

**C H E R Y L   L Y N N**

***I NEVER  
WANTED TO  
BE A WOMAN***

**“Politically Corrected” by Cheryl Lynn**

**Illustrations by Joe Six-Pack**

**A Crossed Fiction Story**



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## POLITICALLY CORRECTED

Margaret Abigail Wilkerson was a proud woman. Her hardened features were cut from granite, and her resolve was twice as solid. Margaret's heritage came from a long line of distinguished old-money conservative politicians. She had won re-election in a hotly contested race as a judge on the appeals court. She had her sights set on becoming the first woman supreme court justice in her state's history.

But in her cold, calculating, political mind, she had realized she could never garner the support she would need to be elevated to the top court. That was because her only living son had a knack for putting himself in the media spotlight, and it was giving her fits.

Michael Jordan, or "MJ" as he preferred, had become a major liability ever since he started college and fell in with very liberal campus organizations. It was his overt participation in liberal publicity stunts and public rallies that had made the last election such a close one. MJ's exploits had been used relentlessly against her by her opponents. His continued involvement in those ultra-liberal groups would surely destroy any chance she had to win a supreme court seat.

How a son of hers could ever see Lenin and Che Guevara as heroes, and the military and police as oppressors, was beyond her comprehension. If his late father, the Honorable Michael Jordan Wilkerson, could see his son now, he would surely be turning over in his grave. Her son was the only one on either side of the family that had turned so radical.

"Maybe it's my fault," she said, one late evening. She was swirling around two ice cubes in her drink, the clinking noise acting like a chime. Margaret spoke aloud, even though her one companion, a staffer, wasn't expected to answer her questions. "If I had spent more time with him, he wouldn't be doing the crazy things that he does. The adverse publicity from his arrest for spray painting that poor woman's fur almost cost me the last election. Gracious, it wasn't even a real fur! What's gotten into that boy, Carl?" The staffer remained silent, but attentive.

Margaret sipped her cocktail. "First, it's joining that radical left wing group on campus, then it's his army surplus clothing, free trade goods and strict vegan diet. What's gotten into that boy? Now I hear he was picked up for picketing city hall to free a murderer on death row."

She turned to face her sympathetic assistant. "Hell, I'm the one who sent that bastard to the executioner! If he continues behaving like this, I won't stand a chance of getting elected city dog catcher – let alone to the state supreme court." Margaret slammed her glass down on the table in a rare display of emotion. To anyone that knew her, they would have recognized that she was at the height of anger. "Damn it, he's embarrassed me for the last time. We have to do something!" she raged at her Chief of Staff.

Carl Perkins was a poster boy for the conservative right. He looked just like a revivalist preacher with a Rolex on his wrist. He was only twenty-four, but had



been with Margaret since he was eighteen. He started out as her intern but was now her Chief of Staff. He stood silent, listening to Margaret vent her rage and frustrations.

He was good at that – listening, making mental notes for further research, and whatever else he needed to do to help his mentor and best friend. MJ certainly was a liability and could derail any further ambitions his friend might have. MJ's continuing publicity stunts and aggravated assaults to further his ultra-liberal causes were seriously undermining Margaret's political future. He had heard rumors that the higher officials in the party were considering backing another for that position.

Carl agreed with his employer. His own future, as much as Margaret's, was in jeopardy. Something radical had to be done to curtail MJ's errant behavior – and soon.

"I'll look into it," he said.



1971 was a tumultuous year for the country. The hippie movement from the late sixties and the evolution of 'free love' had stressed society to the breaking point. The generational change was a chasm between the traditionalist and the non-conformists. Margaret had made the mistake of underestimating the effect it would all have on her family.

Her older son, Darrin, had been the strength of the Wilkerson lineage. When her dear husband Michael had died of a heart attack five years ago, in 1966, Darrin had become the new head of the household. Just like his father, he had enlisted in the military, becoming a pilot. He was flying his first mission in combat when his plane was shot down over Vietnam in 1968.

The loss of Darrin was heart-breaking for Margaret, and it left her with just her son, Michael Jordan Wilkerson the third. Maybe she should have anticipated that losing a father and brother so quickly would have driven MJ away, but she had no idea he would fall in with with hippies.

She first thought he was just going through a phase or sewing his wild oats, but he embraced the counter-culture more and more as the years went by. Now, with his long hair, unwashed clothes and impertinent attitude, Margaret had practically disavowed her son. She had long accepted that she was alone now, and that was just the way it was. Except for Carl and her servants, Margaret Wilkerson had no one to rely on or confide in, and was embracing the solitary role of matriarch.



A week later, Carl, being his fastidious self, had compiled a file on the "MJ" problem. He was ready and prepared when Margaret asked him for options regarding her son. "I've done the research, Margaret, and think I have a plan that will take care of our little situation. Of course, I did it on the Q.T. and no one can link this to us."

This sounded quite serious, and Margaret leaned forward to listen. "There is this... Woman..." Carl explained. "Mademoiselle Marie Labeaux – who came highly recommended. She's from some place deep in the bayous of Louisiana. Some very well-connected people say she can do the impossible, and perform honest-to-goodness miracles. Some, from personal experience, even say it's nothing less than magic."

"Magic?" Margaret said. "Pshaw."

"I've researched this thoroughly. I stand by my findings. It won't come cheap, but I think this woman can do what we need done."

"And what, pray tell, do we need done? Mesmerize the poor boy?"

"No. She's not going to make him a zombie, or any such thing. She does, however, have a potion, or drug of some sort, that will force him to do everything you say."

A skeptical glance from Margaret was met with a stern, confident return glance from Carl. She had learned to trust the man, even in situations like this. He had never let her down. Besides, the prospect of having her son completely under her control, to mold him into the man she wanted him to be, was too tempting to not consider Carl's plan.

"Another positive in using her is that there will be no paper trail. No prescriptions, no doctors," Carl said.

"Let me understand – you plan on giving my son some kind of magic potion that will make him do whatever I tell him? Don't make me laugh, Carl." Even though she trusted Carl implicitly, she needed to press the man. "Magic potions are just old wives tales and nothing more. Besides, if all his friends suspect he's been drugged, what happens when the truth comes out? Well, I don't think we even want to go there," Margaret replied with a laugh.

"You have a point, and I've anticipated this. An immediate change in his behavior and ideology will certainly draw attention and suspicion which we don't want. So I propose we change both his appearance and political views, but do it gradually," he suggested.

"Well of course, we have to get him out of army surplus and into Pierre Cardin, but how will that help?" Margaret countered.

"I was thinking that we have to go in a totally different direction. Giving MJ a haircut and cleaning him up, even done gradually, will attract attention which we don't want. What I'm suggesting is more radical, something so different that it will draw attention away from his political opinions. Something so shocking that his associates will focus only on his physical changes rather than his mental ones. By the time his liberal friends recognize his new political stance, they will assume it a natural course of events." Carl cocked an eyebrow as he looked at his employer. "How would you feel about having that daughter you have always wanted?" Carl finished.

"What?" she gasped, "You're proposing that I change him into a woman?"

"Yes, I know that sounds as ridiculous to me as it does to you, but I've been assured that it can be done. Remember, he will have to do whatever you tell him, no matter what. He will resist it, but he will have no choice but to obey. With his cooperation, and the help of a few experts, I think MJ will make a nice, if not beautiful woman in time."

"A daughter?" Margaret asked herself. True, she had intended on making MJ into the man of the family, but her own desires for a daughter were stronger. She had always wished for just one girl to raise, to follow in her footsteps. When her husband died, that possibility died with him. To have the chance once again was irresistible to Margaret's mind.

"He's not that tall or big, a little help from a surgeon, and his face will be quite feminine," Carl stated.

"What a strange concept... I always wished that I had a daughter but this idea of yours... You said he would resist it. That drug won't change his mindset, will it? It will just make him do what I say... I don't know Carl... I don't know if I

like the idea of him being changed like that.." You could almost see the gears turning in her mind. "But I've done everything in my power to put him on the path of becoming a Wilkerson man, the spine and strength of our family line, which he has rejected." She tapped her chin as she continued to contemplate the idea. It was fascinating, but surely, it wasn't truly possible. Margaret felt that reason and common sense told her not to entertain the notion. But she couldn't resist it. "What you are suggesting is so..."

"Margaret, I know it's harsh, but I don't know of another way. If he's allowed to continue on the same path, you can toss any aspirations of higher office out the window. So what if he doesn't like it?" Carl pulled out a long, typewritten list of arrests. "Look what his behavior and lifestyle has cost you and the family. How many times have I had to sit idly by while you cried your eyes out over something he did? How many more times does he have to cost the family their dignity and harm their legacy? So what if he doesn't like wearing designer dresses instead of tie-dyes? Maybe in time he will grow to love the feeling of delicate lingerie and beautiful gowns. There are a lot of men out there that already do."

"But a woman? A daughter?" Margaret asked, staring off into the air.

"Think of the liability. If we merely altered his mindset and appearance to become a handsome eligible bachelor, his reputation would be in tatters. He would be seen as a sell-out or worse, throwing away his values for money and luxury. What decent woman would marry a man like that? Think of the way the press would treat a man with that kind of history. How would it reflect on you? No, I don't see where we have any choice in this. We need him to become an entirely different person. So what do you say?"

"You make a good argument, but seem to be forgetting one thing. Having a liberal son is bad enough, but wouldn't it look just as bad having a transsexual son? I don't think our conservative friends would look very approvingly on that kind of change," she countered.

"No one will know. True, his closest friends may recognize that he has changed, but to everyone else, he will disappear, replaced by a daughter."

"How, Carl? My friends and associates know I have one living son and no daughters. They would never accept him as a woman."

"Margaret, with all due respect, you haven't been very forthcoming with your friends and colleagues about the family for some time. Besides, your reputation is unquestionable. If you merely assert that you have no idea where MJ is, or what he is up to, they'll believe you. The presence of a daughter can be easily explained as her having lived in a foreign boarding school for several years."

No, it wasn't the most convincing story, but the intoxicating prospect of having a daughter of her very own got the best of Margaret. "Carl, we've been friends for a long time and I trust your judgment." She took a moment to steel her nerves and come to a decision. "Besides paying this woman for her potion, what else do I have to do?"

"All she needs is either a lock of his hair or nail clippings," he responded with a laugh.



Back in his office, Carl exhaled and then smiled a satisfied grin. Margaret had approved his plan. He reached over to the humidor sitting on the mahogany desk, took out a cigar, lit it and sat back. It was time to celebrate. The large, overstuffed leather chair made him look smaller than he was. He was five-nine and weighed one twenty, but his intellect and determination made him stand out in any crowd. Even slight of stature, he was plenty intimidating. He had been Margaret's Chief of Staff for several years and fiercely loyal to her. He initially met Margaret working as an intern and he was impressed by her intelligence and forthright manner. For her part, Margaret recognized his talent and brilliance as well. They got along so well that after he graduated first in his law class, she hired him for a permanent position.

What Margaret didn't know at the time was that Carl was a closet homosexual. It wasn't until Carl became her Chief of Staff, and being paid handsomely, that she found out. He came to her late one afternoon with tears in his eyes and handed her an envelope. Inside were incriminating photos and a letter demanding payment. He was being blackmailed. He confessed everything to her, expecting to be fired on the spot, with poor references that guaranteed he would never work in the field he loved again.

Instead, she issued a bench warrant for the arrest and confinement of the man responsible for the blackmail. It was an open and shut case. The man's finger prints were all over the contents and envelope, the letter was in his handwriting, and a full confession was obtained. Justice was dispensed quickly and quietly. In return, all Margaret asked was that he refrained from any further sexual contact with other men while in her employ. It would be difficult, but not impossible. He agreed, though – to keep his job.

As a result, Carl would do anything she asked without question or qualm. Finding a way to stop her son's destructive ways became an all-consuming job for him. He discretely made inquiries, checked out leads and finally came up with a solution. It was drastic and certainly questionable, but his research had proven beyond a shadow of a doubt it would work. Not only that, but it would provide Carl with an opportunity. If he played his cards right, he could retain his loyalty, keep his pledge, while getting a sexual partner. It had been very hard maintaining his promise to Margaret, and now he saw a way out. MJ was a handsome youth and would make a very passable, obedient woman – someone to fill Carl's aching needs and at the same time assured his position within the family.



MJ sat on the bed, his fingers gently stroking Saffron's back as her head bobbed up and down between his legs. They had just returned from a planning meeting where the final steps on a raid to free the animals kept in the school's



labs were made. Planning and executing such actions were a huge turn-on for the both of them. They would free the animals the first day of summer break, figuring there would be so much confusion with everyone moving out, they could easily escape. Now MJ was getting his reward for developing such a bold plan.

MJ met Saffron the first week during freshman orientation. She was a Native American with long blue-black hair, high cheek bones, flawless light copper skin and a body to die for. They were sitting beside each other in the large auditorium listening to some official from the school. She was wearing skin tight black leather leggings and multi-colored sleeveless tie-dyed baby doll



blouse. He was dressed in designer tan colored slacks, white dress shirt, blue silk tie and navy cashmere jacket. Both were obviously from totally different ends of the social spectrum.

It was MJ's lustful male mind that dictated his initial desires, but as time went on, he came to love Saffron's passion and intensity. Her love of the environment and hatred of injustice had a profound effect upon him. At first, he just followed along, participating in minor protests about one inconsequential thing or another. However, as his relationship with her deepened, he began to see things from her perspective.

At first, Saffron Yellow Leaf thought MJ to be nothing more than another rich spoiled kid and led him along just to fuck with his mind. She quickly discovered that he had plenty of money and didn't mind parting with it. She didn't go out with him for monetary gain, but it didn't hurt that he could fund some of her protest groups. She got a kick out of seeing this rich conservative boy funding her liberal agenda. He was attractive, in a cute way, plus he didn't try to place any demands upon her. What really turned her on was mind-fucking this naive and gullible rich kid.

"You know nothing, Michael Jordan," she would tell him time and time again as she supplanted his conservative beliefs with her own. From that day on, MJ was never seen in his sports jacket and slacks again. Ratty cords, frayed jackets, army fatigues and sandals became his new look.

Saffron found that in time, using her sexuality and MJ's gullibility mixed with his obvious love, she changed his views and obtained his enthusiastic support. It didn't hurt that he had a talented tongue and accepted her demand that oral sex was as far as she was willing to go. While he was obviously in love with her, she would never marry outside her race. He was nothing more than a means to achieve her goals. Once he served his purpose, she would dump him and move on.

The last day of term, MJ sat typing furiously on his typewriter, writing a manifesto called "The Man Must Go," ranting about the inhumanity of caging poor helpless animals for so-called research. He was brash and gave information about the pending raid. Feeling confident that by the time it was published in the student newspaper, it would be too late.

He was right – to a point. He forgot that his submission to the paper could easily be sent on to the campus police. They didn't get half the cages open before security pulled up and they had to make a mad dash for the exits. They all got out but by the skin of their teeth. Rodger Goodsbee, their electronics expert, had disabled all the security alarms, but The Man might have gotten a look at some of them. It was decided that it would be best if they all scrambled out in different directions, go home for summer break and lie low.

MJ didn't want to go home to his chauvinistic, capitalist pig family – as he now thought of them. He especially didn't want to be around his mother, who was the personification of The Man. While in school, his grandfather's trust paid for all his expenses, but once out on summer break, that access ceased. He didn't have any other choice.

After a year of college and his persistent radical activity, he knew his mother was incensed with his behavior, but would allow him to come home. He had received a letter from her Chief of Staff saying as much. The fact that Carl had sent it, reinforced just how much he had infuriated her. Rodger had offered to let him stay with him during the summer, but he didn't want to share a dinky basement apartment. Rodger was a good comrade, but a real pig and his apartment was a sty. The same could be said about his other male friends.

Another thing that didn't even cross his mind was getting a job. He had never worked a day in his life, and once he reached twenty-five, he would receive his grandfather's legacy. He was too immersed in the rich and famous lifestyle. Giving up starched shirts and ties was what appealed to him, but living a common life most certainly did not. The very idea of having to live like Rodger and the rest of his cadre sent shivers up his back. It was the under-privileged lifestyle that made him become a hippie. Seeing the deprivation in their lives and wanting to improve their happenstance was one thing, but giving up on his luxuries was another. His current-day heroes like the Kennedys and James Dean certainly didn't give up their comforts, so why should he?

Giving out money to support the campus' liberal organizations was easy. It was his grandfather's anyway, and the amount was negligible compared to the whole. It fed his weak ego to be the leader of his little group of activists. Having Saffron as his girl was the real bonus in his campus activities, she was uniquely exotic, and the desire he saw in other men's eyes when they saw her fed his ego even more.

As he headed for home, in his red Aston Martin sports car he had been hiding off campus, he had high hopes that next semester Saffron would finally give in to his desires. If he and Rodger could figure a way to break into the college's files then maybe she would let him bust her cherry. She had given him enough hints, so with that thought in mind, he drove home.

He arrived before his mother had come home from work and felt a tinge of shame when he let Ames, the butler, carry his bags. Ames and his wife Amy, the cook, had been with the family ever since MJ could remember. Despite all his rhetoric, it felt good to have someone carry his bags and unpack for him while he chilled. It had been a long, tiring drive, so that was his justification for letting Ames do his job.

His room was just as he left it. The model planes, the plaques he had won in prep school, and all his baseball equipment were all still there. The large walk-in closet contained all his designer clothing and imported shoes. He lingered a moment in the closet fingering a blue silk dress shirt.

"I kind of miss these, but shit – I have a new image to maintain. Can't let mother think I'm coming back into the fold," he thought.



“Alright, Mademoiselle Labeaux, tell me exactly what you have for me,” Margaret said as the elderly woman sat down beside her on the office couch. She had been waiting several days for a visit from the woman. Carl assured her that the Mademoiselle needed time to prepare her potion, but the wait had worn Margaret thin. She was more anxious than she had been in years.

Mademoiselle Labeaux was wearing a blue/gray gingham below-the-knee-length dress, white knitted shawl around her shoulders, slightly humpbacked with age, her hair was covered in a snood, wrinkled but intelligent looking. Her piercing black eyes glinted with life despite how old she appeared. With gnarled hands she held out a small brown bottle.



“This, Madam, is what you asked of me,” the old woman said, in her heavy Louisiana drawl. “I make it with special herbs ‘n mushrooms found only in the deepest darkest places in de bayou. Den I puts my spell on it.”

Margaret took only a moment to realize she was not dealing with a witch, but a genuine voodoo priestess. The Mademoiselle wasn’t like the ones she had seen in the movies. This woman was threatening and genuinely frightening.

The old woman continued. “One tablespoon twice a day until it all done gone. Da first person to tell dem what to do after dat first dose will have da power to make whoever done take it do as you done toll dem ta do. My potion is strong but need to take it all ta be permanent, oui?” She said, smiling with shockingly white teeth. “Now you have my payment?”

Margaret looked over to Carl who was sitting nearby. He nodded his head and handed over a thick envelope. The old woman handed over the bottle, stood, and walked out of the room.

“Your honor, it’s as she says. I think you will be more than satisfied with the outcome,” Carl said to Margaret.

“That woman gives me the shivers,” she said, once the Mademoiselle was gone. “Did you see the look in her eyes? They were so intense. I don’t believe in magic, but now I’m not so sure. Carl, are you sure we are doing the right thing?”

“She’s no fraud, Margaret. The bit about casting a spell, the need for hair or nails may be just a ruse – but I still wouldn’t want to cross her. What she gave you is a strong natural psychotropic drug. I had a sample she gave me analyzed.”

Carl picked up his “MJ” file and opened it to a document he needed to reference. “The only thing the chemist could come up with is that it won’t kill and is similar to a powerful class of pharmaceuticals that work on brain functions. He indicated that it is a strong psychotropic, amongst other things.”

“Other things?” Margaret asked.

“The lab report wasn’t specific. The chemist said he had never seen anything like it before. Mind-altering drugs, genetic material, retro-viruses...”

“Is it safe?” Margaret asked.

“I’ve got fifteen confirmed cases where people took this potion. No one has suffered any adverse effects.”

“Very well Carl, I trust you, let’s get this done. He should be home by now, if he’s coming,” she said.



MJ was sitting at his desk reading the latest newsletter from the ALU – the Animal Liberation Underground. He was happy to see a short article about the release of the animals at his university. It praised the unknown saviors that had the courage to ‘liberate the unjustly incarcerated animals.’ He looked up when there was a soft knock on his door followed by Amy coming into his room. She had a tray with some fresh-baked cookies and a tea service.

“Master Michael, I thought you might like a bit of something before dinner,” she said, placing the tray down on his bedside table.

“Yea... Yeah, thanks,” he replied, not looking up from his typing.

He was a bit surprised by the fresh baked cookies. The last time they talked, he had given Amy holy hell for daring to cook meat. That nasty incident occurred on his first and last visit home during the Thanksgiving holidays. He was hungry, and the cookies were very good, but the tea had a slightly ‘off’ taste. He drank it anyway, as the peanut butter cookies dried out his mouth. He finished off the last of the cookies and tea, then turned his attention to his typewriter. His intension was to write a response to the article, but suddenly, he felt very tired. Deciding that he could write a response later, he went to go take a nap.

Sometime later, there was a loud, sharp knock on his door. He looked up, glanced at his bedside clock and was surprised to see that it was nearing seven

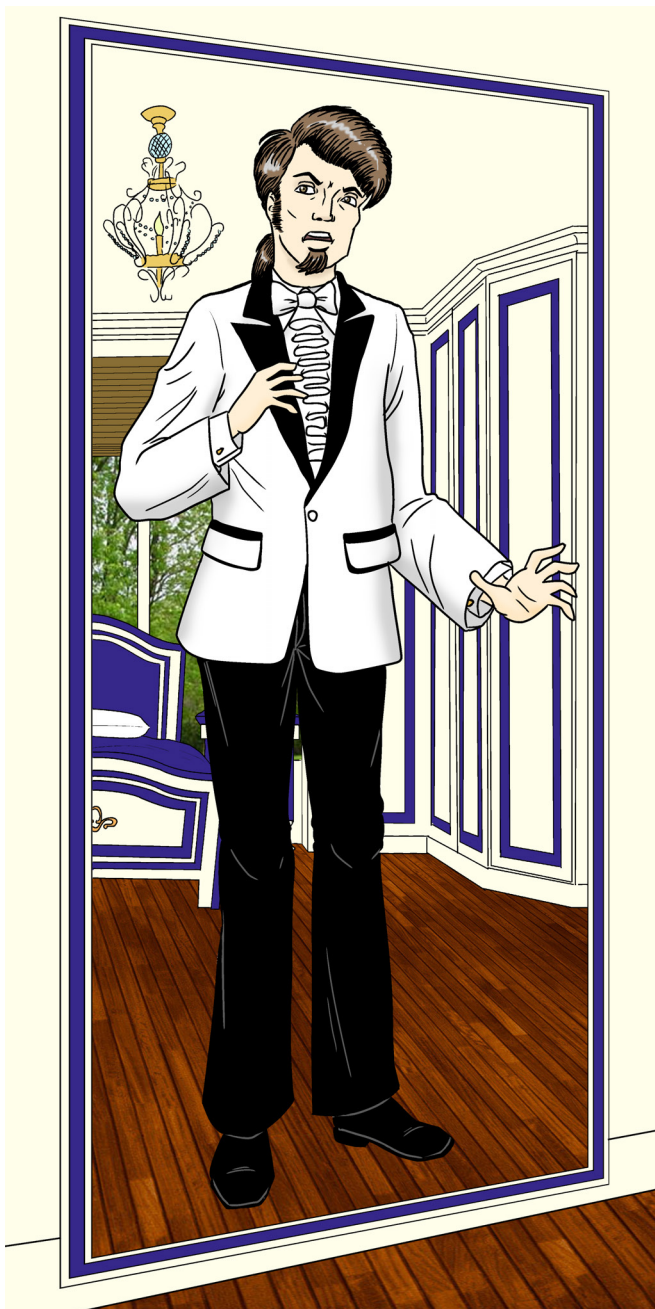
o'clock. His head felt fuzzy as he sat up, just when the door opened. It was his mother.

He hadn't seen her in a while, but little had changed in her appearance. She still carefully maintained her image of authority and integrity. Her clothes were expensive and conservative. Not a hair was out of place and her expression didn't betray any emotion.

"Darling, it's nice to finally have you home, where you belong," she said. "I want you to get dressed for dinner tonight, as we are having guests to celebrate your arrival. It will be a formal dinner and I insist. I expect you to be dressed accordingly." Her message was short, terse and to the point – then she was gone.

MJ got up, went to the bathroom to shower and clean up. Without realizing it, he then bypassed his duffel bag full of his usual clothes and headed to his closet. He stood before the full length mirror tugging the black bow tie into place. He was wearing his tuxedo with a stiff white dress shirt and black alligator Italian shoes. His long hair was tied off in a low pony tail. As he looked at his reflection, he paused, and shook his head, confused.

*Why am I wearing this? I... I shouldn't be dressed like this!* He





thought, as he turned from the mirror and headed to the dinning room. He didn't understand why he had just put on these stuffy clothes, and while he was trying to figure that out, he didn't realize he was already in the dining room.

There were about a dozen people milling around, socializing, and most with a drink in their hand. All were dressed for dinner. The women were wearing cocktail dresses and the men in tuxedos. When MJ entered, they stopped whatever they were doing and looked his way.

"What the fuck you looking at?" he snapped, irritated by wearing a tuxedo and having them stare at him.

"Michael Jordan! Is that anyway to speak to our guests? Behave yourself and watch your language," his mother demanded.

To his great surprise, he couldn't tell her to "fuck off" like he wanted to. Instead he promptly apologized. Confused, he turned and went back to his room.

There, he quickly stripped off the offending attire and went to his typewriter. Writing, he hoped, would shake him out of whatever strange compulsions he was feeling.

Amy found him there several hours later, sitting in his silk boxers, typing away on the keys. "Master Michael, I thought you might like something to eat since you didn't stay for dinner," she said placing a tray on his bedside table.

"Look bitch, how many times have I told you to call me MJ? Now get the fuck out and leave me alone." That's what he wanted to say, but all that came out was, "Thanks Amy." His mother's order to watch his mouth and be nice made him comply, despite his desires.

MJ felt a little guilty after she left as Amy was one of the down-trodden, unwashed masses he was supposed to support. However, she was different. She actually enjoyed playing the obedient servant to his mother. She had made that very plain to him when he had tried to explain his ideology last Thanksgiving. She also told him exactly where he could put his notions. Her husband was the same. No matter how strongly he argued his points, Ames rebuffed him all the same.

*She's just another brainwashed puppet of society. You can't help someone who doesn't want help,* he thought, after that conversation.

Over the course of the next couple of weeks, MJ found himself doing more and more of the things he detested. He began dressing not only for dinner, but for regular daily activities. He soon found himself dressed in designer slacks, shirts and shoes on a daily basis. For a trip to the yacht club, he wore his white slacks, blue long-sleeved shirt, blue socks, white alligator loafers and baby blue long-sleeved cardigan draped over his back with the arms tied loosely in front.

With each passing day, try as he might, disobeying his mother's instructions became harder and harder. MJ Didn't understand how he came to do the things he was doing, but he had come to believe it was the stress of coming home that was affecting him.

During the first week, when he found himself dressed in stale and ostentatious outfits he was able to change back into his old clothing and revert to his

old habits. He could rant and curse about his family and friends being capitalist pigs and tyrants – but it was becoming harder and harder. Mentally, he knew something strange was going on, and it scared him, but resistance seemed futile.

He could hardly believe it, but he no longer had complete confidence he was in control of his life, or even his thoughts. With each passing day his mental anguish and fear grew, but whatever his mother suggested, he did.



“Your honor,” Carl said, addressing Margaret, “it’s been two weeks and MJ is dressing and behaving as you wish. I think it’s quite obvious the potion is working, and therefore, I think it’s time to go to the next logical stage in the plan.”

Margaret was uncharacteristically enthusiastic. “Carl, I can’t begin to tell you how happy I am seeing Michael like his old self.” She almost smiled, she was so pleased.

They were in Margaret’s office, late at night, with the curtains closed and the lights dim. Only the yellow light from Margaret’s desk lamp lit the room. Carl took his MJ file and flipped to a new page, from which he started to read. “His sudden change is attracting attention like we surmised. It’s causing a number of your acquaintances to question what’s going on. I’ve had several people ask me if you are drugging or brainwashing him.” He briefly paused to glance up above the page to measure his employer’s expression. It was stony, as usual. “Again, we expected this, and I’ve told them he’s struggling within himself. I’ve implied that he is seeing a psychologist.”

“Very well,” Margaret replied.

Carl continued. “With your permission, an anonymous source will reveal that his psychological issue was the cause of his rebellious behavior. Once that information is leaked out, it should divert attention away from him being drugged, and we can move on to the next step. I just want to verify this is where you want to go,” Carl said.

“Inside, I want to keep him like this – but you’re right. People are starting to ask embarrassing questions.” Margaret’s reluctance was only visible by the way she was fiddling with the cap of a pen she held in her hands. “We can’t let them think that I would drug him into submission. There are outside forces that would try to save him if given the chance. We can’t afford that happening, so, yes, let’s continue as we originally agreed,” she said, with a resigned sigh.



When he wasn’t fighting his strange impulses, MJ would be sitting at his typewriter dressed in his boxers and undershirt. Most of that time was used to write his treatises and manifestos on animal rights, materialism, and the oppression



of the industrial military complex. His mother knew what he was doing, but didn't want to stop it just yet. Although she also preferred that he had on something besides his underwear. Again, not wanting to rush his transformation, he was not told otherwise.

Ranting on while partially dressed was an outlet for his inner frustrations. Having to dress and behave like a true gentleman was making him very uncomfortable. He obeyed every one of his mother's suggestions, and he still couldn't figure out why he would do it. Another thing that bothered him was that he couldn't tell his friends. Every time he started to write about his odd compulsion to conform to elitist behavior, he had a mental block.

One evening, Margaret entered his room and gave him a book. "Darling, you seem stressed lately. I want you to read this. I understand that it will help you relax," she said.

MJ took it and looked at the book, then up at his mother. "What?" he asked, confused. "This is a blank book." He flipped through the pages, seeing nothing written on them.

"Take another look, it's a book of poetry. From that poet you like... What is his name?"

"Ginsberg?" MJ asked.

Margaret agreed, without knowing who that was. "Yes, that's it."

MJ looked at the book he held, and realized it wasn't a blank book at all, but a rare first edition of Ginsberg's poems. He opened the book again, and saw the pages were no longer blank, but filled with poetry. The effect of the potion was that strong on his mind. To anyone else, it was a book with untouched white pages, but the spell had forced him to see what he was told to see.

After a moment of doubt, MJ just accepted the book as real. He was powerless to resist. "Well, thank you, I guess," he said to his mother. "This is unexpected."

Margaret proceeded only after she was sure that the plan was working and her son was under the influence of her suggestion. "Oh, I know you like poetry, even if it isn't exactly my sort of thing. After all, they're just poems."

"Read the book dear. Sit back with a nice drink before you retire for the night," she replied then left the room.

Just as she commanded, MJ was compelled to open the book immediately and start to read. In fact, he couldn't stop himself from reading. "What the fu..." he wanted to say the word "fuck" but couldn't. Cuss words had long become his descriptive adjectives and he used them freely but now he couldn't even say the word "hell." His mother had insisted that he refrain of speaking such vile language.

He ordered tea through the intercom, and was drinking it as he read through the book. What he had failed to notice when he had the chance, though, was that the book wasn't completely blank. There were hand-written lines on the first page, which he read as if they were just another one of his imaginary poems.

“You will heed your mother and crave her advice.”

“You hate your body as it is. You hate that ugly body hair. You hate your rough and blemished skin. You hate your unruly hair and ragged nails. You hate your body shape.”

“You want a smooth hairless body and soft smooth skin. You want your hair to shine and have body. You want your finger and toe nails to always look their best. You want a thin waist and rounded hips.”

“You love the smell of flowers, berries and spice. You want those fragrances to be a part of you.”

“You hate showers. You love a leisurely bubble bath where you can relax and smell the flowers.”

“You will heed your mother’s advice and seek it out.”

He read the lines over and over again, unable to comprehend them as instructions, but at the same time, the words were burnt into his mind as if they were from a branding iron.



The next morning MJ got up feeling very refreshed. Normally, he woke in a daze until he had his first cup of coffee. In the bathroom, he saw his reflection and was disturbed by it for some reason. He shook his head, trying to clear it but the image still bothered him. After his shower, he lathered up his face and began shaving what little fuzz he had accumulated. He had tried for the last nine months to grow a beard, hoping to look more like his rebel heroes but it was so thin and patchy that he had given up. In two quick passes of the razor, it was gone. So too, his masculine sideburns.



In mid-stroke, he stopped, gazed into the mirror and had the strangest thought. *I should shave my legs and armpits.* But then, realizing how odd the thought was, he shook his head and continued shaving.

Back in his room, he saw his reflection in the full length mirror as he held the boxers he planned on wearing that day. Again, he felt very uncomfortable seeing his hairy chest and arms. Shaking his head in confusion at the weird idea of having a hairy body, he held the boxers up to his nose.

*Ugh, these stink. Maybe I picked up a dirty pair by mistake,* he thought, then lifted an arm and took another sniff. “No, it’s me that smells. Did I forget to use my deodorant? Maybe it’s my aftershave? It doesn’t smell right. Can aftershave go bad? Man, this is so weird.”

For the rest of the day, MJ would often raise his arm and take a sniff. He felt very uncomfortable for reasons he couldn’t fathom, but shrugged it off. He was dressed neatly in fashionable slacks and collared shirt like his mother demanded. He had taken his shower – so why did he feel like he was still dirty?

*Maybe I should ask mother?* He thought, but again shook off the idea.

It was only three days later that MJ finally couldn’t resist the urge to get rid of all his body hair. In the bathroom, he took his razor and tried to shave his legs. It was not only a frustrating experience, but a painful one as the razor kept clogging up, and the sharp blade left bloody nicks in his flesh. Giving up, he did the only thing he could think of. He wrapped a towel around his waist and went to find his mother.

“Mother could I ask you something?” He asked, catching her coming from her room.

“Of course darling but please, call me mummy. ‘Mother’ sounds so formal don’t you think?” She replied. Pull that towel up to cover your chest properly. Now what can I do for you?”

“Ye... Yes of course, mummy,” he answered, while pulling the towel up as requested.

*This doesn’t feel right but I can’t stop myself from doing what she tells me,* he thought. *I’m too old to call her mummy – and why do I have to cover my chest? This is all so confusing!*

He stood in his bathroom, hopping from one foot to the other as the foul-smelling cream covering him from his nose to his toes burned. His mummy had given him explicit grooming instructions along with the strange cream. She also saw to it that he had a plentiful supply of sweet-smelling body lotion, bath salts, oils, shampoo, conditioner and lavender-scented talc. He kept glancing at the watch he placed on the counter top as the minute hand seemed to have stopped.

*Man, this stuff is really beginning to burn and itch... But mummy said I had to leave it on for a full fifteen minutes,* he thought. *It reeks of rotten eggs but I only have a minute to go...*

When the time was finally up, he stepped into the bathtub, which he had filled almost to overflowing with fragrant bubbles. Using a natural sponge he

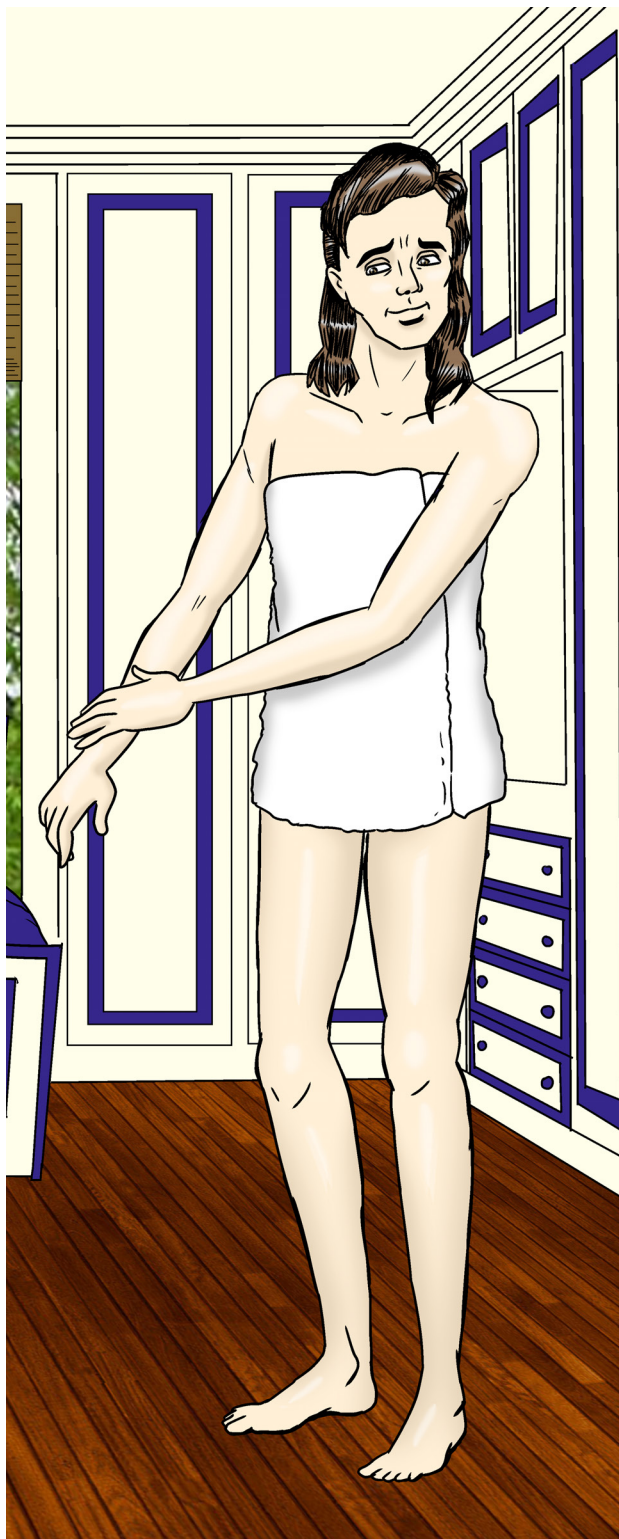
happily removed the offensive cream. With his bath completed, he massaged a floral-scented moisturizer on, then used the lavender-scented talc to dust his body. All just like his mummy had told him to. Finished, and feeling much cleaner, he examined his reflection.

MJ admired himself, standing naked in front of his mirror. He was totally hairless from his lower face down. His body smelled of lavender and his long hair of strawberries, and he now felt much more at ease as he twisted back and forth before the mirror.

"It's all gone, and I smell so sweet," he said looking into the mirror. "I can't believe I let all that ugly hair grow on my body. That new body lotion and talc really helped get rid of that sour smell, too."

His pleasant mood turned when he focused his attention to his head. "Now I have to do something with my hair. It's such a mess, maybe I should get it styled like she suggested. Mummy said I needed to brush it one hundred times. Mummy had some really good recommendations."

He was stepping into his boxers when he had another thought. *What the heck? You look and smell*



*like a girl! Why did you do that? You dummy!* Just as quickly as the thought formed, it was gone.

At breakfast, he asked his mummy about styling his hair and doing something about his ragged-looking nails. She smiled and speed dialed her hairdresser. In less than an hour, MJ was sitting in Madge's styling chair getting the works. His well below-the-collar length hair was trimmed to remove split ends. With his brown hair neatly cut, Madge lightened it to a softer chestnut color and then styled into a feathered look. As he was sitting under the dryer, a young oriental girl came over and went to work on his hands and feet. She began to polish his fingernails, when he pulled his hands back in surprise.

"Let the girl do her work, dear," Margaret said, scolding her son. He gave his hands back, and watched as acrylic extensions were glued to his nails, which were shaped into ovals and then painted a smoky brick red. His toenails were varnished the same color.

Finished with the hair dryer, Madge brushed it out, combing his bangs from right to left such that it draped down almost touching his left brow. Next she parted it down the middle and brushed the hair twisting under at the ends. The style she created was for easy maintenance, and cupped his chin to give his face a more feminine look. She added a bit of hairspray and handed him a hand mirror.

Initially, MJ felt a tinge of fear at the image before him. "Darling that looks marvelous on you, don't you just love it. I really do like the color but you must thank Madge. She did a wonderful job," Margaret said.

When his mummy said that, his fear melted away, replaced with happiness. "Miss Madge, it looks absolutely beautiful. Thank you so much. I just love it," he replied dutifully.

Later that evening, he looked into his mirror, his hand barely touching the side of his head. "Oh Jesus! Ho... How did I let this happen?" MJ was distraught and puzzled over what had been done.



“My... My hair looks like some girl’s style an... And my nails... They’re long and painted. What’s gotten into me?” He tugged at the hair as if he thought it was going to come off. “I want to cut it all off – and my nails too.”

But every time he reached for the scissors or clippers, something distracted him. *But Mummy likes it*, he thought, and he couldn’t bear to do it.

Giving up, he put on his pajamas and went to his typewriter. He was typing clumsily due to his long nails, ranting on about his causes when his mummy came into the room. She watched silently over his shoulder for a moment or two before interrupting his concentration.

“Darling, don’t you think that kind of message inflammatory,” she said. “Writing such things only brings sorrow into the world. Wouldn’t it be much more constructive if you only had nice things to say about people? Most people are good at heart and if you are nice to them, they will be nice to you.”

MJ stopped typing, and wanted desperately to tell his mother to get the hell out of his room. But somehow, he just couldn’t find the words. Besides, his mother was talking and he wouldn’t dare interrupt. “Remember,” she continued, “flattery will get you more than being mean or nasty. I want people to think of you as sweet-natured, and not some bully.”

Margaret paused to read some more of what her son had written. “You should revise this to be more positive. Remember, your place is not to question authority, it is to follow.”

“Oh, and when you send it in to be published, don’t forget to send them a new picture. I think your friends would love to see your new hair style. Here, I brought you another book that I think you will really enjoy. Read it tonight when you go to bed,” she said.

She handed him the book then left him sitting with a confused look on his face. Shaking his head to clear the fog, he started to type when he paused and looked at what he had already written.

“Oh my goodness! Did I write this? How horrible! Mummy was right, if anyone in the administration reads this about their research program, they wouldn’t be very happy. Worse yet, they might even stop funding it and put all those people out of work. Gosh, that wouldn’t be good and it would be my fault.” He ripped the paper out of the carriage, crumpled into a ball and tossed it away. Once he had revised what he had written, to a more positive comment about all the good scientific research resulted in, he attached a new photo and sealed it in an envelope to be mailed.



When MJ was ready for bed, he picked up the new book his mother had left him. “Love Poems,” the title read. But he was the only person who saw it. Strangely, his mother had not told him what the book was about. It was his own subconscious which decided what the title was and what was inside.

In fact, it was the same blank book he had read yesterday, but he thought it was different. He believed it was filled page-to-page with flowery, elegant poems about love. Just like yesterday, He never noticed there were new messages written for him to read.

“You will do what your mother tells you happily and enthusiastically.”

“You hate wearing anything too masculine.”

“You don’t like the rough image masculine clothing gives you.”

“You have a gentle, sweet nature.”

“You will feel better about yourself if you dress less masculine.”

“You want a softer look.”

“You will do what your mother tells you happily and enthusiastically.”

That next morning, as he stood before the mirror in his room fully dressed, he felt ill at ease. He was wearing navy blue slacks and a eggshell white pullover, collared shirt looking like any other privileged college student. The longer he looked, the more uncomfortable he felt. Again, with a shake of his head, he dismissed his feelings and went to breakfast.

By the fourth day, MJ couldn’t stand it any longer and went to see his mummy. “Mummy I don’t feel comfortable wearing these clothes. I think I would look a lot better if I had some... Some softer looking styles,” he said.

“You know, darling, I was going to suggest the very same thing. Your clothing is much too masculine for that new hair style. I believe Anna’s Boutique is open and we can go there. She has some lovely clothing that would look tremendous on you,” she replied.

The shopping trip took up most of the morning. When they returned home, he was wearing black crepe de chine flare legged slacks and light blue man-styled polyester blouse. On his feet were thin black nylon socks and blue snake skin loafers with a slightly raised heel and rounded toe. The rest of his purchases were similar.

Since most of his new slacks didn’t have pockets, he bought a black leather satchel with a thin shoulder strap. He didn’t seem to interpret his bag as a purse, even though that’s exactly what it was.

His mummy didn’t like the way his boxers bunched up in his new slacks, so new underwear was added to the purchases. Instead of boxers, he now had a large assortment of colorful nylon briefs and thin-strapped square-necked silk undershirts.

He had to admit that the soft nylon and silk felt wonderful against his skin. However, his mind was screaming in outrage as he examined his reflection. “I look like the biggest faggo... Fairy. Why can’t I stop all this? I don’t want to look or dress this way but I can’t seem to help myself. Whatever mo... Mummy tells me, I do it. I need to write Saffron and see if she can help me.”

At his typewriter, he typed his message, and attached some Polaroids. “Saffron, something is terribly wrong. I need your advice and help. Do you think I





should wear my gold top with these tan linen slacks? Or would I look cuter in this darling baby blue one?"

He sat back and read what he had typed. *What the heck, that's not what I wanted to say! The 'terribly wrong' is the only correct part of what I was thinking. Why can't I say what I'm thinking? Gosh, I can't send her this,* he thought, as he licked the envelope shut. He then laid it on the desk for the help to mail for him.



A few weeks later, MJ didn't have the foggiest idea why he was with his mummy at the yacht club's afternoon tea. The male members of the club never attended this gathering, it was strictly for the ladies. That day, his mummy had entered his room shortly after lunch and told him to put something extra nice on as they were going out to tea. He couldn't object.

At the time, he had been attempting to write a scathing article about conditions at the local zoo. Instead of writing about the conditions, he rambled about how cute the animals were. "And the baby lions were just the cutest little darlings. All balls of cuddly fur with big orange eyes," he read with disgust.

*What's wrong with me? I can't send this garbage in for publishing,* he thought. *My comrades will think I've totally lost my mind. Maybe I have, seeing what I*



*actually wrote. It's nothing but fluff that only an air-head would say."* And then, he licked the stamp for the envelope and left it to be sent.

Now, here he was with his mummy sitting with a bunch of old fogies having afternoon tea. He was wearing his powder blue pants suit and plum-colored poly shirt with a small floppy bow at the neck, his hair neatly arranged and lightly set with hairspray.

When he complained about going, his mother told him to be polite and follow along with the other women. As much as he tried to stop himself, MJ's little pinkie stuck straight out from the small tea cup's handle taking a dainty sip. Instead of gulping down the tea cookie like he normally would, he took small nibbles. He sat ramrod straight, knees pressed together and tucked back under the chair.

He had very little to say during the meeting as the women talked mostly of clothing styles, the men in their lives and gossiped about the women who had not shown up. The inane chatter made him want to scream and pound his fists but the smile never left his lips. He did comment on how precious the new baby lions were at the zoo. MJ couldn't believe that comment came out of his mouth. What he wanted to rant about was the small cage the pride was kept in.

That night, mummy gave him another 'new' book. This one was titled "Stories of Unrequited Love" and he thought it was full of short love stories. What he didn't consciously read was:

"You will listen to your mother and seek her advice."

"You want to look beautiful."

"You want to learn all you can about looking beautiful."

"You are uncomfortable without makeup."

"To look beautiful you must wear makeup."

"Your lips feel dry and cracked if you don't use lipstick."

"Your eyes look dull without using mascara and eye shadow."

"You need makeup to feel comfortable and beautiful."



With each passing day MJ found himself licking his lips more often and becoming agitated with the way he looked. He didn't figure out what was wrong, until a few days later, when he saw his mummy putting fresh lipstick on after lunch.

"Mummy, why do you wear lipstick?" he tentatively asked.

"Why darling for two reasons," she responded. "First, it keeps my lips moist so they don't chap. It also makes my lips look beautiful. Why, would you like to try it?"

"Y... Yeah, I guess, if it would make my lips feel less dry," he replied.

"Darling, it will certainly help, but you can't borrow or use another person's cosmetics. All cosmetics get contaminated, so you will need your own. If you are going to be wearing lipstick, then you should also use other makeup like mascara, powder and such. Otherwise you would look funny. Think of your face as a canvas. If you just splash on a bit of color the rest of the face will look blank and washed out. You don't want that. You want to look beautiful darling."

"Yes mummy, I do," he heard himself reply, almost hypnotically. "I want to be beautiful."

*What? I don't want to wear any makeup. That's for girls!* his mind yelled.

"I think you will look beautiful with the right makeup. Grab your purse and we'll go to Merle Norman," she said.

"Who's Merle?" he asked.

"Merle Norman isn't a person, darling. It's a store that specializes in cosmetics," she replied. "They have expert consultants that will help you select the right colors to match your skin tone. They can also teach you proper cleansing, skin preparation and application techniques. Normally I would go to Lord & Taylor's to get my cosmetics, but their consultants tend to be busy and there's always people walking around. I don't want you distracted, darling. You'll get a more personal and private consult at Merle's. Then we can go over to Lord's to get your supplies."

Helpless but to do what his mother wanted, MJ was led to the car where they drove to Merle Norman's. Still, he wasn't able to comprehend how this was all happening. The consultant at Merle had said that current trends were for wearing less obvious makeup and bright colors. "The natural look is in but that doesn't mean forgoing any makeup. Let's begin by preparing the face," she had said. She spent some time showing him how to clean and prepare his face for makeup application. When he left the shop, he had an even complexion with natural looking eyelids and pale pink lip gloss.

Margaret was not happy with the so-called natural look. She still believed that a woman's face should draw attention and cosmetics were to be used to bring out the best features. Merle was good at teaching preparation and cleansing techniques but she wanted a more dramatic look for MJ. She had him sit at the Max counter and undergo a complete makeover. MJ left the Max counter with bold eye shadows and bright red lips.

By the time they got home, MJ was carrying several heavy bags filled with cosmetics, brushes and other odds and ends needed to make one beautiful. He had been amazed at all the paraphernalia and work that went into applying and taking off makeup. He had also gotten several instructional brochures like "Mastering Mascara," "Vivid Color" and "The Brow Perfected," along with a couple of manuals from a bookstore.

"Now that you have a selection of cosmetics darling," his mummy said as they left Lord & Taylor, "You need a vanity. To apply makeup you need a good workstation. We'll stop on the way home and see if we can't get one delivered this afternoon."



It was MJ's intention to drop everything into his closet. The last thing he wanted was to sit down and actually put any of that stuff on his face. The entire day had been a mix of pure humiliation mixed with his longing to wear lipstick and look beautiful. He wanted to forget all about it. But instead, he found himself sitting at his desk reading the "The Brow Perfected" brochure. It didn't take him long to unpack a white marker pencil, ruler, angled tweezers and mirror. Following along with the brochure's instructions, he marked off two-and-an-eighth inches for the length with the pencil, then began meticulously plucking, following the directions. When he had finished, his brows rose in distinct high feminine arches with a thin tapered tail. Reaching up with his index finger he slowly traced the new line of his eyebrow. It was very close to what the model on the cover of the brochure had.

*Oh! What have you done?* His mind screamed.

His mummy came in as he was finishing up and praised his efforts. "Darling, I'm surprised that you did such a wonderful job with your first effort. Your brows look very lovely. I bet all your friends would love to see what you have done. Why don't you let me take a few pictures, and then you can send them to all your little friends."

*Huh?* *Send them to my friends?* He thought. *She must be nuts if she thinks I would do that. I'm getting enough flack over my articles and what I did to my hair. Rodger even asked me if I had turned homosexual while I've been home.*