shirt from Venus—red and white—that *could* have been for a boy. His jeans were tight and showed off his curvy butt and slender legs. He wore clunky brown hiking boots. Nick wore a button-down women's Chambray shirt—very unisex but for the fact the cut highlighted how slender he'd become, black skinny jeans that let everyone see his rounding hips and slender legs, and a pair of boots as well. Charlie's stylist had ignored the boy's complaining and bound their breasts to give them a flat chested silhouette.

Joe wore a distressed rugby tunic sweater from Express, black and white striped with an open collar that drew attention to his slender neck and collarbone and an oversized look that suggested a girl who'd borrowed her boyfriend's sweater after a wild night of fun. He had on ripped black skinny jeans and a pair of Vans. The clothes they each wore were androgynous, could go either way, but with their skinny frames long legs, blonde bobs and softened, feminine faces, they looked more like girls than men. Of course, all of their clothes had been provided for free by their new sponsors.

"Now butch it up," their stylist said. "They need to think this whole thing might be a misunderstanding. That you girls might still be boys. I know it's hard, and sooooo boring, but be guys!"

"We will," Paul said, concentrating on keeping his voice flat, his face expressionless. "Look at me. I'm a guy. I like fart jokes."

His sisters giggled.

The room was packed with media from all over the country and the world. The fact

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they'd covered a song by a KPOP girl group had generated huge buzz in Asia. Cameras flashed and cameramen focused in as the boys rushed into the room and took their positions, standing in a semi-circle, wearing hip headsets. Striking pre-planned "masculine poses" the boys fielded the questions, having been well-prepared through hours of practice.

"After the ZMZ thing we thought it would be funny to do a song by a girl group," Paul said. "Just yanking your chains."

"We've been eating really clean, losing weight. Yeah. Am I too skinny? I guess that's up to you to decide, but my doctor says she thinks I'm fine."

She? You have a woman doctor?

"Are you sexist?"

"I was wearing two tank tops, not a bra. But, yeah, when I saw the video later, I realized I seriously needed to do some push-ups."

But, Paul, you look like you've got hips.

"I hope so. It would be pretty hard to walk without them!" Laughter. "I know what you mean, though, but my hips haven't changed, they just look that way because I've gotten so skinny. These are just my same old hips, believe me. Any questions about music? Our next record?"

"My favorite brand of lipstick?" Nick chimed in, getting another big laugh. Just then, Nick made his only big mistake. Nick put a hand on his hip and let it swing out wide, arching his back and running a hand through his hair, but he realized what he was doing and shifted back into butch pose without drawing a lot of attention to himself. Paul reverted to his little shoulder shrugs a couple times, and at one point he was standing on his toes as if at ballet class. Joe giggled and said, *omigod!* at one point, but Charlie watched, pleased. It was just enough to stoke the fires, to keep everyone guessing

Finally, Charlotte stepped forward and said, "that's all, folks. The *Joanus Brothers* have to get back to work on their new record." On cue, the boys came together, slipped their arms around each other's waists and finally smiled as the media gorged, taking as many pictures as they could while the girls posed and then ran out of the room. Charlotte stayed, as planned, ostensibly to answer a few more questions but mostly just to keep the media in place while the girls made their getaway, giggling with relief as they ran to their little white car, jumped in and made their way out of the parking garage. The police had set up barricades and were keeping the fans back, all of whom were shouting and yelling,

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trying to get pictures, begging the boys to roll down the windows, but they didn't dare. Mother had been very adamant on that one.



With the press conference over and the new song sitting at #1, the boys had the afternoon off to go home and laze by the pool. Nick and Paul lay out on their chairs, grabbed their magazines and started to read, but when Joe came down they started laughing at the sight of him. He'd put a tankini, including the top, which stretched across his flat chest.

"Joe, you should put some butter on those pancakes," Nick said.

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“Shut up!” Joe said.

“Is that your chest or a boneyard?” Paul said, feeling bold with his own firm little breasts now pleasantly filling out his bikini top.

“I think I should get used to it is all,” Joe said. “I’m going to have to wear one, too, soon. I’m sure I’m going to blossom any day now.”

Nick and Paul giggled.

Joe did his best to ignore their scorn, which was something that he’d been doing for years as the middle child. “Plus, I don’t want to be the only girl who--- ” Suddenly Joe screamed, a blood curdling scream of pure terror.

“What is it?” The other two screamed.

“Drone! Drone!” Joe shrieked pointing.

Nick and Paul looked up to see a drone hovering above the pool, no doubt taking pictures of the three of them. They screamed, putting their magazines over their chests, getting up and running into the house, slamming the patio door shut, the whole scene caught on camera and broadcast over the Internet. Once inside, the three boys cowered nervously at the patio door, craning their necks, trying to see if the drone was still there. “You check.”

“No, you.”

“Joe, you should go look” Nick said. “You still look like a boy.”

“I do not.” Joe said. “Do boys have legs like these?” He tried to play it off, but being told he looked like a boy triggered so many insecurities. He felt his cheeks growing hot with rage. “You go.”

“You do so look like a guy, so you go.”

“Shut up,” Joe said, flushing angrily, reaching out and yanking Nick’s hair.

Ow! You bitch.”

Nick scraped his nails on Joe’s arm, ripping off a layer of skin. Joe screamed and was about to scratch Nick right back when Paul stepped between them. “Stop! Just stop!”

“She started it!”

“No, you did.”

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“Stop. Please,” Paul said. “Just find some other place to be. Get away from each other.”

Nick turned and went to the living room, plopping down on the couch.

Joe went to the glass door.

“You don’t have to,” Paul said.

“Actually, I do. I left my phone out there.”

Paul’s eyes went wide. “Hurry.”

Joe crept out, hurrying right to his phone and grabbing it. Looking up, he saw the drone still floating up there. “Uhhhhhh.” He gasped in exasperation, running back into the house.

“It’s already on the Internet,” Nick called from the living room.

Joe looked at Paul in his bikini and shrugged. “What do you think Mom will say?”

“Joe looks like a boy?” Paul said, smirking and raising an eyebrow.

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Chapter Six

“Nothing we can’t work with,” Charlie said when she got home. “This changes our timetable a little bit, but it has just fed into the frenzy following the press conference. You girls don’t worry about a thing.”

“Kay, Mom.”

“But, you will have to stay away from the pool for a little while.”

The boys frowned. Tanning was, like, their most favorite thing after dancing and singing. “No tanning?” Paul sighed, his eyes aching with pain at the thought.

“Just for a little while.” Charlotte said, then waited for the predictable response.

Joe thrust his lower lip out, pouting. “You’re asking too much of me. I live to lay out. A life without tanning is death to me. Death.”

Charlotte pretended to be thinking. “Very well. You can go to a tanning salon. I know one where a lot of famous girls go to tan. It’s discreet and highly selective.”

“Omigod,” the boys sang out in unison. “You’re the best.” Tanning salons were so cool, and they loved the idea of hanging out with some other famous girls at a selective salon only for the most elite girls in the business.

With the video out and renewed interest in the Joanus clan, the comments came fast and furious. As Joe read the comments on their video, he felt like crying. Some of them were really cruel, making fun of how flat chested he was. Some people made fun of Paul and Joe for having breasts, but they were just dummies. But why did everyone have to be so mean about Joe being a late bloomer? *It’s not my fault*, he thought. *It’s so unfair*. Social media seemed more harsh for him as a female, and he wasn’t sure he could handle it anymore. People were so cruel, and yet he couldn’t stop obsessing what all these people thought of him.

That night, Joe got on his knees next to his bed for the first time in many years, and he folded his hands under his chin, closed his eyes and whispered, “God, are you there? It’s me. Joseph. I know I haven’t always been a good girl, and I maybe don’t have a lot of reason to expect you to hear me, but can you please let me get my boobs? I’m just so

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ashamed, and I am tired of people making fun of me, and I--- I just want to be pretty.”

He climbed into bed and started reading a magazine article about trends in eyebrows, and he drifted off to sleep. In the morning, he woke and felt something soft and small jiggle on his chest, and pulling off the covers he looked down to see not a flat, skeletal plain, but firm little breasts pushing out the top of his nightshirt, and he started to cry and closed his eyes and said, “Thank you, God. Thank you.”

Things were moving quickly. Photographers had camped out in front of the house all night. Drones buzzed around. With the threat of paparazzi constant, the boy’s look was even more important than usual. Today, they slipped into high cut shorts that really showed off their legs—and with all their dancing and working out by the pool plus the conversion treatments, they all had gorgeous legs any girl would die for. Blouses with sweetheart collars and cap sleeves, and for the first time publicly—pumps. The sleeves showed off that the muscle from their arms had melted away, giving them slender feminine arms, though all of them were determined to get daintier arms still and avoided doing any exercise that might build up their arms or shoulders.

“You won’t deny it anymore if someone asks you about your sex changing. Either ignore them, or say, ‘I would appreciate it if you would respect my privacy.’ It’s going to drive them crazy to see you all openly expressing your femininity but still not confirming what they will all believe to be true.”

In the hot pants and heels, the boy’s shapely butts looked even sexier, and all three now looked like pretty teen-age girls, but there was still one major element missing from their female arsenals. “Today, girly girls, you will be getting make-overs.”

The boys squealed, making little fists and putting them under their chins while prancing in place, as they had seen in the Kpop videos they were increasingly becoming obsessed with. “Your cosmetologists will not only be making you prettier, but they will be teaching you to do your own make-up on a professional level. Remember, from here on out, you don’t even think of leaving this house without putting on your faces.”

“Kay, Mom. We won’t.”

In the car, Paul tuned to the KPOP satellite radio station, and the boys all sang, smiling and dancing in their seats, as Wonder Girls performed *Like This*.

Like this yo Like this
Shake it up shake it down Like this,
Like this yo Like this

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To the left to the right Like this
Like this yo Like this
Make ya body do the wave Like this
Like this yo Like this
Now Stop and wiggle with it

They got to the dance studio before the song ended, and sat singing and smiling in the car until it was over. When it ended, Joe hooked his hair over his ear and, checking his text messages, said, “I love that song so much! The Wonder Girls are so amazing! Can you believe how we totally made fun of them when we toured together?”

“I thought they were, like, such total airheads,” Nick said, checking his hair in the vanity mirror. “What was wrong with me?”

“We weren’t mature enough to appreciate their artistry.” Paul pulled down his own vanity mirror and ran a hand through his hair. “Ugggh. I wish I had some make-up right now to cover these Uncle Fester circles under my eyes.”

Someone tapped on the window. “What’s the deal with the high heels?” A fat, grizzled reporter in a too-small blazer shouted. The media had followed them from the Beach House.

“Showtime, sluts,” Paul said.

The car doors opened. The boys slid their sleek, toned, tanned legs out, stood up on their brightly colored pumps and wiggled their way back to the trunk. Cameras flashed and videographers rushed around to get the boys in their hot pants and heels, their long sexy legs and perky little breasts. The boys ignored all the questions, strutting arrogantly into the studio for ballet class, their noses in the air.

After ballet they had to drive to their modern dance class, so they all braced themselves, pushing through the door and walking to the car as fast as they could in their pumps. By now, word had spread that the group was at the dance studios, and some fans had gathered and started screaming as soon as they saw the three pretty blondes emerge. The reporters were shouting, shoving phones in their faces, but the boys just plastered smiles on their faces and ignored all the questions, waving their slender little arms at the crowd as they got in the car and bringing up a huge squeal from the crowd.

“Omigod,” Joe said, adjusting his bra straps. “I think we’re, like, totally a thing right now.”

They hurried over to their next dance studio and spent a couple of hours happily

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dancing in their heels, learning cutesy dance moves. When they headed out into the lobby, they were in for a shock and all stopped dead in their tracks, as SHE stood there, hands on hips, and looked down at them and said, “Joe? Is that really you?”

Joe looked up at his former wife, the model Alexis Glass. Perched on her stiletto thigh boots, she was taller than him now, and it brought home to him how much height he’d lost. More, she had packed her D cups breasts and full, womanly hips into a black dress that emphasized she was a WOMAN, and Joe took a feminine, submissive posture as he suddenly felt every bit a teen-age girl not just due to his skinny little frame and tiny breasts, but his clothes as well, which seemed suddenly ridiculous.

“Al?” Joe said. “Like, what are you doing here?”

“I heard about.... This...” she said, giving Joe the once over. “I just couldn’t believe it, and I wanted to see you.”

Joe crossed his arms over his breasts, embarrassed not because he had them but because his were so small. His shoulders slumped and he moved with his knees together, cowering over toward his brothers.

Alexis stepped forward, put her arms around Joe and pulled him in for a hug. He felt tiny in her arms, and confused by the feeling of his soft little breasts pressing against his wife’s body. “Girls?” Alexis said, looking at Paul and Nick, who also seemed awestruck to find themselves in the presence of an actual woman, one they had known as men and had only thought about banging, but who now they just wanted to worship. “I guess that’s what I should call you now. Can I have some time with my former husband?”

Paul took Nick’s hand and led him away. Alexis watched the slender girls- she couldn’t even *think* of them as boys anymore-- clattering away in their heels, a wiggle in their walk just like any girls. It all seemed impossible. They’d all been such huge assholes. Could all three have secretly harbored a desire to be not just women, but girly girls?

She took Joe’s hand, shocked not just at the physical change but at the seemingly shy and meek personality, and she led him to a corner where a couple of chairs rested between some ferns.

“What’s going on, Joe? What have you done to yourself?” She brushed the bangs from his eyes, looking at his pretty face. It was him, but him as if he’d been born a girl.

“I’m a woman, Al. I was always a woman. I was just stuck in a man’s body? So, this is the real me?” He said, reciting words that seemed to float up from his unconscious mind

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unbidden. But also floating up out of his murky sub-conscious was a memory of him walking up to Alexis the first time he'd seen her, walking right up to her and kissing her right on the mouth, because she was the one he wanted, and he was a man and he took what he wanted, and she slapped him, but later that night he yanked her dress up over her hips, pulled her panties down and...

“Joe. You were never a woman on the inside. I know you. This isn't you.”

“It... um... it is....” he said, and tears were starting to form in his eyes. “I just would like you to support my decision.”

Alexis took Joe's face in her hands and kissed him—a long, complicated kiss, and when the kiss ended, she kept Joe's face in her hands and said, “Do you remember that, Joe?”

“Yeah,” he said, hoarsely, his voice dropping down toward the masculine. He grabbed her arms and tried to pull her hands off his face. His little arms shook. Alexis shook her head. “They've made you so weak.”

Joe looked away, dropping his own arms to his sides. “No,” he whispered, slipping back into his chirpy girl voice. “I wanted this.”

“I don't believe you,” Alexis said, standing up, looking down at Joe, who pulled his knees up to his chest and hugged them, crying now freely. “Someone did this to you, and I'm going to find out who,” she said, turning and walking away.

Nick and Paul ran up to Joe, crying, and hugging him. “Don't listen to her!” Paul sniped. “She just isn't ready to deal with your true self.”

“I know,” Joe said. “But it still hurts.” he *was* a woman, he thought. He had always been a woman! And yet he was remembering being a man, pushing Alexis onto her back, slapping away her pitiful arms and taking her... riding her hard... and why did he remember loving that so much?

At the studio, they found TokiMonsta, and she introduced them to their next song. They grumbled, but less than before. It was another song by a Kpop girl group, another song that was so bubblegum it made their cheeks hurt, but the first one had been such a big hit they just went along with it. They were getting used to other people making all the decisions, and their lives were getting better because of it, so, like, whatevs or something?

The song was by a group called Girls Generation. It was called Oh. Like the previous song, the lyrics took on double-meanings when sung by the pretty little Joanus

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Brothers, now dressing openly in girls' clothes and showing off their feminine shapes.

Oh!

I'm not the person you knew before, brand new sound

With the new me one more round

Dance dance dance till we run this town

Oppa oppa I'll be I'll be down down down

Hey oppa look at me, just take a look at me

It's the first time I've spoken like this

I fixed my hair and put on make-up too

Why do you only not notice me?

Thump thump, my heart is beating

I just continue imagining

What should I do, having been so proud

I just want to tell you

Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oppa, I love you

Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! A lot, a lot

It's embarrassing so don't laugh

It's the truth so don't make fun either

I'm just saying stupid things again

I'm not the person you knew before, brand new sound

With the new me one more round

Dance dance dance till we run this town

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Oppa oppa, I'll be I'll be down down down

Oppa, just listen to me

Stop saying other things

Don't think of me just as a younger sister

You'll regret after a year

You don't know my thoughts at all

You don't realize and just joke around

What should I do, you immature person

Just listen to me

Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oppa, I love you

Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! A lot, a lot

It's embarrassing so don't laugh

It's the truth so don't make fun either

If you do that again, I might just cry

I'm not the person you knew before, brand new sound

Something about my heart is different today

Down down, don't put it off, I just get mad

Oppa oppa, if you keep this up, no no no no

Tell me boy boy love it it it it it it ah!

Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oppa, I love you

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Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! A lot, a lot

Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oppa, I love you

Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! A lot, a lot

I'm just saying stupid things again

Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh!

Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!

Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oppa, I love you

Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! A lot, a lot

Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oppa, I love you

Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! A lot, a lot

Oh!

As before, the video played, and the boys instantly fell into the dance moves, and their singing sparkled and became cute and pretty and fun. Joe's confusion, though, grew worse. As he looked at the girls dancing, he loved copying their moves, and he so much wanted to be them—just as pretty, just as fun. But he also found himself looking at their long legs and lean bodies, and he wanted them in another way, a way he had somehow forgotten since he'd gone to live with Charlie in her beach house—since somehow he'd suddenly decided he wanted to be a woman, and he hadn't even gotten that, because he'd learned, sitting there in the presence of Alexis, that he wasn't a woman—he was just a girl, and he wasn't sure he liked it.

But he kept smiling, shaking his hips and tits, because he didn't know what else to do.

They kept singing, kept dancing. Their outfits consisted of short shorts and mini-skirts, yoga pants and jeggings. They were always showing off their legs and hips, their blossoming breasts. They couldn't even talk in lower register voices anymore, as their high-pitched little girl voices became their new normal. The record was coming along--TokiMonsta told them it was great, that it would get millions of streams and sales all over the world. They giggled and nodded, smiling, smiling, just dancing and singing and doing what they were told.

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The last big change happened as summer approached. As they were practicing modern dance, this time in platform pink Converse style shoes, Paul put a hand to his side and grimaced. Then he stopped and doubled over, and when Joe tried to comfort him Paul screamed, “leave me alone. I’m fine.”

Nick pointed. “I think you’re bleeding, sis.”

“Shut up, slut!” Paul said, but then looked down and saw blood running down the inside of his leg. His eyes rolled into the back of his head and he fainted.

Joe and Nick ran over, yelling, “Call 911. Call 911.”

“Girls. Girls,” The dance teacher said. “She isn’t dying. She just had her period.”

They all knew the day was coming when their wombs and ovaries would be fully formed, and they were excited and worried both for their sister and for themselves. They had chosen to sit down to pee, eager to live as the girls they were becoming even before their biology had made it a necessity, so this was the final stage for all of them as they stepped forward into full-fledged womanhood. When Paul came to, her sisters helped her to her feet, and then the dance teacher took her into the bathroom. She helped clean her up, and they talked and she gave him a brief primer on feminine protection. He emerged shortly after, smiling sheepishly, proud and embarrassed. Her sisters hugged her, and they headed to the studio to work on the last song for their record. No one said anything to TokiMonsta. They liked her and all, but Paul didn’t want anyone to know. “This is for sisters,” she said.

She had some cramps, but she got through it. She was a big girl, and she knew that she just had to fight through it.

That night, Charlotte came home with a dozen red roses, which she presented to Paul, who accepted them, blushing. “I have another surprise for you,” she said, handing Paul a brand-new Driver’s License. It had a picture of him as he looked now— a smiley, California girl, blonde and tan and wholesome. The name read Poppy Joanus. “Poppy?” He said.

“It’s cuter than Pauline.”

“I like it,” Poppy said. “Thanks, mom.”

Joe smiled through the whole thing, but he was frustrated and confused. The strange feelings he’d had since he’d met up with his ex-wife had been persisting, and though he was able to focus fully on living as the young woman he appeared to be during the day, at night sometimes he surfed the net for pictures of girls, and he fantasized about

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having sex with them, but not as the girl he had become, but the man he'd been. Meanwhile, both Nicky and Poppy had bigger breasts than he did, and he felt like they were prettier and getting all the attention.

He just prayed he would have his first period before Nick. He couldn't stand the thought of his little brother once again advancing into womanhood first. His phone buzzed. Joe smiled, thinking maybe one of his girlfriends from the dance studio had sent him something, but when he looked at his text, his heart leapt into his throat. "I know who did this to you."

"Who?"

"Meet me. Now."

"Where?"

"The Pier."

"Is it Char?"

"No. Come right now. Run. It could already be too late."

Joe bit his thumb. He'd suspected it all along. It was some kind of plot, but if it wasn't his Mom, then who? And, did he really want out now? Their record was about to come out, and they were planning a tour, and Poppy had her period, and they were sisters.

He moaned, burying his head under his pillow, but then grabbed his cell and called an Uber. He got up, grabbed one of his purses, shoved his cellphone and pocketbook into it, quickly touched up his makeup. Carrying his heels, he started to creep down the stairs. It was past his curfew, so he didn't want Charlotte to hear him sneaking out, and even though Alexis said Charlotte wasn't behind it, that didn't mean she wasn't part of it.

The night breeze was cold, and it brought goosebumps out on Joe's skin. He'd only wore a halter top, a mini-skirt and pumps, and ever since turning into a girl he tended to feel cold all the time even when he wasn't half naked. He hugged himself, shivering, knees together, and when the Uber driver arrived he was super relieved it was another girl. She dropped him off at the Pier. He hurried down to the end in his heels, clutching his purse defensively, ready to grab his mace if any boys tried to bother him.

The pier was deserted, which made it kind of scarier. Joe stood under a light and looked out at the dark waters of the Pacific Ocean, listening to the roar of the waves as they crashed against the beach. Joe stood there, stood there, fidgeting with his hair, his purse, checking his phone. Nothing. He texted Alexis. I am here. Where R U?

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No service. He had no bars. Joe bit his lip. Looked around. Where was Alexis?

An hour passed. Another. Joe had to pee. Wanted to cry. He shivered in the wind. He was so skinny now and wore such skimpy clothes he was always cold! He could see a sign—a giant Lobster. He decided to scamper over there and see if he could get bars or maybe borrow someone’s phone? One good thing about being a pretty girl was he could usually always find someone to help him, even if he had to turn on the tears.

When Joe pushed open the door to the Lobster Shack and walked in, clutching his purse, his cheeks flush from the cold, the manager looked up and did the little double-take people did when they saw someone famous. “Can I help you?” she asked, with a smile.

“Um,” Joe said in a soft breathy voice. “I was just cold and wanted to see if I could get bars here?” He smiled his prettiest little smile and did a little knee bend.

“You look like you’re freezing, sweetie! Come in! Come in! We have WIFI,” the manager said, looking at Joe in amazement.

“Omigod,” Joe said. “Amazeballs.”

The manager seated Joe at a table in a closed off section of the restaurant. “Let me get you some got coffee.”

“Um, do you have herbal tea?” Joe said. “Coffee is so bitter?!”

“Sure thing.”

Joe had bars. He tried calling Alexis, but it went straight to voicemail. He had some texts from Kali and other girls, but nothing from Alexis. He texted her, tapping out the message with his perfectly manicured pink fingernails.

“Any luck?” The manager said.

“I have bars here, but my friend didn’t answer,” Joe said. “I’m so worried.”

“Here’s your tea.”

“Gosh. Thanks.”

“Say, you’re Joe Joanus, right?”

Joe giggled. “Don’t say it too loud.”

“Can I get a selfie?”

“That would be soooo fun.” Joe loved having his picture taken.

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They took the picture. The manager looked Joe over, taking in his long blonde hair, which he had put up in a high ponytail, his pretty, painted face, the slender shoulders and tiny little arms, his perky breasts. He had multiple piercings in his ears, bangles on his tiny wrists, and, of course, cute heels. She'd been watching his evolution through the news, but to see the skinny little teen queen he'd become, to hear him giggle and talk in that little girl voice, she shook her head and chuckled. "You don't remember me, do you?" she said.



"I'm sorry," Joe said. "I, like, totally meet so many people?"

"It's okay. You came here once before I was manager and before you..." She gave Joe a once over. "Changed."

Joe looked at her name tag. Sarah. It all came back to him. Sarah had been the waitress that day, the day his card had all been cancelled. Joe put his hands to his cheeks. "OMIGOD. I was so, like, totally mean to you."

"You do remember."

"I'm so sorry. I was such a rude boy. You must hate me." Joe couldn't stand anyone not liking him.

"I kinda did," Sarah said with a smirk. "But, seeing how things turned out?" She touched Joe's blonde hair. Put a hand on his soft, skinny little forearm. "I think we're good."

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A pretty smile of relief spread over Joe's face. He didn't even sense the irony coming from the manager. "Oh, golly. Let me give you a hug."

Joe called an Uber. He didn't know what had happened to Alexis, but he was glad it had brought him back here so he could make things right with Sarah. He called an Uber. When it came, he left a big tip and hugged the former waitress, now manager, then hugged her again, and Sarah finally practically pushed him out the door as he kept apologizing.

She watched him tottering off and laughed. Seeing that a-hole reduced to such a silly girly girl was enough to make her believe in karma. She'd fantasized about telling him off many times since that day, but it had been so much better to see the smile on his face when she'd told him she liked his purse.

Joe snuck back in the house and went up to his room, tossing and turning as he worried about Alexis and wondered who had done this to him and his brothers. He drifted off to sleep after 3am, only to be woken by Charlotte shaking him. "I'm so sorry," she said. "But your ex-wife Alexis? She died in a car accident last night."

Joe wept, and he was too weak to refuse Charlotte's comforting hugs.

The next few weeks were a blur. Nick had her first period first, of course, and Joe's sisters mocked him mercilessly until he finally woke up one morning, found a rusty stain on his sheets, and screamed with joy.

Josey was still sure that her sex-change had been a trick of some sort, but he was tired of getting mocked and when you're a girl with two sisters sometimes getting them off your back that takes priority. Besides, she thought, inserting her tampon. She could hardly be a boy now. She could barely even remember how to act like a boy. No. She was stuck as a girl, so she had to just make the most of it. She had had big ideas about investigating on her own, and she was sure as Snoopy that whoever had turned her into a girl had killed Alexis, but her days were full of dancing and singing, yoga class and Pilates, texting and hanging out with her friends. Doing her nails and hair. When was a girl supposed to find the time?

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Chapter 7

And so it was that The Joanus Girls found themselves touring as the opening act for the Wonder Girls, their favorite group. They spent weeks learning the choreography, rehearsing their costume changes—they had so many pretty outfits to wear during one show. Charlotte decided they should each have a different hair color, so they would be more relatable to more girls. The stylist decided Paul should be a redhead, while Joe found himself with blue black hair like a raven. The boys didn't argue or even think to question any of Charlotte's decisions these days. She knew better. She was, like, a total smarty smart business woman, while they were just silly girls, really, who loved to dance and sing.

The night of the first show of what was to be a year long world tour after soundcheck, Sunye, lead singer for the Wonder Girls, found them backstage and said, "Hey, girlies!"

"Hey, Sunye!" they squealed and giggled, blushing excitedly to be talking to their hero. She was so pretty and so cool and so everything and she even had a cute boyfriend so, of course, the Joanus Sisters all wanted to be her.

Sunye looked the J-Girls up and down. "You look great in those corsets, ladies. Come with me. I have a surprise for you."

A surprise? The girls giggled. They loved surprises.

When the group arrived at Sunye's dressing room, they sisters were amazed to find she had set up projectors which were casting pictures of three men around the walls. Who are these guys? The Joanus Girls wondered. They were all hot guys, and each of the girls found himself wondering what it would be like to kiss such handsome men. "Hold on," Josey whispered, her hand going to her smooth cheek. "That's us." She was right. Those handsome men were—they. These were their old, rugged, handsome faces from before they'd begun to change.

As the mesmerized girls stared at the images of the men they'd once been, Sunye said some things in Korean. A thick fog lifted. Josey Joanus remembered she was a 25-year-old man, and she liked being a man, and she.... She had the body of a girl, and she was dressed like a KPOP idol in a corset and a mini-skirt, and she shook her head and looked at two other pretty girls with stunned looks on their faces, and he knew those two cute females had once been her brothers, and men. The shock of what he'd become overwhelmed him and he wobbled uncertainly on his heels, as did his brothers, the three of them learning on each other, the sweet smell of their floral perfume swirling around them as the once men struggled to confront the fact they were now women.

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“No,” Joe whispered, looking down at his breasts, his tiny little hands with their glittery pink nail polish. “This isn’t real. I can’t be a girl.”

The Wonder Girls all laughed, watching the stupid Joanus Girls face the truth of what they had become, what they had lost.

“Why?” Paul said, but he knew. He remembered.

“When we toured together, you called our music stupid. You disrespected us. Now, you will pay the price for your arrogance. You will be girls for the rest of your lives, and you

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will be treated as girls and live as girls but inside you will be men, screaming to get out of your soft, feminine prisons.”

“Curtain in five, Joanus Girls!”

“Thanks, five,” the boys responded automatically in their pretty little voices.

“What should we do?” Josey asked.

Poppy shrugged. “Perform.”

“Like this?” Nicole shrieked.

“Like this. We have to. We have a contract. We have fans. We owe it to them. Besides, what else can we do now?” He gestured down the length of his curvy body with a skinny little arm.

Sunye could have said it for them. It had been programmed into their pretty little heads along with the fact they would feel trapped and believe they had no choice but to live the lie of their bodies. “Smile! Smile! Smile!” Sunya said, opening the door for them. “It’s all about being pretty, Joanus *Boys!*”

As he headed to the stage, his high heels clicking, Joe glanced back over his shoulder, slitting his eyes in feminine fury. That was all he could do, though. He knew he had lost everything.

The curtain opened, and an audience full of tween girls and their parents screamed. The Joanus Girls had their backs to the audience, one hand on a hip, bending forward. When the music started, the girls started to shake their hips to the beat, then spun to face the audience, big bright smiles on their faces as they wiggled and pranced in their stiletto heels, lip-synching to pre-recorded music. No one knew that inside those slender, pretty little female forms were three adult men who smiled so brightly, but very badly wanted to cry. They were grown men, but the only value they had to offer the world now came from the reality that they were cute, and they were girls, and they were pretty.

Smile. Smile. Smile.

The End

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A still from the video for "Beach Bunny Bop."