ADULTS ONLY

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A HALLOWEEN CREEP-OUT

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack



TRANSGENDER STORIES OF THE SUPERNATURAL

JOE SIX PACK

A HALLOWEEN CREEP OUT

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack
A Stories of the Supernatural tale



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Hollow Eve

They stood on the porch while the bass thumped through the walls, and they looked ridiculous. The bet which led to this was even more ridiculous, taking their team by +22. But they were college student. Of course they were going to be for their own team. Of course they were going to be bold. Of course they were going to bet something stupid because they couldn't believe they would lose.

The bet? Let their girlfriends choose "sexy" female costumes for them. Bad idea. Unless you were into comedy. Then it was a pretty good one.

Dave, six-foot-two with a linebacker's shoulders, had gone as Frankenstein's monster: a pale green leotard that clung to every hairy inch of him, stitches drawn on in black marker. Simple stuff. Problem was, that he wasn't a simple Frankenstein's monster, no he was a sexy Frankenstein's monster. Over his leotard was a tattered low-cut top that was cut for a woman with a generous endowment and a ragged skirt, and a short, scruffy black wig that sat on his head limply and lifelessly.

Isiah, fresh from sunbathing on the beach, looked a bit misplaced as a ghost — and again, a sexy ghost. The best was for the three of them to attend the biggest Halloween party on campus in the "sexy" version of the top selling costumes off of amazon. His usual sun-kissed hair and gym body was obscured by his costume, which was made up of long, tattered rags that trailed on the floor and a wig of long grey hair, which he kept blowing out of his mouth.

Then there was poor Justin, who'd lost the coin flip, and was dressed in the most popular costume as bought by the well-known degenerates on Amazon.com: a sexy evil nurse. This costume was a short-skirted dress in shiny black and red that squeaked when he moved, black rubbery stockings that made his legs look sexy, a blond wig tied in twin ponytails, and a belt of syringes with a scalpel hanging off it.

Each of them had to not only endure the humiliation of unpacking their costumes in front of their frat bros, but also having to sit still for hours as their girlfriends did their makeup. It was the kind of afternoon where one realizes that the people you loved and trusted took more delight in degrading you than being kind. It is said that everyone dies alone, and they were seeing the wisdom in the notion. After a while, the synapses in their brains which controlled embarrassment had brunt out, were now just charred black cinders.

That led them to the porch, now dressed in "sexy" female Halloween costumes, looking ridiculous, waiting to go inside. Waiting to step into social

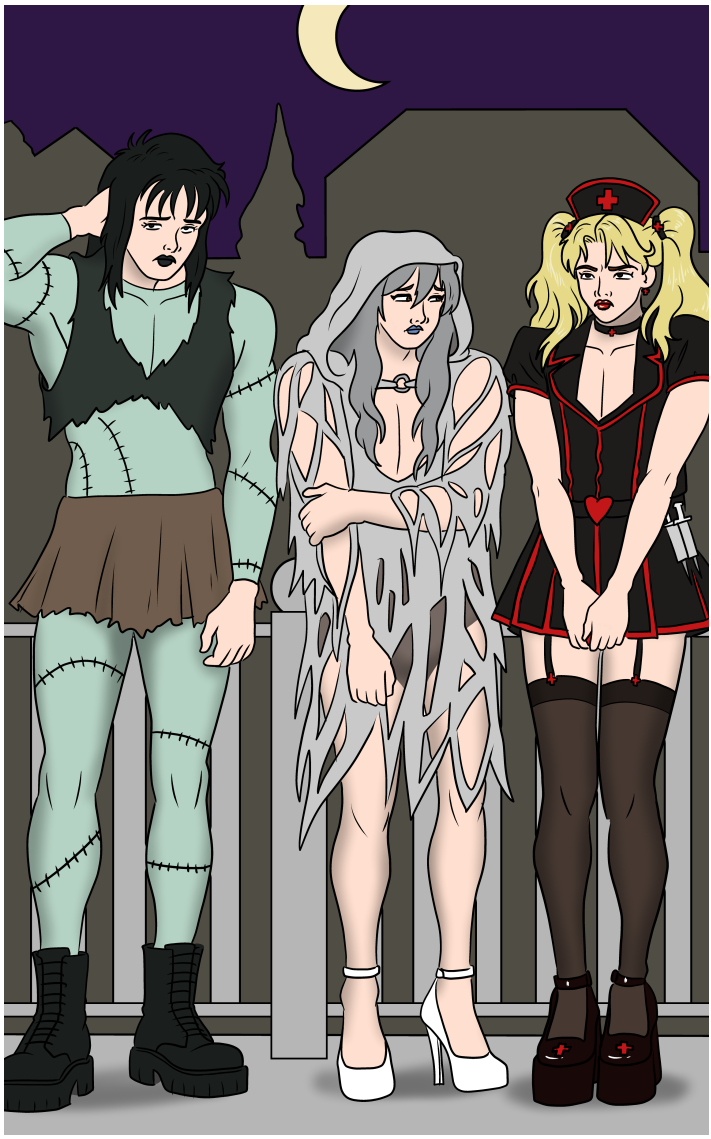
oblivion. They knew they might never recover from this.

"Nobody will notice," Isiah said. "It's too big. We'll just be ignored."

The door opened and the entire party looked at them.

The laughter hit like a wave. Somebody wolf-whistled sarcastically. A dozen held up their phones for video. A girl in a witch costume fell on her butt laughing.

No one mistook them for women, of course. Not for a second. They were three men in wigs, and the party treated them like a gift.



For about ten minutes it was mortifying, the kind of thing that sears itself into your mind, destroying grey calls, creating scar tissue in the core memories, forever twisting thoughts and creating phobias, neuroses and psychological trauma. For another ten minutes it was merely embarrassing.

Purely out of a sense of survival, they started to play into it. They had to. Dave, in his sexy Frankenstein getup, did a runway strut across the living room and got a round of applause. Justin started to hold one of his syringes and

mincing around like a fantasy nurse, asking people if they wanted "the good stuff."



It worked. By the second drink it had stopped mattering. They were the joke, and they didn't run hiding from it. That was the power of alcohol. They eventually even broke up and started taking up girls, just like all the other guys there. Well, Justin and Dave did. Isiah, as he normally did, kept to himself.

It was only about an hour into the raucous, overcrowded party when a very sultry and mischievous looking goth girl, in an excessively ruffled black lace dress, black hair in double buns, sidled up to Justin and offered him a vial.

"Every nurse needs her medicine," she said. She had dark lipstick and very pale skin. Without even waiting, she walked away, looking back over her shoulder with that amazing smile.

He was more than hesitant, but in truth, anything that might make him forget this night had a appeal to him. He knew he shouldn't just take drugs from strangers, no matter how cute, but Justin was not a strong man when it came to girls, nor a man who wanted to remember this kind of humiliation with any clarity. He took a very small, tentative sip, of just the smallest amount of the vial. It tasted like a barrel full of cherry cough syrup.



He drifted down the hallway while the party smeared around him into streaks of color and sound. His skin prickled. He looked at his hands. They had long nails. They were smaller, and growing smaller as he looked at them.

It was all in his mind, of course. The vial was messing with him. It was bringing his biggest fear to the surface. That fear was that the costume was becoming real, and he was becoming the woman who would be in this sort of outfit.

He caught his reflection in a dark window and stopped. The stubble was gone. His jaw was soft. His hands, small and slender, wrapped around the plastic syringe belt, with nails the same red as the dress. He tugged at one of the blond ponytails, and it was not a wig. It had never been a wig. It was warm and alive and grew from his own scalp. He could feel it.

Agent of Change

Dr. Susan Hackstaff, M.D., had barely put her white coat on when she heard a shout.

"Hey!" Yelled a loud, piercing voice from outside her exam room. "Is there anyone here?"

The doctor leapt to her feet and scurried out into the hallway. "Oh, hello," she said, greeting the visitor and potential patient. "The receptionist must have stepped out for a moment."

"C'mon in, Dad!" the visitor yelled out the front door. "They're actually open!"

It was true that they were open, but only by about three minutes. Total.

Dr. Susan Hackstaff had just opened her new clinic 180 seconds earlier, for the very first time. Seasons Recuperative Solutions was the name she had chosen for it, and had spent the better part of a month filling it with equipment and working on the interior. Finding a staff had proven more difficult. People were far more expensive than office chairs.

So yes, the receptionist was not at the front desk, but that was because there was no actual receptionist.

"All right, all right," said the father as he came through the front door. "Don't get excited," he told his son. He gave a quick look at the doctor. "You the nurse?"

"I'm the doctor," Susan replied, curtly. "Dr. Sus..."

"Yeah, okay, look. Here's the deal. My boy here wants an operation. What's it gonna cost?"

"Well, why don't we go into the exam room and..."

"What's *that* gonna cost? Insurance said they ain't gonna cover this."

"If you could just..."

"Dad!" The younger teenager whined. "Don't ruin this for me! You always ruin everything!"

"Let the adults talk!" The father barked back as his son. "What's it gonna cost?"

"No cost to talk," Susan said, adding on a sigh. This was her first potential patient, and she needed the money bad. "Follow me, if you would."

"You heard her," the father said, pointing his son down the hallway. "That way."

"I *know,* Dad."

Bert Thurman, as the father introduced himself to Dr. Hackstaff, was not in the mood to listen to anyone. "The kid says he wants to lose some weight," he told the doctor. "I think he's fine, but..."

"Let me tell her, Dad!" the son whined. His name was Logan Thurman, and was just sixteen. "I inherited a lot of money from my grandma's death, and Dad said I could get anything I want so I told him that really really wanted to get thin so I started working out and I didn't lose any weight and then I went on a diet and..."

"Okay, okay," Susan said, trying to slow the kid down.

Logan continued. "But my Dad said, and he *promised* me, that if I couldn't lose weight any other way, I could see a doctor and do it that way. That's what he said, he said. He *promised* me."

Susan already didn't like these two. The boy was a spoiled brat, and the father was an overbearing lunkhead. If they weren't her first possible patients, she would have declined. Lord knows that she didn't want her first Yelp review to be a negative one.

"So let's have you take off your shirt," Susan asked the kid.

"Wait. What's the cost?" Mr. Thurman asked, yet again.

"I'll let you know when I'll need to charge for something," Dr. Hackstaff said. She then took a seat in the only other chair available, intentionally blocking out the father. "Oh, if you want to have a seat, there's a brand new comfy sofa out in the hallway," she informed him.

Given how unsettled the father looked, Susan was willing to bet that the man's deep love of sitting outweighed his desire to keep being a nuisance, and she was right. "I'll be right outside if you need me, Logan."

"Okay, Dad!" Logan moaned.

Once he was gone, the doctor started in on her usual routine questions. "So you have a concern about your weight?"

"I'm fat," Logan said. "Everyone says so."

"Let's have you step on the scale," she asked. Logan came up as 185 pounds and 5' 6" tall. "That's not *that* overweight. At your age, I'd expect you to be only fifteen pounds lighter, and you're still within normal numbers for..."

"My Dad promised me!" Logan interrupted. "If you don't do it..."



"Now, hold on there. What exactly do you want me to do?"

"Lipo!" The boy said with a smile. "Suck all the fat out and make me thin! Suck it all out! *Shhhlorp!* You can do that, right?"

"Well, yes, it's technically feasible. I'd want to ask you a few more questions, do some tests, the usual procedure. Normally, this is an operation I'd do on mature women, not on a teenage boy."

"You mean overweight women like you?"

Susan narrowed her eyes, but tried to just breeze on through that incredibly offensive comment. "Women who had fat that resisted diet and exercise. Now you say that you've been exercising?"

"I bought a gym membership for after school. I didn't lose anything!"

"How often did you work out?"

"I went twice and I didn't lose any weight at all. It was a total rip-off."

"I see. You also tried dieting."

"I'm practically a vegetarian. Except for bacon and hamburgers. And pizza rolls."

This was clearly shaping up, in Susan's mind, as a textbook case of resetting her patient's expectations. This boy wanted the easy way out, and she wasn't that kind of doctor.

...Anymore...

"Maybe you should take some time to think about..."

"Dad! She won't do it!" Logan yelled out loud so he could be heard through the exam room door. *"Daaaad!"*

"I didn't..." Susan began to speak.

"What's going on in here?" Bert Thurman said, bursting into the room. "What are you telling my boy?"

Susan really wanted this time to be different. She had hoped she was going to make a new start in this town. That's why she had moved out here and taken up the offer to start the clinic.

But these two were pushing her buttons, and awakening the fire that burned within Dr. Susan Hackstaff, a fire which burned with an intensity that few could even comprehend. A fire which burned for justice. Justice against men. Horrible, stinking, rotten men.

"Let's talk about scheduling," she said.



Logan Thurman strutted down the hallway of his school with a cocky smile. He was scheduled for liposuction tomorrow, and he felt like he was on top of the world. No one would make fun of him when they saw him next. By then, he'd be skinny and fit, just like the popular jocks that always got all the girls. This was his last day as a pudgy kid, never to be ridiculed again.

"Hey, Lard-ass Logan," said Greg, his best friend, as he caught up to Logan. "What you smilin' for? Find a spare cupcake in your pocket?"

"No!" Logan replied, as if it were a serious question. Then he imagined how nice it would be if he did, indeed, find a bonus cupcake in his pocket one day. "No," he repeated.

"Anyway," Greg said, as he pushed Logan into a metal locker, roughly. "I'm going to kick your ass in the parking lot after school."

This was the person Logan referred to as his best friend. People who *really* hated him didn't even bother to beat him up, most of the time.

"I can't... My Dad's picking me up and I'm going to be out of school. For, like, a week or more," Logan said, as he rubbed his newly bruised shoulder. "You won't even recognize me when I get back."

"Well, I better just kick your ass *now*, I guess," Greg said as he slammed Logan back into the lockers. Logan had a very low set of qualifications for a best friend.



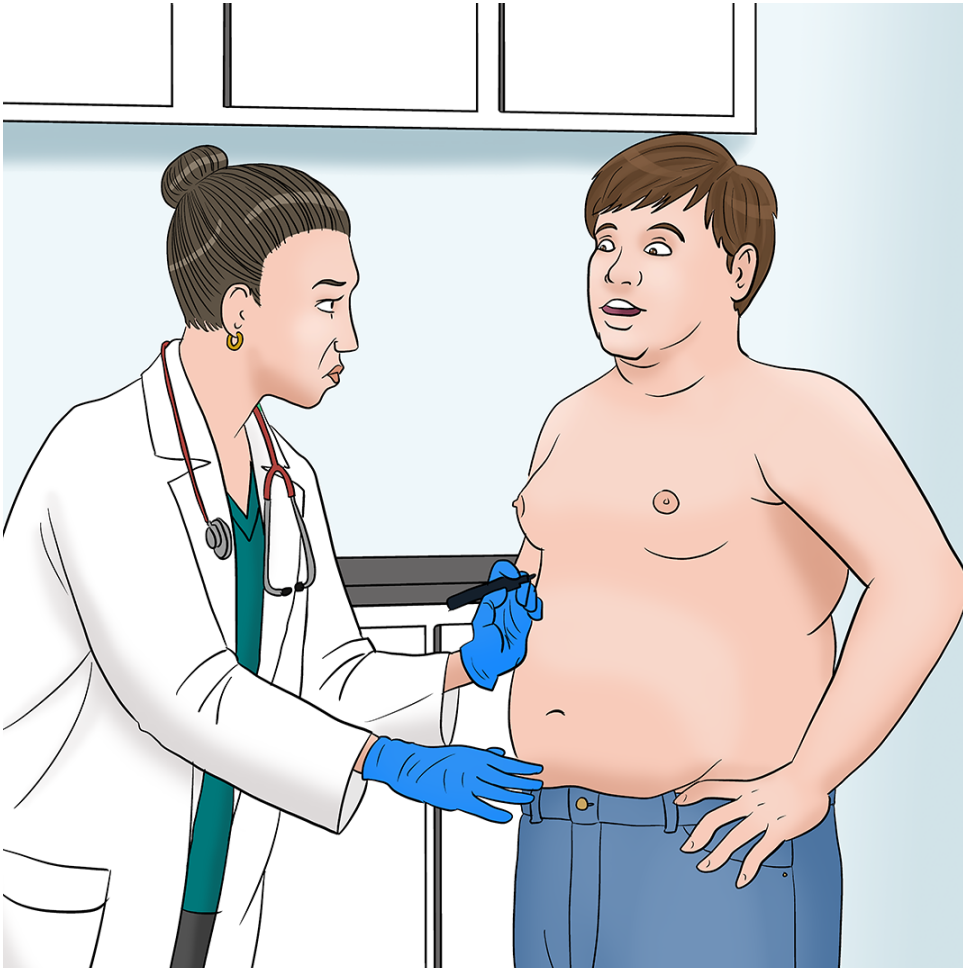
"Is that where you're going to cut me open?" Logan asked as Dr. Hackstaff drew a short dotted line on Logan's waist. "Because blood makes me throw up."

"You'll be anesthetized," Susan explained to her patient. "You won't be awake."

It was the day of Logan's surgery, and he was giddy. He couldn't keep his hands still in anticipation of what was about to happen. No more fat jokes. No more being called "husky." No more splitting his pants in public. No more feeling guilty about eating a whole quart of Cherry Garcia while on the toilet. No more being picked on because of his weight.

"What kinda drugs are you gonna give me? Can I take them at home, too?"

Dr. Hackstaff had rarely heard such a blatant attempt to get hard drugs from her, so she just smiled back, knowing what she was about to do was going to make her feel a lot better.



"We'll talk after the procedure," she said. She found a spot and injected Logan with a syringe. "This may pinch," she said, after she stuck it in. "You'll start to feel a little drowsy."

However, the good doctor hadn't injected her patient with something that was supposed to put him to sleep. She had put a powerful hypnotic drug into his system that was about to leave him very suggestible.

"Now today, I'll be removing the fat along your waistline — do you understand, Logan?"

The boy nodded as his eyes were losing their focus.

"Later on," Susan said, "we'll take care of the other parts of your body, and we'll have different appointments for future procedures. For now, it's just your tummy."

"Yeah... Just my tummy..." Logan replied, as the drug had already kicked in. "I thought we were going to do the whole thing?"

"No, no. That would be dangerous. One thing at a time. You agree, don't you?"

"I... I guess..."

"Good, good."

"Think how sexy you're going to look with that slim waist of yours. I bet you can't wait to show it off."

"Sexy?" Logan responded. He really hadn't thought of it that way, but that certainly could be true, he decided. "Yeah... Totally sexy."

"I bet you've bought yourself some tight-fitting clothes to show everyone how good you look. Stretchy pants and skin-tight tops. You'll want to let everyone see the new you."

"You think I should?" Logan asked.

"Of course you should. Why, if I were you, I'd be wearing nothing but skin-tight clothes so everyone can see how you're changing. That's what you want, right?"

"Yeah, that's exactly what I want. I want everyone to see the new me. I'm going to get some tight clothes right away."

"I knew you would," Dr. Hackstaff replied with a smile. Of course he was going to, because that hypnotic drug wasn't any old drug, but an exotic cocktail of mind-controlling taken from the glands of toads direct from the deepest forests of the Amazon — her special blend.

She had sworn she'd never use the stuff again, but it was just taking up space in the office drug cabinet, and this little turd really did deserve everything that was coming to him. Now, for the next few minutes, the boy was helpless but to obey her commands.

"Okay, how much should we remove from your waist? If we take out too much, it might look a bit unusual, but we'd have to do fewer procedures."

"I don't want to look weird," Logan said.

"So, all right, we'll do it in three more tummy operations, then. After a while, you won't even feel the pain. Then we can do the rest of it."

"Three more?" Logan was clearly imagining how much pain he'd be in, and how much time he'd be recuperating. "Maybe we should do it all at once then."

"Medically speaking, I shouldn't allow it to be done at once. A gradual change in your shape is the best path. Of course, people might not notice the changes, because they'll happen so slowly, but this will be safer."

"No! I want people to notice!" Logan objected. "And you just said you could do it all at once!"

"You're going to have a very narrow waist, and your legs and chest will still have fat. Is that what you want?"

"Yes!" Logan replied. "Suck out all the fat in my waist! Get it all! Make me thin!"

"Only if you're sure."

"Please! I want to have the thinnest waist of anyone in school!"

"It's against my better judgement, but I'll do it." Now, Susan had made sure that Logan would have a very precise memory of begging for this procedure. He'd just convinced himself that it was exactly what he wanted. That was important, because the result of this operation would be dramatic and even a little humiliating. Now, though, Logan would ignore any taunts because he was convinced that looking thin at the waist was what he wanted most in the world.

Susan gave Logan the injection to put him under. "Well, then, let's get started."

"I can't wait!" Logan said with a giddy grin.



Logan was only half awake when he came out of surgery, and his entire midsection was wrapped in thick gauze, held together by an elastic compression garment. He couldn't even lift his head enough to see it for himself.

Dr. Hackstaff was in good spirits, though. "You'll be in bandages for a week," she said, "there will be a little swelling."

"Can I have a mirror?" Logan asked.

"When you get home and have had a good nap. You need to rest up."

"Ho-kaay..." Logan replied, his voice unable to stay strong.

"I want you to take these painkiller pills," she said, handing him a large, unmarked brown pill bottle full of hormones and anti-androgens. "And rub this cream on your skin. It will help you recover faster," she said, producing a tall skin creme bottle.

Essence of Rose

"What's that?" Carmen asked, as she looked up from her knitting. "It looks like a wedding invitation."

"I think that's what it is," her husband, Pierce replied. The envelope was embossed in floral detail and printed on textured, fancy paper stock. He wedged his finger into the flap and tore it open. Pulling out the card, he read it aloud. "You are cordially invited to the wedding of Rosalyn and Derek Whitaker."

"Fucking Derek," Carmen said.

Pierce Lawson was used to that type of response from his wife. In a way, he didn't blame her at all. His job, as a merchandiser for Rothway Federated Stores, meant he had to develop close relationships with his biggest and most important suppliers. Pierce's biggest and most important supplier, by far, was Derek Whitaker.

"He's not *that* bad," Pierce felt the need to say.

Carmen focused her eyes on the twirling needles in her hands. "You're right. He's worse."

Knowing his wife like he did, Pierce walked up to her side and kissed her on the cheek. "He's definitely not worth fighting about, that's for sure."

"Well, I'm not going, if that's the next question," Carmen said, kissing him back on the nose. "No matter how handsome my escort is."

"It's not a formal thing," he answered as he put the invitation, along with the rest of the day's mail, on the coffee table. "You don't have to dress up."

"I don't have to dress up because I'm not going." She smiled back and then went back to knitting the sweater she had been working on all week.

Pierce had to at least do what he could to cajole Carmen into going. It was no real negative if she didn't go, but it would be a big plus if she did. It was true that Derek Whitaker was not the nicest human being on this Earth. In fact, Pierce had always found him irritating and pompous. He had an ego big enough to rival the Goodyear blimp and had to be the center of attention no matter where he was. Derek was an overgrown frat boy who wasn't bright enough to recognize that almost everyone hated his guts, and worst of all, he was actually quite handsome.

In terms of business though, Derek held all the cards, and it was Pierce's most important job to keep him happy. "It's just about networking, honey," he explained to his wife.

"You dragged me to his Fourth of July party instead of going to my folks' house last year." Carmen was not going to be coerced. She had good reason to hate Derek. "You forced me to go to his birthday party instead of taking those tickets from my brother to go see Book of Mormon. Then there was the time I had to tell my best friend to go to Barbados without me when you decided I needed to be here to have a Christmas party to entertain him and your co-workers." Carmen was trying to keep her tone civil. "And he cancelled on us anyway. That was all in the name of 'networking.' "

"It's just an hour. We drive there, smile, hand over a present and go."

"You always say that it'll just be a minute or two, and it turns into twenty or forty or an hour. You get to talking about business and it's goodnight Gracie."

"Carmen, I'd like you to go. Please."

"No," she said for the third time.

"Please."

"Pierce, do you have any other friends? I mean, outside of business?"

Her husband didn't have an answer for that. This had been a steady complaint from his wife for a while now. He had to admit that he spent a lot of time on his networking, probably at the cost of maintaining some of his personal friendships. But he had friends. Lots of friends. Just because he hadn't been keeping up with them for a few years didn't mean they weren't friends anymore.

"I don't mean to be vicious," Carmen said, realizing she might have gone over the line there. "I just don't want to go with you and waste most of a day being pleasant to unpleasant people."

"You know I won't *make* you do it," Pierce said, eager to cut through the tension. "I love you too much to do that."

"I know, honey." She had one last comment to make before she let it go, though. "I feel sorry for whoever this Rosalyn is, though. That poor girl probably doesn't realize she's marrying into your business relationship with Derek. She'll never see her husband with all the time you two spend together!"

"Laugh it up," Pierce said, relaxing into his favorite chair. "But I still have to go. And since you refuse, I'm not even going to put your name on the gift." He stuck his tongue out at her, in jest. Inside though, he envied her. She wasn't going to have to drive an hour down the highway to some forgotten little



church in the back woods, sit alone through an awkward hour or two of trying to talk to people he had never met before, and pretend like he was happy the whole time. But he couldn't avoid it. He had to go.

Pierce's job as a merchandiser was to secure the best products for his particular area of the business. He was assigned to ladies' perfumes & toiletries, right out of college. Now at 28, Pierce had built a strong reputation within the company for his ability to wrangle the exclusives all their competitors couldn't get. That reputation was going to be his ticket up the ladder. That reputation was everything to him.

That reputation hinged on Derek Whitaker.



"What do you think?" Derek asked, his bottles and jars lined up on Pierce's desk. "Rothway would be nuts to miss out on these babies. These are the hottest goddamn products in the biz!"

This happened four years ago, the very first time Pierce had met Derek Whittaker. It was a sales call, Derek demoing the products he represented to the new buyer at Rothway — which was the young Pierce — just three months into his new job.

"The demand for this shit is crazy, my man!" Derek continued. "Not only are they just flying off the shelves, but the margins are batshit insane! If my boss knew I was even talking to you about retailing this stuff, she'd beat my ass until it bled!"

Pierce doubted anyone could even try to do that to Derek. He was a big man, six feet two or three, over two hundred pounds and all muscle. He didn't even have a neck. His big shoulders just merged right into his jug-shaped head. Unless his boss was a feral gorilla, Derek seemed safe from physical threats.

"Well, what I'm most interested in," Pierce said to the big man hovering over his desk, "is not so much the grooming products, but that perfume."

"Ah, *Reminiscence!"* Derek said, picking up the bottle. "The ladies are buying this crap up!" He gave a couple of pumps into the air.

"Smells like roses," Pierce observed.

"It smells like money to me! Fat stacks of cash." He held up the frosted fancy glass bottle to ponder. "Margins Mother Teresa would slit a leper's throat for!"

Pierce winced at that tasteless remark, but soldiered on. This was where he was going to make his mark at this new job. His career was would be made if

he could just get one hit product. He had done his research, and not only was *Reminiscence* ready to blow up in terms of popularity, but Derek was right about the margins. He had decided this was going to be his first big score for the company.

If there was one thing his father had taught him about business, it was one motto: Be selfish. No matter the cost, be it hurt feelings or a dent in the wallet, be selfish. Want the best. Get the best. Steal the best. That was how he had gotten Carmen, and it was how he was going to get get rich.

Pierce drummed his fingers on his desk. "I want it, and I want the North American exclusive on it." He brought out his personal checkbook. "Now tell me what I need to do to get it." He filled in the check and asked, "One or two T's in Whitaker?"

It was a bribe, plain and simple. Pierce wasn't going to toil for years to wait for his big break. He was going to make it himself.

"Well, let's talk," Derek said, finding a seat.

They knocked out a dollar amount quickly and Pierce cut the check and handed it over. It was understood that this meant Pierce was going to get the exclusive on the fragrance *Reminiscence* for at least five years. Of course, Derek thought he was fleecing the poor fool, but Derek knew that if Rothway was going to retail it, it was going to have decent sales, and that meant residual commissions. For each bottle Rothway would sell, Derek would make a tiny percent, but it added up to potentially millions. So he was on board with whatever Pierce was going to do and back it with everything he had.

"I'll need to run it past my boss, which will be a challenge. She'll be a royal bitch. But I do have more than enough..." He kissed the check and tucked it into his pocket. "...Motivation."

"She?" Derek inquired. "Sounds like a tough customer."

"Rosie Volbrecht. Beautiful gal, really gorgeous — totally frigid, though. She must jam ice cubes up her snatch every morning before she leaves for work."

Again, Pierce winced in mental pain at Derek's way of phrasing things. "You think you can do it?"

"Yeah, I can do it. I know just how to handle it, too." Derek smirked, a grin that made Pierce immediately regret what he had just done. "In fact, I may just be able to defrost the ice queen herself with this."

It was just a day later that Pierce got an unexpected, face-to-teeth-gnashing-face visit from the woman in question.

Derek was right about his boss. She was a beautiful woman, blond with fair skin and delicate features like an antique porcelain doll. She was almost too perfect. Her sparkling blue eyes were precious jewels and her plump pink lips like the petals of a dewy flower. A girl like her wasn't supposed to be working behind a desk, dressed in a pale grey suit, slogging through an ordinary office workday. Girls like her were seen in pencil sketches of the gardens of ornate palaces or in paintings, lounging on plush cushions in the golden light of morning.

"Oh, Hi. Ms. Volbrecht, isn't it? Or do you prefer Rosie?"

"I prefer Rosalyn, which is my name," she said, with a frown. "Only that neanderthal of a sales rep calls me Rosie, and I've told him several times to stop it. It borders on sexual harassment."

"I see," was the only thing Pierce could say.

"Now I understand that you and Derek think you've worked out some sort of exclusive with *Reminiscence,"* she said as she stood at the front of Pierce's desk. "There is no such agreement, and Derek was not supposed to make *any* exclusive agreement at *all* regarding *Reminiscence* — or any product we sell."

Pierce wasn't going to let it go that easily, no matter how beautiful she was. "I have a contract, Ms. Volbrecht. A signed contract. Was he not authorized to bargain on your behalf?"

"He... He was authorized, but he was not supposed to sign a contract."

"There's a crucial difference between the term 'supposed' and 'authorized,' " Pierce said with calm confidence. "What you want me to do is tear up a perfectly legal contract that will net my company quite a bit of money, just because you're asking me to."

"That idiot had no right!" Rosalyn said, her anger flaring up. "That scent was the last my mother made for our company, and it was *not* for sale!"

"Your mother?"

"My mother made all of our perfumes. She worked for years making unique fragrances that have kept our company going, even years after she passed away! My one responsibility to her was to make sure that we kept her company — her dream — afloat using the products she created. And *Reminiscence* was our last chance! Now, that idiot has signed it away!"

"I can't help you, Ms. Volbrecht. I have a contract and I expect it to be honored. Besides, this is a lot of money. Your company will make more money

in one year than you have in fifty. We have five hundred stores this will be sold in, and it will be promoted and marketed like no other fragrance you've ever made. You know that."

"Like hell! I'll sue! Derek Whitaker is a scum-sucking dirtbag who will rot in hell before I let him get this commission!"

Pierce was slowly starting to understand the dynamic here. Rosalyn Volbrecht had some serious beef with her top sales rep, and didn't want him, and only him, to make such an important sale.

"Let's be rational about this. I don't want personal animosities to get in the way of something that will make both of us very happy."

"I'll be frank with you, Lawson. My father has been pressuring me to get married to Derek for years. He's dead set on it. What he sees in that low-life degenerate, I can't even fathom." She finally took a seat and rested her head in her hands. "I've told my father I'd never marry him. I made the excuse that I would never marry down to his middle-class level, the one thing that my father accepted as a reasonable justification." She sighed and lifted her head back up. "I know it's not your problem, but if he gets this sale, he'll be our top earner. He'll make millions. He will finally have the status my father has been waiting for."

"You can still say no, I'm sure."

"You don't know my father. He won't be defied."

"Ms. Volbrecht, I don't know what you want me to do. This exclusive is going to make my career. Do you really think I'll sacrifice that for your... Social and romantic obligations?"

"If you were a decent man, you would."

"You're just trying to play to my sympathies. I won't trade in my happiness for yours, plain and simple. I have a wife and a new house to think about. I have to do what I have to do. As someone once told me, no matter the cost, be selfish."



In the present, Pierce had been driving all morning, and he had to stop and ask for directions twice to find the small church located in a desolate field. It looked like it had been neglected for decades, and it was hard to believe it was even standing, looking at the condition it was in. It was almost spooky.

This was going to be awkward, seeing Rosalyn after all this time. He could only assume that she had warmed up to the idea of marrying Derek, as her

father had passed away a year ago, relieving her of any obligation to his wishes. Yet, here they were, about to tie the knot.

Still, he was hoping to avoid her, because it was bound to be a bit tricky. As he got out of the car and carried the small ribbon-wrapped gift box with him, he noticed that although he was running kind of late, there were only nine or ten other cars there. It didn't look to be a particularly well attended affair.

On the steps of the church, a few pale pink and white ribbons tied to the iron railings were fluttering in the breeze, and a short man with thick glasses was waiting. He was looking very anxious as he kept glancing at a list he was holding. He then looked around and then adjusted his collar, and then back to the list. The black rose he had in the lapel of his black suit designated him as one of the wedding party.

"Hi, uh... Is this the Whitaker wedding?" Pierce asked.

"Yes!" The small man replied, briefly straightening up from the slight hunch in his posture. It was if he hadn't even noticed Pierce pull up and walk over to the steps. "Yes! Are you here for the bride or the groom?"

"Uh, groom."

"Name?"

"Pierce. Pierce Lawson."

His smile was immediate and broad. "Ah, yes. Mr. Lawson. Very glad to see you. Rosalyn and I were afraid you wouldn't make it."

"Rosalyn?"

"My sister. You might know her as Rosie. She's not too fond of that name, actually..." The small man's eyes wandered away for a moment and then refocused on Pierce. "Well, you're here, and that's what's important. Let's get you seated, Mr. Lawson. My name is Proctor, by the way."



"Well, Pierce is out at the moment," Carmen said to her visitor. "He's at one of his... *Business* engagements." She led the woman inside and offered a seat. "I'm sorry he's not here. Is there anything I can get you some tea? Coffee?"

"No thank you, I'm fine."

Carmen had put her knitting to the side to answer the door. She didn't want to get up from her seat as she was cozy and warm, curled up on the sofa in a

blanket, but after the second ring, she had to attend to it. The woman there said she was Pierce's co-worker, so she invited her in.

"Actually, I'm being a little facetious. He's at a wedding. Probably someone you know. Derek Whitaker?"

"I couldn't really say. Do you know when he's going to be back? I can't get him on the phone."

"A couple of hours, I suppose. Probably longer if he starts to talk shop." Carmen nestled down back in her spot. "He always talks shop." She poured out some hot water from a kettle she had standing by. "What did you say your name was?"

"Rosalyn. Rosalyn Volbrecht." The fair-skinned beauty brought out a small perfume bottle from her pocket. "We were supposed to be talking about our best selling product, *Reminiscence*." She spritzed it into Carmen's face.

The young wife involuntarily squinted at the spray. Carmen then felt a little woozy. She blinked a few times as she reopened her eyes, her head feeling a little foggy. "Perfume?"

"Yes, my mother designed it herself. Her legacy to me." Rosalyn put the bottle back in her pocket. "Maybe I *will* have some tea. Is it all right if I stay and wait for Pierce?"

Carmen poured a second cup for her guest. "I don't see why not."



The aisles of the church were sparsely populated. Seated on the groom's side by himself, Pierce only saw two other people on his half, which he assumed were Derek's parents, though they didn't seem to be terribly interested in the proceedings. The woman was doing a crossword puzzle as she waited and the father was watching something on his phone.

The bride's side only had six people, and only two of them were sitting together. Other than some sparse coughing, they were all seated quietly, waiting for the ceremony to begin. What made it strange was that all six of the bride's guests were staring at Pierce. He had no idea why, and had to fight the urge to glance back. That would make it even more awkward.

Looking at the scant crowd seemed to confirm what Pierce knew about Derek — that he was a world-class asshole. Not even his own family wanted to show up at his wedding. Piece figured that it really shouldn't come as a surprise that he was so disliked.

Checking his phone, he saw that it was almost ten minutes past the time on the invitation. The ceremony should have begun by this point. He also noted that his phone had no signal, so even if he wanted to call Carmen and beg for her forgiveness for being late coming back, it would be impossible.

That was when he finally saw Derek for the first time, dressed in his wedding tuxedo. He stuck his head out from the back, and then a moment later came out to talk to the priest, who was waiting patiently. After a few moments of discussion, which looked more like an argument than anything else, he and the priest left through a side door.

There was some rumbling and murmuring coming from the bride's guests, undoubtedly from uncertainty. That was when Pierce felt a tap on his shoulder. It was Proctor, lurching over from the row behind. "Mr. Lawson. I wonder if I might prevail upon you for a favor..."

"A favor?" He replied, trying to speak softly enough not to be heard by the other attendees. "What kind of favor?"

Proctor looked over at the other aisle and saw the bride's guests all fixing their gaze intently on the both of them. "Let's go outside for a moment."



If anything, the temperature outside the church was even colder, especially as the wind had picked up, blowing over the featureless plot of land. The sun was dimmed behind clouds, and the sky was quickly becoming overcast. They met out in back of the church, in a small forgotten graveyard that was encircled by a knee-high picket fence.

"I didn't want to say anything in there," Proctor said, his hand on Pierce's shoulder, "but the bride is delayed."

"Delayed? How long?"

Proctor looked uncomfortable. "She... She probably won't be able to make it. At all."

"Shoot. Derek must be devastated. Did you want me to go talk to him?"

Proctor blocked his way back into the church. "No, no. That's not why I wanted to talk to you. Rosalyn... Rosie is just unable to physically be here. She's still completely committed to the marriage."

"Well, that's good," Pierce replied, though puzzled.

"The thing is, both she and Derek want to do the ceremony today. We rented out the church, we're paying the priest, we can't get back the money, the guests have all flown out here from out of state... So, we need a stand-in for Rosie."

"Is there anyone to do it?"

"We're not on the best of terms with the bride's side of the wedding party. They... They're not really approachable on something like this."

Pierce could believe that. They had been silently hostile ever since he had arrived.

"We're out of options, Pierce." Proctor clasped his hands together, in a pleading gesture. "Would you stand in for Rosie?"



Rosalyn had removed her shoes and was curled up on the sofa right next to Carmen. The blond-haired girl was feeling the sweater Carmen was knitting. "That's impressive. I'd never have the patience for something like this."

"Well, I have a lot of free time, by myself. Pierce works so hard."

"Sometimes people work *too* hard, always wanting more, and ignoring what they've already got."

Carmen sighed. "Tell me about it. Just between you and me, I don't know where Pierce and I are headed. Sometimes it feels like a dead end."

"I know what it feels like to be trapped," Rosalyn said, sipping her tea. "It's not fun."

"I shouldn't be telling you all this. I hope you can be discreet."

"I won't tell a soul," Rosalyn said, making a zipped-lips gesture with her free hand. "Does Pierce talk about his work much?"

"Sometimes it seems that's all he talks about. Especially that perfume you have there."

Rosalyn took the bottle from her pocket. "*Reminiscence*? Well, it was his first big break. He owes a lot to this fragrance. Of course, this particular bottle is a special formulation. One not available in stores. I had it made just for me." She spritzed it at Carmen. "It has kind of a magical quality, don't you think?"

"It does have a... *Special* feeling to it," Carmen said, as her expression glazed over. She had let her knitting fall into her lap.

"Carmen?" Rosalyn said, noting the dazed look in her eyes. "Carmen? You don't look well. Why don't you stand up and I'll help you take that blouse off, darling."

Carmen let the knitting drop to the floor, unnoticed, as she got up onto her feet. "Yes," she said, "I do feel a little out of sorts... Darling."

"You'll feel better in a moment," Rosalyn offered, as she started to undo the buttons.



In the changing rooms of the church, Pierce was standing by himself, unsure to what he had just agreed to do.

Proctor had assured him that it was a formality. The marriage between Rosie and Derek would be legal, even if there were a proxy in her place. The ceremony was just something they had to go through with, procedurally, and Derek would be eternally grateful for his assistance.

Of course, Pierce could also calculate what might happen if he refused. That exclusive for *Reminiscence* would be in jeopardy. He couldn't risk offending Derek under any circumstances. His whole professional life hinged on having Derek on his side. In a way, he had no choice in the matter. He was trapped.

"Oh yes, thank you again," Proctor said, as he returned to the changing room. "Derek was very happy to hear the ceremony was going on as expected. And I know Rosal... *Rosie* will be overjoyed."

"I feel like an idiot. I hope there won't be any photographs. This is embarrassing enough anyway."

"There's nothing to be embarrassed about. Everyone surely understands that you're helping us out in a tough spot." Proctor smiled. "But I promise. No photos."

There was just something about Proctor that didn't make Pierce feel he was quite telling the truth. "Alright, then. I guess I should ask: what do I need to do next?"

"Just be ready to say the words. That's really all you need to do. We'll take care of the rest."

"Easy enough, I suppose."

Proctor turned to leave, but stopped himself. "Oh, one more thing. Would you mind carrying a few things through the ceremony? It's kind of an old tradition. Something old, something new... You know they saying goes."

"Sure, certainly. What would you like me to do?"

"This is the ring she would have used. Just carry it in your pocket, so we can say it went through the ceremony." Proctor handed it over to Pierce. "Don't lose it. It's a family heirloom."

"I'll be careful with it."

"Please do. That's both something borrowed and something old. And, uh, to fill the something new and something blue, she was going to, uh... Well... This is difficult to say..."

"What?"

"She was going wear these," Proctor said, producing a powder blue set of finely stitched, silken panties and a matching bra.

"Heh," Pierce remarked. "Okay. Should I just..."

"I'll just fold them up and maybe you can use the other pocket of your suit to carry them."

Pierce watched as the strange little man carefully, respectfully, folded the garments up neatly. Pierce took them and quickly put them away in his coat.

"Fine. Wonderful. Thank you so much. Again, thank you." Proctor backed out of the room, smiling and nodding in appreciation. "We'll be getting started in just a few minutes."

Once he was alone, Pierce stood still for a while, and then began to pace a bit. With only his thoughts, he began to doubt himself once more. How in the world he could find himself in such a ridiculous situation was beyond him. Maybe, he thought, needed to re-think this business arrangement with Derek.

That when he got a mischievous thought. Making sure the door was closed, Pierce slowly took the powder blue undergarments out of his pocket and gave them a sniff.

They smelled like... nothing. They were new. That figured.

He quickly tucked them back in his pocket, and then tightened his tie. No one would be the wiser.

As he began to pace again, Pierce tried to think about anything else but what he was doing and why he was doing it. Unfortunately, he became distracted when he noticed a white, lacy dress hung up in a cabinet. He knew immediately what it was, it was Rosie's wedding dress.

Still curious, he leaned over and gave the dress a deep sniff.

It smelled like...



Roses.

Carmen giggled. Rosalyn smelled like roses. It had to be, didn't it? Her hair smelled like roses, her neck smelled like roses, even her nipples smelled like roses.

With both women disrobed from the waist up, their arms in an embrace and nuzzling each other's necks, Carmen found it so funny that Rosalyn smelled like roses. Magical roses. She was right. That perfume almost felt like it had cast a spell over her.

After all, it wasn't every woman Carmen took her clothes off for. In fact, Rosalyn may have been the very first one. It was hard to remember.

"Do you still feel neglected, sweetie?" Rosalyn asked.

"No!" Carmen replied, with a happy enthusiasm. "I've never felt better."

She backed out of the embrace and dove in on Rosalyn's lips. She wanted her to know just how much better she was feeling now.

Even her lips tasted like...



Roses.

A swirl of roses, mesmerizing roses that had made him woozy. It was almost as if he could see the trails of the fragrance wrap around his head and caress his face. His eyes involuntarily closed as he let the wonderful, mind-melting scent take over.

"Five minutes!" Proctor said, breaking Pierce's moment. The short man was sticking his head in the door, his expression a little more haggard than the last time Pierce had seen him. "Five minutes, and you don't even have the dress on yet?" He howled. "We're out of time!"

It took a moment for Pierce to fully comprehend though the fog of his mind what was being asked of him. "But I wasn't supposed to wear a dress..."

"Whoever heard of a wedding without a dress?" Proctor said, locking the door behind him. He started to help Pierce slip out of his suit jacket. "Quickly, now."

Without any real resistance, but without helping, Pierce found his clothes being liberated from his body. A team of women flooded the small room and began to prepare him. He wasn't even sure how his pants were removed, as he



had never stepped out of them. It wasn't long, though, before he had his arms in the air as the dress lowered onto his body. "At least I'll have an amusing anecdote to tell my wife," he told himself. No sooner than had the dress come to rest then the wedding march began outside.

Proctor quickly reached up and placed the veil on Pierce's head. "We have to move, now!" He insisted.

"But how? Why do I have to...?" Pierce was still confused. "This doesn't..." A spray of atomized perfume hit his senses and Pierce was unable to complete his thought.

He felt Proctor take him be the hand and lead him outside. "They're waiting! Everyone's waiting!" he pleaded.

Wrenshaw Primary

The Emerald Estates development, as hugely successful as it had become, began with the boring matter of land acquisition. From the creek, to the ridge line, from the highway to interstate. When the investors instructed his people to start looking into buying the land, the many, many acres of contiguous property that form a neat rectangle, they came upon one nagging problem: Davis Wrenshaw.

All the land parcels in the area were being acquired through the state's de-commissioning of a state park — except for one particular plot of land. A small home owned by Margaret Elizabeth Wrenshaw, a 71-year old woman who had lived on the land since marrying her husband. His family had built a large Victorian house sometime in the mid to late 1800's, and it had weathered the years valiantly. It looked a little beaten, but also more stately with it's advanced age.

It was just a few months before Emerald Estates was to start bidding for the other larger parcels that they approached Mrs. Wrenshaw about her house. She invited them in for tea and she had a nice afternoon chat with the lawyer Emerald Estates had sent.

Margaret had once been a schoolteacher in an old boarding school, but had retired. Her husband had passed ten years prior, leaving her a widower, and she always loved having company. Even lawyers.

The lawyer reported back that the property was likely something they could acquire, as Mrs. Wrenshaw was agreeable to selling, but only if she could get a large sum of money to pass on to her grandchildren. All she wanted to do before consenting was to talk to her "college grandson" and get his advice.

That grandson, Davis Wrenshaw, 19, and studying business law, was all too eager to involve himself. Davis showed up at Emerald Estate's offices and dropped a small stack of papers on the receptionist's desk, accusing the business of trying to con his dear, lovely grandmother out of her house. There were charges of mail fraud, trespassing, intimidation, stalking, fraudulent representation and even theft for the tea the lawyer had consumed. Of course, Davis let it be known that he would stop his lawsuits if they bought the house for fifty times the value.

So began a legal battle that raged on, year after year, even as the development began construction. If one were to look from the air at Emerald Estates, they would have noted a large "bite" out of the almost-perfect square shape of the



land. The builders had to work around Mrs. Wrenshaw's parcel, even if they had hoped that they could get the land later on.

So in a sea of new houses, one large, tall, dark Victorian house stood out from the rest: Margaret Wrenshaw's proud grand home. It looked very much out of place once the development had been completed, as if it had been sent back in time.

Even as Davis Wrenshaw still maintained his exorbitantly high price for the old home, three years of construction were long since done, the ribbon cut at the main entrance, the homeowners moved in and settled. As time went on, Davis knew that his price would just keep climbing.

There was only one hitch with Davis's plan to rake in the money. His grandmother had passed away a year ago.

It was a quiet death, having passed away in her sleep. She was 73 at the time, and alone in her house. Davis discovered her on one of his visits, and as

saddened and as dismayed as he felt, he also knew that with her, he had lost any negotiating leverage for the house and land. She had not completed a will, and her property would go to the state.

Instead of reporting her death as he well should have, he decided that hiding her body would be the best course of action. After all, she would have wanted her family to get the money they were entitled to, Davis reasoned.

So in the back yard, a small field of flowers grew, where Davis had buried her remains.

Davis could then continue to represent her grandmother's interests and get a windfall of money on her behalf. It was just a technicality that she didn't actually exist anymore.

Everything about Davis's plan was working just fine for quite a while. The court proceedings went along slowly but surely, Davis would occasionally trade emails with the Emerald Estates people, and everything looked good... For a while.



"A summons?" Davis said, when he heard about Emerald Estate's latest court motion. "A summons."

It made perfect sense that the lawyers for the construction company wanted to call Margaret Elizabeth Wrenshaw to testify, but Davis had never actually figured on the whole thing getting this far.

He tried to get the court to cancel the summons, citing "poor health" for his grandmother, but he couldn't produce a doctor's note to prove it. It was all he could do to just change the court appearance to a deposition in her home.

That meant that lawyers would come see her, instead of having her go to court. Now all he had to do was raise his grandmother from the dead.



"Long time no see!" Davis said as his younger brother, Phillip came off the plane. "You look great! Thin and healthy!"

"Yeah, thanks..." Phillip said. He knew his brother well enough to recognize a snow job when he heard it. He expected little else from Davis, and studying to be a slimy lawyer fit right in with the way he had always behaved.

"So glad you could come!" Davis said, taking one of his bags and immediately heading out. Phillip was immediately suspicious. This wasn't like Davis at all... Unless he wanted something.

"You are gonna pay for my ticket back home, too, right?" Phillip asked.

"That's what I said!" Davis reassured him.

Phillip was seventeen, and had a week off from high school back in Albuquerque, where they had grown up together. "I recorded your promise on my phone."

"Ah!" Davis replied, less than confidently. "So, there's not much time. Let's get you in the car and head for Gramma's place."

"Not much time?" Phillip asked, as he ran his hand through his short blond hair. "She's okay, isn't she?"

"We'll talk about it in the car."



"I can't believe she's gone..." Phillip said, seated in the plush velvet sofa in the living room of the old house. "Gramma..." He sighed. "On vacation..."

"Yep! She's loving her cruise, too. I'm sure she's having the time of her life!" Davis said. "While I'm looking after the place, she's just living it up, probably."

Phillip smiled. "She probably is. She always wanted to take a cruise. Sucks for me, though. I was so looking forward to seeing her. She hasn't written in a while."

"Can I see her email?"

"Oops! Deleted it. You know how I am with email. Zero inbox."

"That's too bad."

"Around the world cruise! A year long. Maybe more."

"Well, good for her. But why did you want to have me here?"

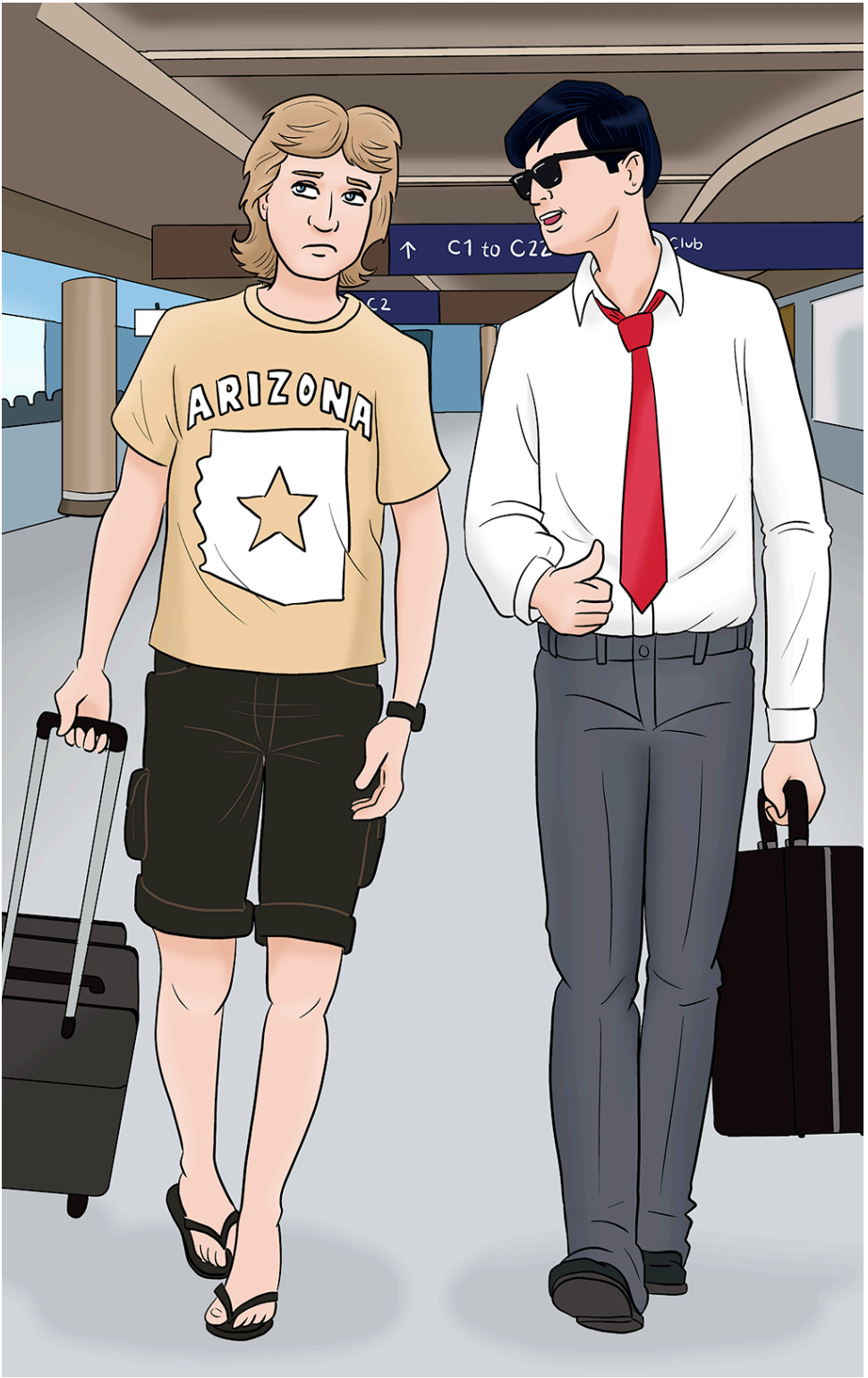
"I have... A... *Challenge* for you, Phil."

"What kind of challenge?"

"Well, some lawyers need to interview Gramma, and they're coming tomorrow."

"Why? You told them she's not home, right?"

"I don't have a lot of options, you see. And since you and Gramma have always been so close... You know her so well... And are kinda her size..."


↑ C1 to C22
Club
C2
ARIZONA

"What are you saying, Davis?"



Phillip found himself seated at his grandmother's makeup table, staring into his reflection. He couldn't believe he was doing this, but he would help out his grandmother, no matter the cost.

According to his brother, the developers of the Emerald Estates were trying to steal the house from under her, and going to rob her blind if she wasn't present and living on the land.

It was for his beloved grandmother that he was doing this. If he could help in any way to keep her house, he would do this. Even if it was humiliating and degrading. He was going to do his best and become Margaret Elizabeth Wrenshaw for the afternoon.

Phillip had been in two high school plays, and knew a few things about makeup, so he wasn't too unaccustomed to what was laid out before him on the table.

He had brought up a picture of his grandmother on his phone, and set it up in front of him for reference. He was a young man with young, fair skin, barely even a hint of a beard yet. It was going to be tough to replicate his grandmother's look.

Fortunately, "Gramma" was a fan of strong makeup. Even if her skin was saggy, her face didn't appear to have deep wrinkles and blemishes. So Phillip began with a modest bit of trimming to get his eyebrows into the same shape. He could scruff it back up when he was done, and it wouldn't look that different from his usual appearance.

Next, using a thick coat of foundation, he covered all of his features. He was a little startled to recognize a little of his grandmother in the reflection. Their shared family features were quite apparent, with similar eyes, and a similar nose. Even their lips looked very much the same when he frowned.

His grandmother had been a teacher in the prime of her life, and was a stern woman when she needed to be. To him, she had always been the sweetest old lady he could imagine, but sometimes, when they were out and about, he'd get a glance at the woman who had been a teacher of young children for so many years. In a flash, she could become angry, with a glare in her eyes that would make a full grown man wither. She must have been the most intimidating person in the universe to the kids she taught.



He gave a good scowl in the mirror to see how he looked. He nearly scared himself.

The goal wasn't to become a clone of his grandmother, just to get in the neighborhood, enough to pass for a cursory informal examination. As Phillip began work on his eyes, though, he was getting closer than he ever thought possible. The silver eyeshadow she preferred really brought her to life. He could almost see her soul coming through. A trace of black eyeliner around his eyes had completed the look.

A little bit of dark blush on his cheeks to make them appear hollow helped age him a bit. A line under his eyes to give him the look of having baggy eyes made him look authentically aged. He added a few lines to approximate crows feet and laugh lines, but they were subtle touches he probably didn't need to add. Using way too much makeup, like Gramma tended to do, did a very effective

job of making him look like her. He was already convincing enough, much to his surprise.

He was tempted to do the last step, his lips, but before that, he decided that it was messy enough that he should get dressed first and not risk smearing it. His grandmother liked to use a lot of lipstick.

He stood before his grandmother's closet and tried to think though what she would wear. She would have regarded a lawyer's visit as a kind of semi-formal occasion, so the casual outfits were not an option. Phillip figured she would have dressed much like she would have for her old teaching job.

He pulled out a maroon blazer and skirt and whisked off the dust. Phillip could not ever recall seeing her in anything but a skirt. He placed the set on the bed and figured out what else he would need.

A ruffle-edged blouse with a high collar was a favorite look for his grandmother, and he found a few in plastic dry cleaners covers in the closet. The high neck would hide his youth, where one would expect to find the sagging neck skin of an elderly woman. He selected one in a pale rose color to match the maroon of the skirt and jacket. A small ivory cameo brooch on her dresser was her favorite clasp for the neck, so he took that and tossed it on top of the blouse.

"I wonder why Gramma didn't take this with her?" he asked himself. He rarely saw her without the brooch. Hopefully, she'd never know that he had gone through her things like this. To face her, if she knew, would be absolutely mortifying. But it was all to help, after all.

The next question Phillip had to answer for himself was what to wear under the clothes. Did he really want to wear his grandmother's underwear? Well, the answer to that was an unqualified 'no.' He just couldn't even begin to think about rummaging through his grandmother's intimates. However, if Davis was right, and everything depended on this meeting going flawlessly, he didn't want to risk something giving him away.

Fortunately, Phillip found some new-in-the-package sets of undergarments in the closet. They looked like they had been there for years, if not decades.

A pair of high-waist "Granny Panties" seemed appropriate. They were beige and laced, made of elastic material. He removed his underwear and slid them on. It took some adjustment to his privates to get everything to fit the right way, and he found that by tucking his dick in between his legs, he could mask his true gender well enough.

The matching bra was much larger than he'd ever seen, with conical cups that were so stiff that they almost didn't need any stuffing. He put his socks inside

just to make sure they didn't deflate on him. The heavy elastic band of the bra pulled his shoulders back and made him stand up straighter, too.

"Hey, how's it going in here?" Davis said, as he launched his head through the door.

"Davis!" Phillip barked. "C'mon, you said..."

"Just wanted to see how things..." He looked at his brother in the face, and was taken aback by how much his made-up eyes resembled his grandmother's. "I... Uh... I'll be downstairs, okay? One hour to go."

"Fine!" Phillip barked back.

Davis closed the door behind him, still looking, his eyes trained on Phillip's face. He couldn't quite figure out what to think.

Phillip took a deep breath and went back to business. The next thing to take care of were his legs. He had figured on wearing pantyhose, so he had taken the time to shave his legs earlier. He found a pair of deep suntan over-the-knee nylons in a fresh package and put them on the bed, too.

Lastly, he selected a pair of patent leather black two-inch Hush Puppies pumps with a fat, stout heel and rounded toes. Heels would be a minor challenge, but they were true to how his grandmother would have put together an outfit.

He picked up the blouse and put it on, the long sleeves both ending in ruffled cuffs, as did the high neck. A series of modest ruffles also ran down the front, where he buttoned up the blouse. He realized that he was going to have to do some work on his nails, too. The stumpy man fingernails wouldn't do. A box of press-on nails he found in the makeup drawers were just wheat he needed and put them out to apply in a minute.

The panty hose was easy enough, and stayed in place. They dramatically changed the look of his legs from skinny 17-year-old boy's legs to a mature woman's. They also made walking on the hard wood floor precarious because they were so slippery.

He had put off the skirt long enough, and stepped into it. It was thick, lined in silk or stain or something like it, and buttoned up on the side, which puzzled him for several minutes. But once he had it on, it was a good fit. The crepe material was a little strange, but it looked good on him, so he thought.

Then he stepped into the shoes. They were almost a perfect fit, embarrassingly enough. Phillip had never regarded himself as a small person, just someone who was due a growth spurt or two before they were in college. Either his grandmother had large feet, or he had tiny ones. For his own vanity, he decided it was his grandmother's feet that were on the large side.

Before putting on the jacket, he sat back down at the makeup table. A pair of earrings that matched the brooch were resting on a ceramic plate, and Phillip put them in his pierced ears. He had gotten them pierced years ago to tweak his parents, but hadn't used them in a long time. He was glad they had yet to heal over.

They were very heavy, with thick ivory and gilded edges, and weighed the lobes of his ears down, stretching them out like an elderly woman might have.

"Gramma left her rings, too?" Phillip said as he picked three rings off another ceramic platter. He put on the amethyst and tarnished silver ring she had worn since she was a teenager. He remembered her story about it, that she had received it from her first high school lover, a young man who went off to war and never returned home.

Next, he slid on the engagement ring she had received when she was only twenty five, from his grandfather, Gene Wrenshaw. She said it was her very favorite ring, and had told many stories about the "courting years" of her and his grandfather. In fact, because his grandfather wasn't exactly the touchy-feely type, most of what he knew about him was through these stories. Finally came the large, shimmering diamond wedding ring his grandfather had gotten from his mother, who had survived the Battle of London, with this her only remaining possession. It was a fourth generation heirloom.

With the rings on, he added a bracelet and an antique silver band watch that he often saw his grandmother wearing when they went out. He carefully added the press-on nails he had found earlier, and lastly, two coats of the dark red lipstick that was his grandmother's most recognizable feature.

Finally, he unboxed one of the two silver-and-black-haired wigs his grandmother used on a daily basis. With a deep sigh, he was ready to get a look at the finished product.



"Davy! Da-vy! Are our guests here yet?" Came a voice from the top of the stairs.

Davis, who had been nervously pacing, looked up, and watched step by step as his grandmother descended the stairs.

"Don't stand there with your mouth agape, help me prepare a proper tea set," the old woman said.

"Holy shit!" Davis said.

"Language!" Margaret Elizabeth Wrenshaw said with a frown. But then, Phillip's smile broke through and he laughed.

"Oh my fuckin' God!" Davis said.

Phillip was standing mid-way down the stairs, letting Davis get a good look at him, head to toe in his grandmother's clothes, makeup and wig. "It's kind of freaky, isn't it?" He said, with a sheepish grin.

"Yeah, it sure is," Davis took some steps forward to get a closer look. He was nervous, as he himself had personally buried his grandmother in the back yard, and to see this reanimated version was eerie. "I mean, Jesus. You look... It's Gramma, but maybe a few years younger. You can even do the voice!"

"Little Davy," Phillip said in his Margaret voice, "I hear you've been treating your brother quite poorly. You shouldn't be so mean. He's family, after all. You'll need him some day."

"Wow..." Davis said. "Just... Wow."

Phillip finished his trip downstairs and adjusted the jacket when he landed. "Oh, my little Davy," He said, using his grandmother's pet name for Davis. "Fill a tea kettle. I want to have it ready for when the lawyers arrive."

Davis laughed. "Knock it off, okay? You are really creeping me out."

"Sorry," Phillip said, back in his normal voice.

"Okay," Davis said, trying to clear his mind and reset. "Okay, okay. So, here's how this is going to go. I'll answer the door and then we'll set up where you can be comfortable, and then you'll be sworn in by..."

"Sworn in?" Phillip asked. "I don't want to lie under oath."

"You won't be. You're not here. Gramma is."

"I don't want Gramma to lie!"

"She's on a cruise, remember? Probably doing a conga line right now."

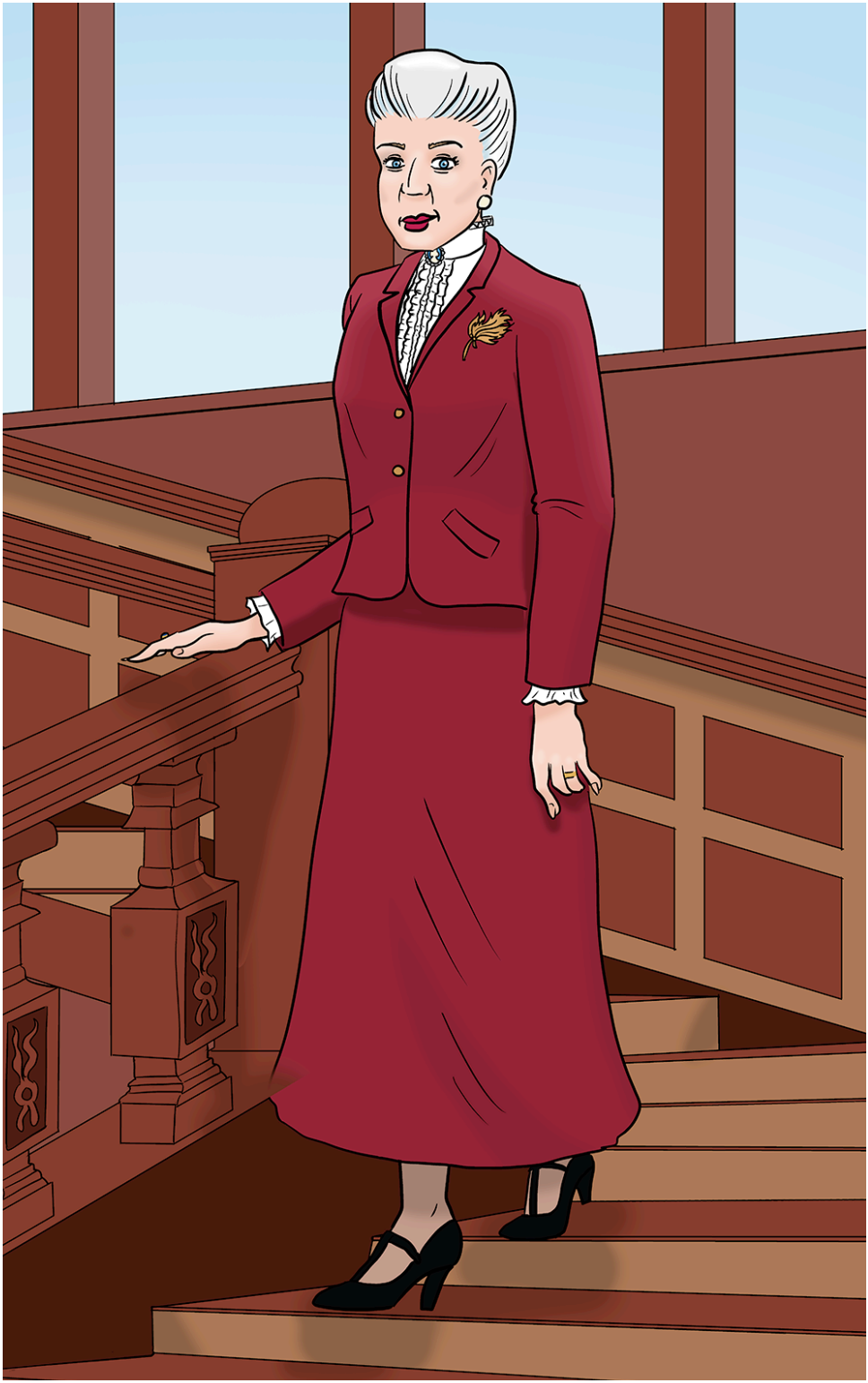
"I don't know, Davis."

"Hey, have I ever gotten you in trouble?"

"Constantly."

"Well... This is an exception. This is for Gramma."

"Right." Phillip checked his reflection in a nearby mirror. "This is for you, Gramma."



"...And your husband died, leaving you with the inherited right to the property and the house."

"Yes, that's correct," Phillip replied in his grandmother's voice. They were seated around the large dinner table, with Phillip at the head of the table. A small video camera was pointed at him.

The lawyer for Emerald Estates continued. "So, Mrs. Wrenshaw... Or do you prefer your maiden name?"

"I haven't been called by my maiden name in a very long time, dear," Phillip replied. He said the words carefully and precisely, with the elocution his grandmother was very particular about, being a former teacher. "Margaret Elizabeth Miller is a name I haven't used since I was in college."

"I see," the lawyer answered. "So, once you inherited the property, you of course signed documents and papers verifying that you have deed to the land?"

"My dear grandson Davy made sure I had," Phillip said, looking over at his nervous brother. "He's a lawyer, you know. Our family is very proud of him."

"And you can produce these documents?"

"They're in the den safe. Do want to see them?" Phillip said, shifting his weight before standing.

He was stopped before that happened. "No, no. Not necessary." The lawyer was testing Phillip, trying to find some gap in Margaret's knowledge or any signs of mental weakness. So far, he had not been able to exploit any kind of mistake or verbal gaffe. Phillip had been on point.

However, Phillip did have to make up a few things, like "remembering" he had signed all the proper documents, so far, he had avoided telling any whoppers.

"How many students do you have, currently?" The lawyer asked.

"Pardon?" Phillip replied.

"For the school you run here. I don't see any children."

Phillip's eyes slowly panned to his brother, who was hiding his ashamed eyes behind his fingers.

"My... School..." Phillip drew out the words to give himself a chance to think.

"Does anyone know where the bathroom is?" Said one of the men in the lawyer's group. He stood up and looked around. He was an older man, in a sweater vest and tweed jacket. His greying brown beard was cut neatly, and contrasted with his bald head.

"Let's pause for a moment," said the court representative. "Time for a quick five minute break."

Phillip stood up, grateful to be able to stretch his legs. "The bathroom is upstairs, first door to the left," he told the man who asked.

"Thank you very much," he said, with a subtle bow. "My name is Francis. Dr. Francis Pinkerton. Lovely to meet you, and I do hope we aren't too much trouble."

"A pleasure, doctor," Phillip replied, as he gestured toward the upstairs. He headed over to his brother and forcefully pulled him out of his chair and over to where they couldn't be heard. "School?"

"Shit, yeah..." Davis said. "I filed some papers that claimed Gramma was running a school here, a small, private school. The laws make it more difficult to seize property for a business, and especially a school. So, I figured, what the hell? I filled out all the paperwork. Boom. School."

"And you weren't going to tell me about this?" Phillip asked.

"I barely even remember it, actually." Davis said. "Just say that you don't have any students this term, yada, yada, hoping for some next term, yada, yada, yada. No big deal."

