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OFFICE LADY LAND

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack



TRANSGENDER
TALES OF

Transformation



J O E S I X P A C K

OFFICE LADY LAND

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack
A Tales of Transformation story



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OFFICE LADY LAND

Hanford McAllister stepped out of the sleek black Lexus LS chauffeured to the curb of the Shinjuku skyscraper with the same air of disdain he wore to every business meeting. He wore it well. Almost as well as his polished Italian loafers, which hit the pavement like punctuation marks, and his tailored charcoal suit was an affront to the drab sea of black and gray suits around him. The Tokyo office workers parted instinctively, heads bowed and steps quickened, as though his presence alone might invite ruin.

The sheer size of the skyscraper rising before him — a shimmering, glass-paneled giant — was no longer impressive to him, though it had been the tallest building in Japan for nearly five years. To Hanford, it was just another symbol of power, authority, and dominion over Tokyo's bustling chaos.

He swept through the revolving doors without sparing a glance for the bowing receptionist. Inside, the lobby buzzed with activity: polished marble floors gleamed under bright LED lights, and workers in immaculate business attire hurried past with solemn purpose. An art installation — a minimalistic fountain shaped like a circuit board — gurgled softly in the background, but Hanford barely registered it. His executive elevator awaited.

The gleaming metal doors slid open, revealing a pristine interior paneled in dark wood with brushed steel accents. Hanford stepped inside, alone, as was his privilege. With a soft chime, the elevator ascended smoothly, the floors ticking away silently on the digital display.

The doors opened to the executive floor, a stark contrast to the bustling hive below. Here, the decor was even more ostentatious: deep, rich wood, thick carpet that muffled every footstep, and large windows offering a breathtaking view of Tokyo. Yet Hanford hardly appreciated it. To him, it was simply a backdrop — everyone was a visitor in his world.

A slender young man jogged to catch up with him. Max Crayton, Hanford's newly installed CIO, looked comically out of place next to the older man's bearing and sharpness. At just 24 years old, Max had the build of a runner and a face that still hadn't lost its boyish softness. His suit, though perfectly fitted and outlandishly expensive, somehow looked as if he were playing dress-up with it.

"Morning, Hanford," Max said as they both entered the elevator, slightly out of breath but trying to mask it.

"Max," Hanford grunted, pressing the button for the top floor. "You're late."

Max ran a hand through his slicked-back hair and gave a nervous laugh. “Caught in the usual traffic.”

Hanford rolled his eyes. “Excuses are for losers, Crayton. Remember that.”

Max fidgeted with his tie, glancing at Hanford out of the corner of his eye. “You know, you’ve got them running scared all over this place. They scurry like ants when you’re around. They think you’ll fire them just for making eye contact.”

Hanford smirked. “Good. Too many of these people think they’re entitled to a paycheck. They’re only as good as their last hour of work.”

Max chuckled weakly, unsure whether to agree or simply stay quiet. He decided on the former. “Guess it’s working. They practically jump out of their chairs when I walk into a room, and I’m just the new guy.”

“They don’t respect you yet,” Hanford said, his tone cutting. “They just don’t know what to make of you. Give it time. Make them sweat. Just keep doing what you’re doing. Demote people. Berate people. Humiliate people. Fire people. They have to fear you, Max. Fear keeps this whole place in line.”

Max’s smile tightened, but he nodded.

Hanford chuckled, his laugh sharp and humorless. “Watch them when you so much as ask them a question. I swear half these little guys would faint if I raised my voice.”

“They’ve got good instincts,” Max said, smirking. “Speaking of which — heard something interesting this morning. A little bird says there’s something going on up at the top. The top-top. You know, board-level stuff.”

“Is that so?” Hanford said dismissively, but his tone carried an edge of interest. “If there’s something going on, it’s an opportunity. Every crisis is.”

“I don’t think it’s anything,” Max replied, following Hanford into the outer office suite.

The sight of the empty desk immediately soured Hanford’s mood. His personal assistant’s desk — an ergonomic marvel surrounded by perfectly ordered stacks of papers and expensive Japanese calligraphy pens — was conspicuously empty. A white ceramic teacup sat abandoned on the corner, a faint ring of tea at the bottom.

“Where the hell is she?” Hanford barked, his voice cutting across the quiet.

Max shrugged. “Probably off gossiping with the others. They’re always huddled in the break room, chirping away.”

Hanford sneered. “Typical. Can’t rely on anyone around here. They spend more time chattering than working, and they wonder why they’re still

answering phones instead of running meetings.” His opinion of the Japanese workforce was not the highest.

Max chuckled, shaking his head. “Not like they’d have a clue what to do with real responsibility.”

The two men laughed as Hanford flung open the heavy double doors to his office. It was a shrine to himself: a massive oak desk dominated the room, flanked by floor-to-ceiling windows offering a panoramic view of the city. Framed photos of Hanford with various world leaders adorned the walls, alongside a pair of samurai swords he had bought on Temu and liked to pretend were authentic. Behind the desk, a leather chair sat waiting like a throne.

And a small Japanese man sat in it.

The Japanese man was well familiar to Hanford and Max. He ran the office day-to-day. He didn’t look up when the two Americans arrived, ignoring his bosses who had driven him to the edge of madness on a daily basis with their outrageous demands and insensitive behavior. Instead, he just kept pouring over some papers in his hands.

“Get out of my chair, Takashima,” Hanford said, angrily, as he threw his briefcase onto a nearby chair. Despite his approach towards his desk, and his imposing figure that threw a shadow over the man in his chair, the man, Takashima, did not move. He just kept reading.

“It’s not your chair,” the man said. “It’s the company’s chair.” He kept reading.

This defiance was unprecedented. For the three years he had been in charge of the Asia-Pacific Division, and working in this office, Takashima had been completely compliant. He was a little toad of a man, in Hanford’s eyes. Even hesitating a fraction of a second in defiance of Hanford’s orders was unheard of.

“Now, Takashima.” Hanford was impatient, and his impatience was usually followed by unpleasant things.

Takashima didn’t move. He inclined his head slightly, his glasses catching the morning light. “This chair,” he said softly, “is no longer for you, Mr. McAllister. It is for the use of the President of the Asia-Pacific region. As of this morning, that position is mine.”

The words hung in the air, their weight slowly settling over the room. Max, who had been lingering behind Hanford, blinked in confusion. “Wait, what? What are you talking about?” he stammered, his voice a sharp contrast to Takashima’s measured tone.



Takashima folded his hands neatly on the desk. “The Japanese partner in this company has completed a full buyout of the American stake. Effective immediately, this office — and all operations in Asia — are wholly owned and operated by our Japanese firm. I have been appointed as President of the Asia-Pacific region.”

Hanford’s face darkened, his lips curling into a sneer. “You’re joking. This is some kind of stunt. Where’s the memo? Where’s the official announcement? You think you can just waltz in here and sit in my chair, throwing out baseless claims?”

Takashima reached to the corner of the desk and picked up a document. He placed it on the front of the desk with care, sliding it toward Hanford. “The details are here. The board has already been dissolved. The paperwork is complete.”

Hanford didn’t look at the document. He leaned forward, placing his fists on the desk, his towering frame looming over the seated Takashima. “You listen to me, Takashima. You’re a pencil pusher. A glorified administrator. You don’t have the spine to run an office, let alone an entire region. This job requires vision. Leadership. You’re nothing more than a wormy, loathsome little man who can’t make a decision without someone holding your hand. You think you can fill my shoes? You’re not even in the same league.”

Takashima didn’t flinch. He didn’t blink. He sat motionless, his expression unreadable. It was as if Hanford’s outburst were nothing more than a gust of wind passing by.

Max stepped forward, emboldened by Hanford’s fury. “Yeah, this is ridiculous!” he said, his voice rising. “You think the company’s going to just roll over and let you, what, *take over*? They’d never put someone like you in charge. You wouldn’t last a week, and everyone knows it!”

Takashima turned his gaze to Max, his expression still devoid of emotion. “This decision was not made by you, or Mr. McAllister, or anyone in this office. It was made by the company. It is final.”

Hanford slammed his palm on the desk, the sound reverberating through the room. “Final? Let me tell you what’s final. Your time at this company. You think you can sit there, in my chair, and pretend you’re in charge?”

Still, Takashima said nothing. His calmness only served to fuel Hanford’s rage.

“I’ll make some calls, and this whole nonsense will be undone by the end of the day,” Hanford snarled. He turned to Max. “Get me Legal. Now.”

Max nodded, eager to prove his loyalty. “You got it. We’ll shut this thing down in no time.”

Takashima finally spoke, his voice steady and unshaken. “You are, of course, free to make any calls you wish, Mr. McAllister. But you will find the company’s legal team has already been informed.”

With little he could say to ramp up the tension further, Hanford dramatically turned and left the office. “Come on Hanford, we need to talk to Zak.”

Max followed his boss out of the room, trying to look just as fierce and angry as Hanford looked, and failing.

It was a short march to Zak Curren's office, the Regional Vice-President, and Hanford and Max stormed into the office without knocking, their anger boiling over. The large, sunlit room, with its immaculate glass desk and sleek modern furniture, felt almost serene — until Hanford's voice shattered the calm.

"Where the hell is Zak?" Hanford bellowed, his voice echoing off the glass walls.

Behind the desk, seated with perfect composure, was Azumi Matsumoto, Hanford's former administrative assistant. She was a stout Japanese woman, with a chubby face. She looked up at him, her demeanor serene and composed. Her crisp white blouse under a grey blazer and neatly tied bow contrasted starkly with Hanford's red face and Max's nervous energy.

"Azumi!" Hanford barked, pointing a finger at her like an accusation. "Get out of that chair and go back to your desk where you belong!"

Azumi set down the pen she was holding and folded her hands neatly on the desk. "Good morning, Mr. McAllister," she said in her even, polite tone. "I would appreciate it if you kept your voice down. This is a professional office, and such outbursts are unbecoming."

Max glanced at Hanford, unsure whether to laugh or be horrified at the audacity. "What the hell is going on here?"

"This," Azumi said, gesturing to the desk, "is now my desk, and you will treat me with the respect my position deserves."

Hanford's face darkened further, and he jabbed a finger toward the desk. "You've got some nerve, Azumi. Sitting at Zak's desk, talking like you know what you're doing. Get up. Now."

"I am afraid that is no longer possible," Azumi replied calmly, not even glancing at the finger pointed at her.

Hanford's fury threatened to erupt, but before he could lash out again, the door opened, and Zak Curren walked in. The Vice President of the Asia-Pacific Region, Zak was a 30-year-old American with a habit of arriving late, but his usual easygoing grin was nowhere to be seen. He stopped abruptly at the sight of the commotion in his office.

"What's going on here?" Zak asked, his voice sharp. His tie was askew, and his dark blond hair looked hastily combed, suggesting a rushed start to the morning.

Max turned to him immediately. "Zak! Thank God. This whole place has gone insane. Takashima's taken over my office, claims he's now President of the Asia-Pacific region, and now she" — he jabbed a finger at Azumi — "is sitting at your desk, saying it's hers!"

Zak's eyes darted to Azumi, who remained unflappable, then back to Hanford. "What are you talking about? Nobody's told me anything about this!"

Azumi adjusted her posture slightly, her face as calm as ever. "Good morning, Mr. Curren," she said. "Allow me to clarify. The Japanese partner has bought out the American share of the company. As part of the new structure, the leadership positions have been reassigned. I am now serving as Vice President of the Asia-Pacific Region."

"Vice President?" Zak began, his face twisting in confusion and anger. "This is ridiculous! You're just an Office Lady! I'm the Vice President. You're... You're Hanford's assistant!"

"No longer," Azumi corrected smoothly. "I am no longer Mr. McAllister's assistant. I now report directly to Mr. Takashima."

Zak looked to Hanford and Max, his anger rising to match theirs. "What is this, some kind of coup? They can't just do this! We're *executives*. We'll sue them into the ground for this nonsense."

Max, emboldened by Zak's indignation, joined in. "Exactly! This is illegal. They can't just fire us and..."

"No one has been fired," Azumi interjected calmly, her voice cutting through the rising chaos like a knife. "Your positions have been re-assigned. Under the terms of the buyout, it was agreed that no one would lose their employment. You, Mr. McAllister, Mr. Curren, and Mr. Crayton, will all remain employees of the company — provided you accept your new roles."

Zak froze, his indignation giving way to wary confusion. "New roles?"

Azumi nodded. "The positions available to you are within the office staff. Specifically, as office ladies. If you decline these positions, your employment will be terminated, and you will be deported, as your work visas require active employment to remain valid."

Hanford's jaw dropped, and for a moment, no one spoke. Then he let out a barking laugh, filled with disbelief and fury. "Office ladies? You expect me to..."

Max cut in, sputtering. "That's absurd! That's not even a real offer! It's a deliberate insult! You can't seriously think we'd..."

"Those are the only roles available," Azumi said evenly. "The terms of the buyout are clear. If you refuse the positions, you will lose all salaries, benefits, and personal effects held by the company. Additionally, you will be sued for breaching your contracts, which require you to fulfill your roles as employees."

Zak's mouth opened, then closed, his face a storm of emotions. "You're joking," he finally said, his voice faint.



Max's face turned pale. "The dress code..." he stammered, suddenly, he turned to his co-executives. "I wrote the damn dress code for office ladies. It requires compliance with specific beauty standards! Skirts! Makeup! This is insane."

Azumi smiled faintly, as if she were indulging a child's tantrum. "I am fully aware of the dress code, Mr. Crayton. Compliance is mandatory for all office staff, as you are well aware. If you accept your new roles, you will be required to adhere to those standards."

"This is a farce!" Hanford roared. "You people are just trying to ridicule us! To get a laugh out of degrading us!"

Azumi met his gaze steadily. "It is your choice. Accept your new positions and remain with the company, or refuse and face deportation. The police are already prepared to escort you to the airport should you decline. The decision is yours."

The room fell silent, the weight of her words crushing whatever defiance remained in the three men. Hanford glared at Azumi, his fury so palpable it was almost suffocating, but she didn't waver. Max and Zak exchanged horrified glances, their pride warring with the brutal reality of the situation.

Azumi folded her hands neatly on the desk, her expression one of perfect calm. "Take your time," she said softly. "But not too much. The police are waiting in the lobby." Zak's face flushed crimson, his disbelief and anger bubbling over as he pointed an accusatory finger at Azumi. "This is outrageous!" he shouted, his voice cracking with fury. "You can't expect us to make a decision like this on the spot! Do you even understand the kind of humiliation you're asking us to accept? This isn't a job offer — it's a joke! A trap!"

Max interrupted with a hand raised nervously, his voice tentative. "Uh, quick question."

Zak spun on him, glaring. "What now?"

Max cleared his throat, his expression sheepish but oddly serious. "If I... if I accept this stupid role or whatever, do I get to keep my company car? And, uh, the parking spot?"

Zak's jaw dropped, and his fury redirected itself. "Are you serious right now? Are you actually serious, Max? A company car? A parking spot? That's your big concern?"

Max shrugged defensively. "Look, I'm just saying..."

"Jackass," Zak said.

Max bristled. “Hey, don’t act like you’re above this, Zak. At least I’m thinking practically. What are you doing? Throwing a tantrum? What good is that gonna do?”

Zak threw up his hands in exasperation. “Oh, I’m sorry, Max. I didn’t realize you were so eager to settle into your new role as Employee of the Month: Office Lady Division!”

“Gentlemen,” Azumi said softly, cutting through their bickering with the precision of a scalpel. “Your internal disagreements are irrelevant to the matter at hand. The terms remain the same. I suggest you focus your energy on deciding rather than arguing.”

Both men turned to her, united in their mutual indignation for just a moment. Her calm, impenetrable demeanor only seemed to enrage them further.

“You can’t expect us to make this kind of decision,” Zak repeated, his voice shaking, “without time to consult legal counsel. To gather evidence. To file a formal objection...”

“Mr. Curren, which country do you think you are in?” Azumi said, a hint of a smile on her face. “Now, your decision?”

The three men were suddenly, reservedly quiet.

Azumi Matsumoto’s gaze moved steadily between the three men, her composure as unyielding as ever. “Gentlemen,” she said, her voice cool and measured, “Will you accept the positions offered, or should I inform the appropriate authorities to begin the deportation process?”

Max and Zak exchanged nervous glances, then both looked at Hanford, as if he held the key to their fates. Hanford stood stiffly, his face a mask of barely concealed rage. He turned away from the group, pacing a few steps toward the window. The skyline of Tokyo stretched before him, brilliant and vast, but for the first time, it seemed like a cold and indifferent.

Zak broke the silence first, his voice low but cracking with resignation. “I’ve got to have a job,” he muttered, almost to himself. He looked down at his polished shoes, his hands twitching at his sides. “I’ve got responsibilities. Bills. People counting on me.”

Hanford’s jaw tightened as he stood with his back to the room. He didn’t have to turn around to know what Zak was really talking about. The late-night phone calls. The whispered conversations. The pale, sweating face of a man who was always looking over his shoulder. Hanford knew Zak was in deep with the wrong people, his drug habit pulling him under like quicksand. And now this? This was the perfect storm Zak couldn’t outrun.

Zak took a deep breath and straightened his tie, trying to inject some confidence into his decision. “Fine,” he said, forcing a small laugh that didn’t reach his eyes. “I’ll see what you’ve got in mind. But let me be clear — I’m probably walking away from this. I’m not committing to anything just yet.” Worst case scenario in his mind was that he gets fired for being an incompetent “office lady,” whatever that meant.

“Your consent to the position is commitment enough,” Azumi replied, her tone unflappable. “But noted.”

Zak grimaced but gave a sharp nod, his face a mixture of defeat and annoyance. Azumi’s gaze shifted to Max.

Max hesitated, his eyes darting nervously between Azumi, Zak, and Hanford. “Well, uh,” he stammered, running a hand through his hair. “I mean, I’ll back up my boss. Whatever he wants to do, I’ll... I’ll do too.”

Azumi’s calm expression didn’t waver as she looked to Hanford. “And Mr. McAllister? Your decision?”

The room fell into a tense silence. Max fidgeted, Zak rubbed the back of his neck, and even Azumi seemed to pause, her pen hovering just above her notepad. All eyes were on Hanford, who remained motionless, his back still to the room.

Finally, he spoke, his voice heavy with a bitterness that seemed to hang in the air. “I have stock options vesting in a year. You think I’m going to walk away from that? Throw it all away because of some... humiliating stunt?” He clenched his jaw. “I know what you people are up to. You want me to drop my incentive package. Well, I won’t let you do that.” Hanford turned slowly, his face hard but his eyes calculating. “No. I’m staying. I’m not going anywhere.”

Max’s eyes widened in shock. “Wait, what? You’re serious?”

Hanford glared at him. “It’s 14 million dollars, Max!”

Max blinked, swallowing hard. He had been certain Hanford would tell Ms. Matsumoto to go to hell, that they’d both walk out together, defiant to the end. But Hanford’s response had thrown him off balance.

“Well,” Max said reluctantly, his voice small, “if you’re staying, then I guess I’m staying too...?”

Azumi straightened her posture, a faint glimmer of satisfaction in her otherwise neutral expression. It was if she had expected this result. “Very well. You have all accepted the terms. I will inform the necessary parties.” She stood gracefully, smoothing the front of her blouse. “Now, if you’ll follow me, we’ll proceed to the lower floor to get you started.”

Zak, Max, and Hanford stood frozen for a moment, as if their legs didn't want to carry them toward whatever indignity awaited. But Azumi was already heading for the door, her calm and purposeful steps leaving them no room for hesitation.

"Please," she said, her tone polite but firm, "this way."

The elevator hummed softly as it descended, its sleek walls reflecting the tense silence between the three men and Ms. Matsumoto. Hanford stood stiffly, his arms crossed, glaring at his former secretary. Zak leaned against the wall, his face a mixture of resignation and simmering anger, while Max fidgeted nervously with his tie.

Hanford couldn't resist one last shot. "When this is over, Matsumoto," he growled, "you can forget about ever being my secretary again. You've burned that bridge."

Ms. Matsumoto didn't even turn her head. She let his threat hang in the air like smoke, utterly unacknowledged. Instead, she spoke in her cool, measured tone. "From this point forward, we will speak only in Japanese. This is now a Japanese company, and therefore a Japanese workplace."

"What?" Max yelped, his eyes darting between her and the others. "Wait... what? I don't speak Japanese!"

Ms. Matsumoto looked at him with the faintest flicker of disinterest. "Perhaps you should ask your co-workers, Mr. Crayton. Mr. McAllister and Mr. Curren both speak Japanese. I am certain they will be happy to assist you."

Max opened his mouth to protest further, but the elevator came to a smooth stop, and the doors slid open. Hanford scowled as he stepped out, immediately recognizing that they weren't on any of the typical office floors.

"This isn't the work floor," Hanford said sharply, his English breaking the stillness.

Ms. Matsumoto's eyes narrowed ever so slightly. She replied in Japanese, her tone sharp but professional. "Makkarisutā-sama, eigo de ohanashi sarenai yō onegai mōshiagemasu." Which translated to, "Mr. McAllister, I must remind you not to speak in English." She continued, "If you cannot comply, we will assume you are refusing the terms of your employment."

Her words hit Hanford like a slap, and he bit back the retort that was forming. She continued, still in Japanese but calm as ever, "Before you can begin work in your new roles, you must be properly attired. That is why we are here. This is the exercise room, where you will be outfitted with work-appropriate clothing."

“What did she say?” Max whispered to Zak, his voice shaking. “I don’t understand what’s going on.”

Zak sighed heavily, clearly wrestling with his own indignation. “She said this isn’t the work floor. We’re here to get changed into... whatever the hell they expect us to wear.”

Max blinked. “Changed? Like... *right now*?”

“Looks that way,” Zak muttered, his voice laced with dread.

The group moved down the hallway, the men trailing reluctantly behind Ms. Matsumoto as she led them toward a door marked with a graphic of a pink figure wearing a skirt. Max stopped dead in his tracks when he saw it, but Hanford shoved him forward with a muttered curse.

As they passed through the door, Ms. Matsumoto brought her phone to her ear, speaking quietly but firmly. “The police are no longer required. Please thank them for their service to the company and dismiss them.” She ended the call with a calm efficiency that sent another wave of unease through the men.

From somewhere behind a partition, they heard whispers and giggles. The sound wasn’t loud, but it carried an unmistakable note of ridicule. The humiliation was palpable, and it made their steps even heavier.

Inside the changing room, the atmosphere was eerily calm. A row of employees stood silently, their hands clasped neatly behind their backs, their expressions impassive as they waited. Ms. Matsumoto turned to the men and spoke with crisp authority. “Disrobe.”

“What did she say?” Max asked, his voice rising in panic.

“She wants us to strip,” Zak muttered, his lips tightening.

“Absolutely not,” Hanford growled. “This is...”

Before he could finish, Ms. Matsumoto snapped her fingers. Four burly men stepped forward from the corner of the room, their arms crossed and their expressions grim. They weren’t enormous, but their presence exuded a no-nonsense authority that even Hanford recognized.

Max looked around in confusion. “What’s going on now?”

Hanford shot him a withering glare. “Take a flying guess, genius. Start stripping.”

With great reluctance, Hanford began to shrug off his jacket, muttering curses under his breath. Zak followed suit, sighing heavily as he undid his tie and tossed it onto a nearby bench. Max hesitated, glancing nervously between his co-workers and the silent, imposing figures standing nearby.



“What are you doing?” Max asked, his voice tinged with panic. “Why are you...?”

“Just do it, Max,” Zak snapped, his voice tight with frustration. “Unless you want to find out what happens if you don’t.”

Grumbling and muttering to himself, Max finally began to remove his clothes. As they stripped down, robes were handed to them by one of the silent attendants. The robes were soft and plain, but the men’s resentment burned through the simple fabric as they slipped them on.

Ms. Matsumoto stood with poise, addressing them once they were covered. “You will now be depilated, corseted, and fitted for your new uniforms. Please cooperate with the staff. Any resistance will delay the process.”

Hanford, Zak, and Max exchanged dark looks, the humiliation of the situation fueling their whispered vows for revenge.

“When I get out of this,” Hanford muttered, his voice low and venomous, “I’ll make sure Matsumoto and everyone else responsible for this pays tenfold.”

Zak nodded grimly. “I don’t care what it takes. We’ll burn this whole operation to the ground.”

Max, who was still fumbling with his robe, chimed in, “And I’ll... well, I’ll do something. Just wait. They’ll regret...”

Before he could finish, the attendants stepped forward, firmly gripping each man by the arm. The suddenness of it made Max yelp, but Zak and Hanford remained silent, their faces hard with humiliation and rage. The men were separated, each led in a different direction. Their protests faded as the heavy doors closed behind them, leaving Ms. Matsumoto standing alone in the quiet room. She took a seat and tapped a checkbox on her phone.

Zak stood alone in the stark, white-tiled room, the air carrying the faint chemical smell of cleaning agents mixed with the faint floral undertone of the cream covering his body. The assistants — three young women wearing matching pastel uniforms — moved efficiently, brushing the thick, cold substance across his arms, legs, and torso. The feeling was unsettling, alien.

“Hey, what’s going on?” Zak asked, shifting uncomfortably as the cream began to itch. The assistants didn’t even glance at him, their expressions serene and professional. Their silence made the situation worse, the tension coiling in his chest like a spring.

After what felt like an eternity, the assistants motioned for him to stand still. Zak obeyed, unsure of what would happen next, as the itch intensified, spreading over every inch of his body. Ten minutes passed in agonizing silence,

broken only by the soft hum of the ventilation system and the faint, distant voices of others beyond the partition.

Finally, one of the assistants returned, pulling a long hose from the wall. Before Zak could react, a sharp spray of lukewarm water hit his skin, rinsing the cream away. He sputtered, flinching at the sudden deluge, and wiped his eyes as the water cascaded off his body. When it was over, he blinked down at himself in astonishment.

All his body hair was gone. His legs, arms, chest — everything was smooth, almost unnaturally so. He ran a hand over his arm, disbelief etched into his features.

“What the hell?” Zak shouted, his voice echoing in the room. “Why did you do this? I could’ve just shaved or something! What’s wrong with you?” He turned to the assistants, but they merely handed him a towel and gestured for him to move on. Their silence infuriated him further, but he had no choice but to comply.

Meanwhile, in another identical room, Hanford stood glaring at his minders, his broad chest rising and falling with anger. “This is absolute bullshit!” he shouted as he stood naked, his hands trembling with fury. “You people are insane! All of it gone — what is this? A torture chamber?”

The minders ignored his tirade, holding up a garment that immediately drew his ire.

“What the hell is that supposed to be?” Hanford snapped, glaring at the corset-like body shaper they presented. The soft beige material with satin lacing made his blood boil.

Two of the minders moved in unison, stepping toward him with mechanical precision, while the third held the garment open.

“You’re not putting that on me!” Hanford roared, stepping back. “I’m not — ugh, fine! Just get this over with!”

The garment was wrapped tightly around him, and Hanford winced as the stiff fabric constricted his torso. The laces were pulled with relentless tenacity, compressing his waist inch by inch. Each tug elicited a new stream of profanities, and soon, his breath came in short gasps.

“You’re killing me!” he bellowed, his face red as he struggled to move. “This is insane! I can’t breathe! Stop it!”

The minders said nothing, their expressions as impassive as statues. They continued tightening the garment until it created an hourglass silhouette, cinching Hanford’s waist into an unnatural curve. He swayed on his feet, his hands gripping the edge of a nearby counter for support.

Finally, they stopped pulling, securing the laces at the back. Hanford gasped for air, his rage now mingled with discomfort and confusion. He reached awkwardly around his back, clawing at the laces, but his arms could barely reach.

“Undo it!” he demanded. “I’m not wearing this crap — undo it now!”

The minders simply stood there, watching him struggle. Their silence stoked his fury, but his movements were sluggish and futile under the constriction of the garment.



In yet another room, Max sat on a bench, hunched over, his face pale. His hairless arms rested on his knees, and his corseted torso rose and fell as he tried to catch his breath. “Please,” he begged, his voice cracking as he looked at the minders. “Can someone just explain what’s happening? Anything at all?” The minders didn’t respond, their impassive faces giving him nothing to latch onto.

They remained stone-faced as the door opened, and a woman entered carrying a tape measure and a clipboard. She wore the same pastel uniform as the others, but her demeanor was sharp, her movements brisk.

“Wait, what are you doing?” Max asked as she approached, though his tone suggested he already knew.

The woman ignored his question, efficiently measuring his height, chest, waist, hips, and feet. She jotted down notes on her clipboard while Max squirmed and muttered under his breath.

“I don’t understand what this is all for,” Max said, his voice cracking. “Can you just tell me? Please?”

The woman completed her measurements without acknowledging his words and left the room. Max sat in silence, waiting, until she returned with a neat stack of folded garments. On top of the pile was a pair of sleek black heels.

Max's eyes widened, and he instinctively backed away. "No. No way. I'm not putting those on!"

The woman didn't react. She simply nodded to the minders, who stepped forward with purpose.

"Wait! Wait!" Max blurted, raising his hands defensively. "Okay! Okay, I'll do it!"

He stumbled toward the pile of clothing, clutching it against his chest as his face burned with humiliation. As he set them down on the floor, he muttered under his breath, "This is insane. I'm going to wake up, and this'll all be a nightmare. It has to be."

The minders watched silently, their expressions unreadable, as Max began to change.



The room was eerily silent except for the clack of awkward, unsteady heels on the polished floor. Hanford, Max, and Zak emerged from their respective changing rooms, each dressed identically: knee-length black tailored skirts, white button-up blouses, and three-inch black heels. Their appearances were incongruous with their masculine physiques, and none of them could walk properly in their new footwear. Each step was accompanied by a stumble or an uncertain wobble, their humiliation apparent in every movement.

Ms. Matsumoto, waiting with her clipboard and phone in hand, watched them approach with an expression of detached professionalism. Her posture was perfect, and her dark pencil skirt and white blouse seemed to emphasize how natural and confident she looked compared to the three men. She gestured for them to come to the center of the room, her demeanor calm but commanding.

The three men exchanged looks of shame and disbelief before reluctantly gathering in front of her. Hanford's jaw tightened as he glared at his colleagues, their shared embarrassment forming an unspoken bond in their mutual misery. Ms. Matsumoto walked slowly around them, her heels clicking rhythmically against the floor, inspecting them as though they were soldiers in formation. Occasionally, she tapped on her phone, making notes.

Hanford, his pride still simmering beneath the surface, muttered darkly, “If pictures of this get out, Matsumoto, I’ll snap your neck myself.”

Ms. Matsumoto ignored him entirely, as though his words hadn’t even reached her ears. Finally, she stopped in front of them and addressed the group. “You are suitable enough for the next step,” she said plainly.

Max, still struggling to stay balanced in his heels, whispered to Zak, “What did she say?”

Hanford grunted, not bothering to lower his voice. “It means it’s time for the next round of humiliation to begin.”

Ms. Matsumoto glanced briefly at Hanford before continuing. “Now, you will receive hair and makeup appropriate for an Office Lady.” She clapped her hands, and moments later, the door opened. Four burly men entered, each carrying a folding chair. They set the chairs in a line, and Ms. Matsumoto motioned for the three men to sit.

“Any attempt to resist,” she said evenly, “will result in severe consequences.”

Hanford, Zak, and Max reluctantly sat down, their movements stiff and uncoordinated. As soon as they were seated, hairstyling capes were draped over their upper bodies, snapping into place around their necks. Zak gave a sharp intake of breath as the cape was tied, the act somehow solidifying the inevitability of what was about to happen.

The door opened again, and a team of women entered, pushing carts laden with hairstyling tools, sprays, and dyes. Without a word, they began their work, wetting the men’s hair and running combs through it.

“What the hell is going on now?” Max asked, his voice strained and uneasy.

Zak, his voice dripping with sarcasm, replied, “They’re extinguishing the last little flame of dignity we had left.”

For the next hour, the hairstylists worked with meticulous care, trimming, layering, and dying each man’s hair. Zak winced as the cold dye touched his scalp, while Max muttered nervously to himself. Hanford gritted his teeth and closed his eyes, his jaw set so tight it looked as though he might crack a molar.

As the hairstylists finished their work, another group of women entered, wheeling in carts containing nail polish, makeup palettes, and small trays filled with jewelry. The men exchanged horrified glances, but before they could object, their hands were grabbed, and their nails were meticulously painted and extended. Their faces were expertly contoured, with foundation and blush applied seamlessly. Eyeshadow, eyeliner, and lipstick followed, transforming their faces into something unrecognizable.

Finally, bracelets, rings, necklaces, and earrings were fastened onto them, each piece carefully chosen to complement their new outfits. As the hairstylists finished drying and styling their hair, Ms. Matsumoto clapped her hands again. The burly men stepped forward, turning the chairs to face a large wall draped in cloth.

The cloth was pulled away, revealing a massive mirror that spanned the entire wall. The three men stared at their reflections in stunned silence.

Their appearances were nothing short of surreal. While they did not look like real women, they no longer looked like men. Every detail had been altered to fit their new roles. Their hair was covered by black wigs in professional cuts, their makeup flawless. The jewelry and fitted skirts completed the image.

Max stared at himself, his mouth opening and closing as he struggled to comprehend what he was seeing. "That's... that's not me," he muttered, his voice barely audible.

Hanford refused to look until one of the burly men firmly gripped his chin and turned his head toward the mirror. His scowl deepened as he glared at his reflection, but there was no denying the transformation.

Zak's reaction was visceral. He bent over, retching loudly, unable to contain the humiliation that churned in his stomach.

Ms. Matsumoto watched impassively. "A success," she declared. "A good first step."

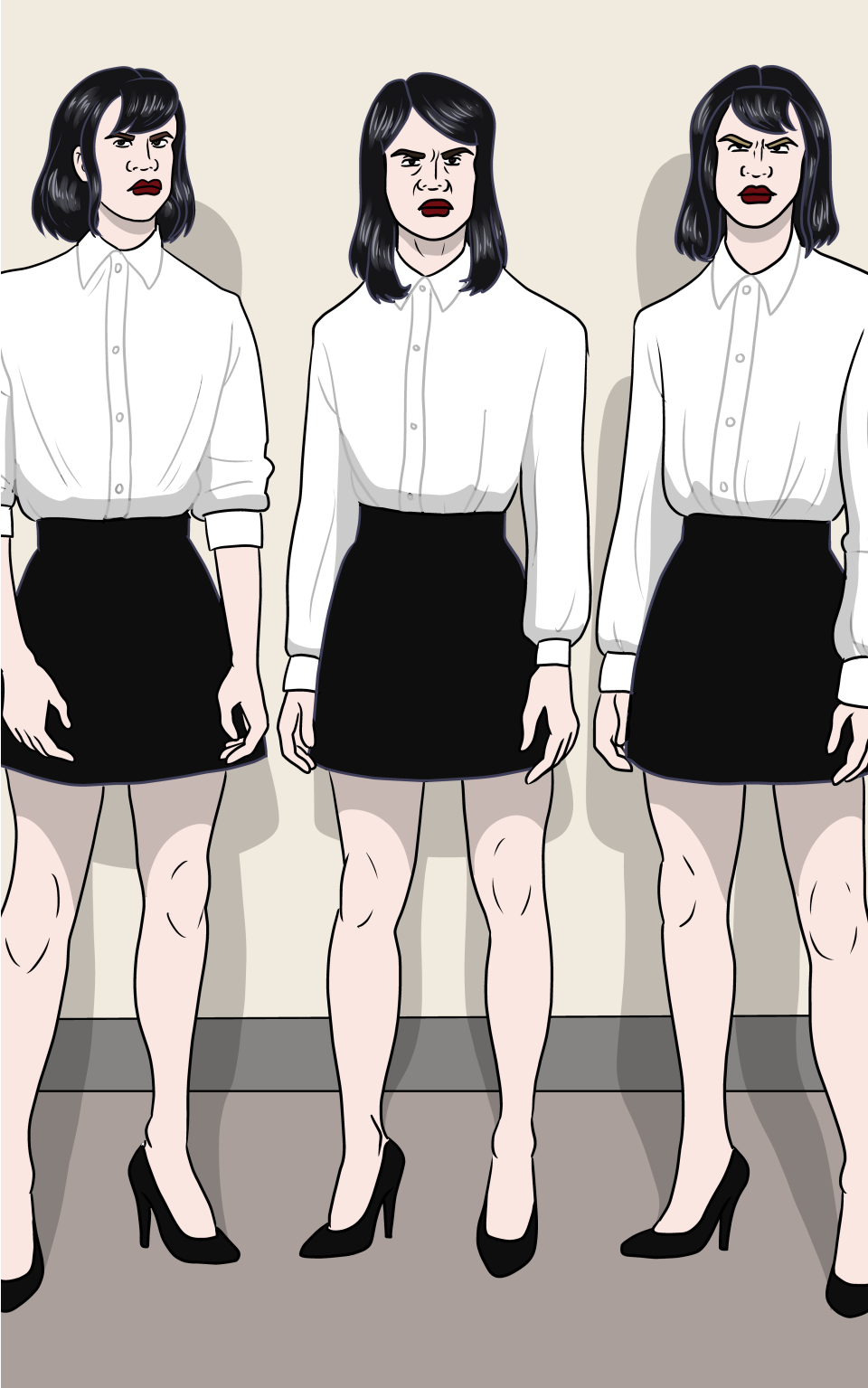
Hanford glared at her, his face contorted with anger. "What do you mean, 'first step'? What else do you have planned for us?"

She ignored his question and instead addressed all three men. "You will need to arrive here early each morning at precisely 6:30. Your hair and makeup will be done before you report to your division captains. You will arrive in identical clothing to what you are wearing now. After your preparations, you will work a full day, with a half-hour lunch break. Your day will end when your captain permits you to leave, usually around 10 p.m."

The men stared at her in disbelief, their exhaustion and humiliation rendering them unable to form coherent objections.

She continued, "You have the rest of the day to yourselves. Dismissed."

They stood there, frozen, unable to process her words. When they finally began to shuffle awkwardly toward the exit, wobbling in their heels, Ms. Matsumoto addressed Hanford one more time. "The company penthouse is no longer available to you. Mr. Crayton's suite at his hotel has also been vacated. We have arranged a two-bedroom apartment for you both. Here are the keys."



She handed the set to Hanford, her expression unreadable. “The apartment is in Kumagaya, a short 90-minute train ride away. I ask you to inform Mr. Crayton that you are now roommates.”

With that, she turned and left, leaving the men standing there in stunned silence, their reflections still glaring back at them from the mirror.

“What do we do now?” Max asked. “Can we take this shit off?”

As he asked the question, they were each handed a nondescript black purse. Zak quickly flipped open his, to find his wallet, and a fresh supply of makeup and a shiny new Suica card to pay for his train ride.

The elevator hummed softly as it descended toward the building lobby, its mirrored walls reflecting the three men standing stiffly inside. Each held a small, sleek black purse in their hands, gripping the leather straps like they were trying to disarm a bomb. The car was thick with unspoken tension, and none of them could look directly at their reflections without flinching. Which was unfortunates, as all the walls of the elevator were mirrors.

Max finally broke the silence. “I don’t understand any of this,” he said, his voice shaking slightly. “I mean, I didn’t even know what half of those words she was saying meant. What the hell are we supposed to do now? I’m so lost.”

Zak shot him a sour look, shifting awkwardly as his heels wobbled on the smooth elevator floor. “What’s new? You don’t understand anything most of the time.”

Max bristled, clutching his purse tighter. “Oh, real nice, Zak. Real supportive.”

“Both of you, shut up,” Hanford snapped, his voice low and dangerous. His gaze was fixed on the digital floor indicator, but his mind was clearly elsewhere. “Stop whining and start thinking. We’re going to figure out how to turn this around and flip the script. This isn’t over.”

The elevator dinged softly as it arrived at the ground floor, and the doors slid open. The lobby stretched before them, bustling with employees and visitors, its polished marble floors and minimalist décor reflecting the understated elegance of a Tokyo office tower.

The three men hesitated for only a moment before stepping forward in unison, their heels clicking awkwardly on the smooth floor. They clutched their purses higher, holding them in front of their faces like makeshift shields, and began walking briskly toward the exit.

As they passed through the lobby, the hum of conversation shifted, subtle at first but growing louder. Soft whispers and the occasional suppressed laugh seemed to follow them, bouncing off the high ceilings and sleek surfaces. The

sound was maddeningly ambiguous — were people mocking them? Were they pointing?

Zak's cheeks flushed, and his grip on his purse tightened. Hanford's face was a mask of fury, but he kept moving, his jaw set like stone. Max, however, couldn't help himself. He stopped suddenly, turning to face the growing cluster of employees who had paused their conversations to watch.

"Mind your own business!" Max shouted, his voice echoing across the vast space. The heels of his shoes slipped slightly on the polished floor, forcing him to grab a nearby column for balance.

"Max, keep walking," Hanford barked, not even turning to look.

Max muttered under his breath but obeyed, hurrying to catch up as they pushed through the revolving glass doors and into the Tokyo morning.

Outside, the street was alive with the city's usual symphony of motion. The rhythmic heartbeat of cars and buses, the hum of bicycle tires, and the chatter of pedestrians created a backdrop of organized chaos. Office workers in neatly pressed suits hurried along the sidewalks, their polished shoes clicking against the pavement. Women in elegant skirts and dresses carried leather handbags, chatting softly or scrolling through their phones. The air was cool, with a faint scent of exhaust and distant street food vendors wafting on the breeze.

Hanford paused on the sidewalk, squinting against the sunlight. His mood lifted momentarily when he spotted his black Lexus LS parked at the curb, the familiar vehicle gleaming under the morning light like a lifeline to his old life.

"Thank God," he muttered, heading toward the car with as much dignity as he could muster in his heels.

But as he approached, the driver stepped forward, his white gloves raised in a polite but firm gesture.

Before Hanford could process, the back door of the Lexus opened. Mr. Takashima stepped in and slid into the car without a word.

The door clicked shut with a quiet finality, and the chauffeur let Hank go as he totted around to the driver's door. The car pulled away from the curb, merging seamlessly into the orderly flow of traffic as if nothing unusual had happened.

Hanford stood frozen, his face a mix of shock and fury. The weight of the morning's events suddenly hit him all at once. He had no idea where to go or how to get there. He had no plan. The city around him, for the first time since he had arrived in this city 8,000 miles from home, felt alien and unknown.



Zak Curren's ride home was an exercise in humiliation. He boarded the crowded Tokyo bus, keeping his head low and his shoulders hunched. His cheap sneakers scuffed against the floor as he shuffled down the narrow aisle, clutching his makeshift bundle of work clothes. Despite scrubbing his face raw at a convenience store restroom and changing into a thin pair of men's pants he'd picked up from a secondhand shop, Zak couldn't hide the unmistakably femininely styled black hair that couldn't be combed into a different style no matter how hard he tried.

The air on the bus was stuffy, filled with the faint smell of exhaust, pressed bodies, and Tokyo's unrelenting humidity. Zak felt every glance lingering on him as he squeezed into a seat near the back, tucking his bundle tightly under his arm. Was it paranoia, or did the schoolgirls across the aisle giggle at him? Did the businessman adjusting his tie throw a disgusted glance his way? He didn't dare look up to find out, keeping his eyes fixed on the floor and praying for his stop to come quickly.

When the bus finally arrived in the quiet residential neighborhood where he rented a room, Zak practically stumbled out, his nerves frayed and his stomach in knots. The streets here were narrow, lined with modest two-story houses and the occasional vending machine humming under a streetlight. A few elderly neighbors tended to their small, well-kept gardens, and Zak nodded politely as he passed, though he doubted they even recognized him. He reached the gate of his house, a weathered structure with faded paint and a leaning mailbox. He let himself in, wincing as the gate creaked loudly.

The familiar scent of soy sauce and miso greeted him as he stepped inside. The house was cool and dimly lit, its tatami floors creaking beneath his weight. Zak barely had time to set his bundle down before the old woman who owned the house shuffled into the entryway. She was hunched and slow-moving, her thick glasses perched precariously on her nose, and her gray hair tied back in a loose bun. Despite her frailty, she managed a warm smile.

"Ah, Curren-san," she said in a soft, wavering voice. "Why are you home so early? Were you fired?"

Zak shook his head and muttered, "No." But the old woman cupped her hand to her ear, tilting her head.

"What was that? Speak up, Curren-san!"

"No, I wasn't fired," Zak repeated loudly, wincing at how his voice echoed in the small space.

“Ah, good, good. I will make you some lunch,” she said, shuffling toward the kitchen.

Zak sighed in relief, but his reprieve was short-lived. As he moved toward his small room, her grandson, Riku, appeared at the end of the hall. A itinerant university student with a permanent scowl etched on his face, Riku was tall and lanky, his sharp eyes narrowing as soon as he spotted Zak. He leaned against the wall, crossing his arms in a way that blocked Zak’s path.

“Why do you smell like perfume?” Riku asked, his tone dripping with disdain.

Zak tensed, clutching his bundle tighter. “I don’t smell like perfume.”

The grandson sniffed the air exaggeratedly, then sneered. “Yes, you do. And why aren’t you wearing the same clothes you left in this morning? What’s in the bundle?”

“None of your business,” Zak muttered, trying to edge past him.

The grandson moved to block him again, his lip curling. “It *is* my business. I don’t trust you.”

Zak avoided his gaze, his heartbeat quickening. “I’m not hiding anything.”

The grandson stepped closer, his voice dropping to a hiss. “You’re a deviant. I can see it. You think I don’t know about your drug habit? I see you sneaking around at night, acting all shady. You’re a disgrace, and you’re not going to bring shame to my grandmother.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Zak shot back, his voice defensive.

The grandson’s eyes flicked to the bundle under Zak’s arm. With a quick motion, he yanked it out of Zak’s grasp, ignoring Zak’s protests. The carefully folded skirt and heels spilled onto the tatami floor.

The grandson’s sneer deepened. “What’s this? Are you a transvestite, too? You’re worse than I thought.”

Zak’s face burned as he scrambled to gather the items. “I... I just found those! Someone must’ve lost them, and I was going to return them!”

“Don’t lie to me,” Riku said coldly. “You’re a degenerate. I should call the police right now.”

“No!” Zak’s voice cracked as panic set in. “You don’t understand! I’m not... I swear, I’m not *like* that!”

The grandson crouched down, leaning in close with a malicious grin. “The police love locking up Americans. You think they’ll believe you? You’d rot in jail for years.”

Zak's chest tightened, and he felt his breath hitch. He knew Riku was right. He'd heard the stories — foreigners arrested on flimsy charges and held indefinitely, their lives ruined. The thought terrified him.

"Please," Zak said, his voice trembling. "Please, don't call the police. I'll do anything."

The grandson straightened up, his smirk widening. "Anything, huh? We'll see about that. For now, keep your filthy secrets out of sight, and don't you dare cause trouble. One wrong move, and you're done."

Zak nodded weakly, clutching the skirt and heels to his chest. As Riku walked away, laughing softly to himself, Zak slumped against the wall, his hands shaking. The old woman called from the kitchen, her voice cheerful and oblivious. "Lunch is ready, Curren-san!"

Zak swallowed hard, forcing himself to his feet. The house felt colder than usual, and the weight of his situation pressed heavily on his shoulders as he made his way toward the kitchen.

The grandmother shuffled back into the room, balancing a tray laden with a small bowl of miso soup and a plate of steaming white rice. The aroma was comforting, but her expression abruptly shifted as she paused mid-step. Her nose twitched slightly, and she sniffed the air. The scent of perfume lingered faintly from Zak's earlier ordeal. Her eyes widened, her frail hands trembling as the tray slipped from her grasp.

The crash startled both Zak and Riku, who immediately leapt to his feet. "Bāchan!" he exclaimed, rushing to her side. He crouched down, picking up the scattered dishes and spilled soup, his voice tight with concern. "What's wrong? Are you hurt?"

The grandmother didn't seem to notice the mess or her grandson's worried tone. Her cloudy eyes filled with tears as she turned her face toward Zak. "I smell her..." she murmured, her voice shaking. "It's the perfume Sakura used to wear. My dear, sweet Sakura..."

Zak's blood ran cold. He shook his head, clutching his bundle tightly as if it could shield him from what was unfolding. "No, no, you've got it wrong, ma'am," he said quickly, his voice faltering. "I'm not Sakura. It's me, Zak — Zak Curren."

But the grandmother didn't seem to hear him. Her eyesight was almost entirely gone, and her mind wasn't much better. She didn't seem to realize that the man she had been serving lunch to hadn't moved from his seat. Her brow furrowed, and she tilted her head, her hands stretching out toward Zak. "Sakura? Is it really you?"

“No, ma’am, I’m Zak Curren,” Zak said, louder this time.

Her hearing failed her once again. “Sakura?” she repeated, her voice rising with emotion. Tears spilled down her cheeks, and she took a halting step forward, her frail arms opening wide. “Oh, my sweet Sakura!”

Zak opened his mouth to protest, but she embraced him tightly, her frail frame trembling against his chest. “Where have you been?” she cried, her voice a mix of joy and sorrow. “Why did you leave us? I thought I’d never see you again!”

Zak tried to pull back gently, his face burning with mortification. “I’m not — ”

Before he could finish, Riku grabbed him by the shirt, pulling him close. His sharp eyes burned with intensity, his voice low and dangerous. “Listen to me,” he hissed. “This is the first time I’ve seen her smile in ten years. Do you understand? Ten. Years. If you don’t want me to drag you to the police right now, you’ll play along.”

Zak’s heart pounded. The threat was clear, and Riku’s grip was ironclad. Zak hesitated, his mind racing. He hated every second of this, but the alternative — being arrested, locked away, losing what little shred of control he still had — was too terrifying to consider. After a long, agonizing pause, Zak nodded stiffly.

“Okay,” he whispered through gritted teeth.

The grandson’s grip loosened, and he pointed to his throat, then gestured upward, silently ordering Zak to soften his voice.

Zak swallowed hard. “Yes,” he said finally, his voice pitched higher, softer, and unnervingly feminine. “It’s me, grandmother... Sakura.”

The grandmother pulled back just enough to look into his face, her tear-streaked eyes lighting up with joy. “Oh, Sakura,” she whispered, caressing his cheek with her frail hand. “I missed you so much. Where have you been? What’s happened to you?”

Zak forced a weak smile, his stomach twisting. “It’s... a long story,” he said, struggling to keep his tone light and his voice high. It was one thing to talk like a girl, it was another to do it in a language he could barely speak.

The grandmother’s grip on him tightened as she guided him toward the table, her tears now replaced with excitement. “Come, come! Sit with me. I want to hear everything! Tell me everything about your life, my dear Sakura.”

Zak hesitated, glancing back at Riku, who stood with his arms crossed, watching intently. The unspoken threat lingered in the air. Zak sighed, swallowing his pride, and sat down across from the grandmother.

For hours, they talked. Or rather, she talked, and Zak played along, answering her questions as best he could. Where had she been? What had she been doing? Why had she stayed away for so long? Zak's responses were vague but gentle, painting a picture of a granddaughter who had been busy but thought of her family often. The grandmother held his hands, laughing and crying as she shared stories of Sakura's childhood.

Zak's throat ached from maintaining the higher pitch, and his stomach churned with embarrassment and guilt. He couldn't help noticing the pure happiness radiating from the old woman. Her smile was genuine, her laughter soft and melodic. For the first time since Zak had moved into the house, the atmosphere felt warm and alive. All he could think about was that this old woman would die of disappointment when she learned the truth.

The grandson sat nearby, his expression unreadable as he watched the scene unfold. Though his face remained hard, there was a flicker of something softer in his eyes — relief, perhaps, or satisfaction.

As the night wore on, Zak's humiliation deepened, but he forced himself to endure it, knowing he had little choice. Each time the grandmother called him "Sakura," it cut into his pride, but the alternative — the cold, unforgiving bars of a Japanese jail cell — was far worse.



The streets of Tokyo proved an insurmountable maze for Hanford McAllister. After nearly two hours of stumbling through narrow alleys, glancing at incomprehensible train signs, avoiding police and enduring the stares of passersby, he finally reached his breaking point. His feet throbbed painfully from the unfamiliar three-inch heels, the sharp tap of each step now a grating reminder of his humiliation. The tailored skirt restricted his movements, forcing him into a clumsy shuffle rather than the commanding stride he was used to. The vibrant city, alive with the hum of commerce and efficiency, felt like it was mocking him.

Max, no better at navigating Tokyo than Hanford, trailed behind, equally exasperated and defeated. His purse dangled awkwardly from his shoulder, a stark contrast to the businessmen in dark suits hurrying past with purpose. Finally, after hours of walking around, trying to find a way home, he found himself in a familiar spot.

"This is where we started," Max said. "Why did we come back here?"

“Shut up, Max!” Hanford barked. He had never intended to return, but he had no idea they had just walked in a circle. But it was just as well, as his rich person’s instincts kicked in: Rich and powerful people don’t solve problems, they make *their* problems someone *else’s* problem.

Hanford’s face was a storm cloud of rage as he stormed back into the towering glass building of the company headquarters. His heels clicked awkwardly against the marble floor, and his skirt shifted with each stride, a constant reminder of his humiliation. Max trailed behind him, his steps hesitant and uneven. The contrast between the men’s angry movements and their carefully tailored, feminine appearances was stark, and the lobby fell into a hushed murmur as employees turned to watch the spectacle.

Hanford slammed his hand down on the front desk, his expression dark. “Get me Takahashi. Now!” he demanded in Japanese, his voice echoing through the expansive lobby.

The receptionist, a young woman in a neat gray suit, flinched slightly but held her composure. “I’m sorry, McAllister-san, but you do not have an appointment. Takahashi-san is unavailable.”

“Unavailable?” Hanford snarled. “You tell him that Hanford McAllister doesn’t need an appointment. This is my company — my building — and I want to see him *now!*”

Max, still struggling to keep his balance in the heels, tapped Hanford on the shoulder. “What’s going on? What did she say?” he asked nervously, but Hanford ignored him.

Hanford continued his tirade, raising his voice louder with each word. The soft murmur of the lobby turned into a louder buzz of whispers, with employees discreetly peeking over cubicle walls or around corners to catch a glimpse of the commotion. Max, noticing the attention, tried to shush Hanford. “People are staring,” he hissed.

“Let them stare!” Hanford barked in English, turning briefly to glare at Max before returning his attention to the receptionist. “Get me Takahashi. Now!”

The commotion was abruptly interrupted as Ms. Matsumoto appeared from one of the side hallways, her heels clicking sharply against the polished floor. For the first time since the morning, her carefully composed mask of neutrality was gone, replaced by an expression of cold fury.

“McAllister-san. Crayton-san,” she said, her voice cutting through the air like a blade. “You will join me, please.”

Hanford turned to face her, his anger barely contained. “Good. You’re here. Maybe you can explain to this girl that I want to see Takahashi. I’ve had enough of this charade.”

Ms. Matsumoto’s eyes narrowed, her expression cold. “You have disgraced the company and yourselves with this behavior,” she said, her voice cutting. “Follow me.”

She didn’t wait for a response, turning on her heel and heading toward the elevators. Her command was so sharp that even Hanford hesitated before begrudgingly following. Max, sensing the gravity of the situation, scurried after them, his purse bouncing awkwardly at his side.

Inside the elevator, Ms. Matsumoto pressed a button without a word, the doors closing with a soft chime. The silence was suffocating, broken only by the faint hum of the elevator. Ms. Matsumoto stood rigidly, her hands clasped in front of her, her eyes fixed on the floor numbers ticking down.

Finally, she spoke. “It is clear that you have learned nothing from today’s experience. You continue to show disrespect for this company, its values, and its people.”

“So what?” Hanford said. “What have I got to lose?”

The former secretary calmed herself easily, her tone returning to her usual dispassionate voice. “Since you have returned to us, I can only assume that you are eager to further your transformation. I will have you undergoing the alterations to your appearance that we planned to do tomorrow.”

“What are you talking about?” Hanford snapped. “We’ve done everything you’ve asked...”

Ms. Matsumoto turned to him sharply, her icy demeanor breaking into something colder and harsher. “Further steps will need to be taken.”

Max, who had been fidgeting nervously, glanced at Hanford. “What’s she saying?” he asked, his voice trembling.

“She’s saying this isn’t over,” Hanford muttered bitterly.

The elevator chimed again, and the doors opened — not to the sleek, polished halls of the company floors but to the underground car park. The dim, cool space was silent, save for the faint hum of distant traffic. Waiting near a sleek black car were the same burly men from earlier, their arms crossed and their expressions impassive.

Hanford’s jaw tightened, and he stepped out of the elevator, his heels clacking loudly against the concrete. “This farce ends now,” he barked in Japanese,

turning to Ms. Matsumoto. “I demand to be reinstated to my rightful position — immediately!”

Max, lagging behind, glanced between them. “What’s going on?” he whispered, his voice frantic.

Hanford didn’t bother answering, his fury directed entirely at Ms. Matsumoto. She regarded him coolly for a moment before gesturing to the burly men, who moved forward as one.

“You will be escorted to a salon,” Ms. Matsumoto said, her voice calm but firm. “You will remain there for the rest of the day, to be pampered at the expense of the company.”

“This is insane!” Hanford growled as the men flanked him. “I won’t go. You can’t make me!”

Max, still struggling to understand, raised his hands in protest. “Wait, what’s happening? Why are they...”

Before he could finish, one of the men gently but firmly took him by the arm, steering him toward the car. Hanford struggled as another man did the same to him, but their grip was like steel.

“Let me go!” Hanford bellowed, his voice echoing in the concrete car park. “You’ll regret this! You’ll all regret this!”

Ms. Matsumoto watched impassively as the men were ushered into the back seat of the car. As the doors closed, she adjusted her blazer and smoothed her skirt with practiced precision. The car pulled away, its taillights disappearing into the dimness of the garage, leaving Ms. Matsumoto standing alone in the silent space. She turned and walked back toward the elevator, her heels clicking sharply against the cold concrete.



The train rocked gently as it sped through the Tokyo night, its quiet hum broken only by the faint announcements of upcoming stations. Inside the brightly lit car, Hanford and Max sat side by side, their gazes fixed on the floor, their faces etched with shame. Both were back in their office lady outfits — white blouses tucked into knee-length black skirts, stockings smoothing their legs, and the three-inch black heels that had become their new burden. A faint scent of floral perfume clung to them, adding another layer of discomfort to their already humiliating predicament.

The other passengers in the train car were silent, but the weight of their stares was suffocating. A middle-aged salaryman shifted uncomfortably in his seat, stealing glances from behind his newspaper. Two high school girls whispered to each other, giggling behind their hands. A pair of elderly women sitting across from them stared openly, their lined faces neutral but their eyes sharp with curiosity.

Max tugged nervously at the hem of his skirt, his fingers brushing against the cold metal of his purse strap. His shoulders hunched as he tried to make himself smaller, his freshly pierced ears glinting under the harsh fluorescent lights. A pair of delicate gold studs, chosen for him at the clinic, now adorned his ears. He caught a glimpse of his reflection in the train window and winced. The earrings felt heavy, both physically and emotionally, as if they were tangible proof of how far his dignity had fallen.

His mind drifted back to the events of the “salon,” his stomach tightening at the memory. The sterile white walls of the clinic had been far from the luxurious pampering he’d imagined. Instead, it was a methodical transformation process, one designed to strip away any remnants of their former masculinity.

He recalled the piercing station vividly: the sterile needle glinting under the overhead light, the sharp pinch of pain as the technician worked with calm efficiency. Max had gritted his teeth, trying not to cry out, but the sensation of the cold earrings being fastened into place had made him shudder. When the technician handed him a mirror to admire her work, he’d barely been able to look.

Beside him, Hanford shifted in his seat, the quiet clink of his heels tapping against the train floor. His jaw was set in a hard line, but the furrow in his brow betrayed his inner turmoil. His mind, too, was replaying scenes from the clinic.

The memory of the electrolysis chair burned brightly. He could still feel the sting of the small electric needles as they meticulously thinned and reshaped his once-bushy eyebrows. The clinicians, dressed in soft pastel uniforms, had worked with calm precision, chatting lightly in Japanese about trivial matters as if his humiliation wasn’t unfolding right before them.

Hanford had tried to protest, his voice low and seething, but the clinicians ignored him, offering only polite smiles. When the procedure was finished, they handed him a mirror. He’d stared at his reflection, stunned into silence. His eyebrows, now delicately arched and tapered, framed his face in a way that made him look softer — almost doll-like. He’d barely recognized himself.

Max leaned closer, his voice a whisper. “This is a nightmare,” he muttered, clutching the strap of his purse as though it were a lifeline. “I thought salons were supposed to be... I don’t know, relaxing? What was that place?”

Hanford didn’t answer immediately. His hand twitched, brushing against his purse, his mind replaying the moment when the clinic staff had presented them with an array of earrings to choose from. He’d initially refused, his voice rising in fury, but the burly men from earlier had stood nearby, their silent presence making it clear that resistance was futile. Begrudgingly, he’d chosen the smallest, least conspicuous studs, hoping they wouldn’t draw too much attention. Now, the soft glint of silver on his ears felt like a brand he couldn’t escape.

“This isn’t over,” Hanford muttered finally, his voice low and dangerous.

Max glanced at him, his expression skeptical. “It sure feels over to me.”

The train slowed as it approached the next station, the familiar chime echoing through the car. The two men tensed as a group of young women boarded, their laughter filling the once-quiet space. The women glanced in their direction, their chatter momentarily stopping as they took in the sight of the two men. One of them giggled, whispering something to her friend, who covered her mouth to hide a smirk.

Max shifted uncomfortably, heat rising to his cheeks. He tried to tug his skirt lower, but the tailored fit made it impossible. Hanford glared straight ahead, his fists clenching in his lap.

As the train resumed its journey, Tokyo’s neon lights flashed through the windows, casting the interior of the car in vibrant, shifting colors. Outside, the city pulsed with life — bright signs advertising everything from ramen shops to karaoke bars, vending machines humming quietly on street corners, and bicycles weaving between pedestrians on the narrow sidewalks. The world seemed to carry on as usual, indifferent to the humiliation Hanford and Max were enduring.

Max finally broke the silence. “Do you think this is how it’s going to be every day?”

Hanford’s jaw tightened. “Not if I can help it.”

Max didn’t reply. Instead, he stared down at the faint sheen of his pantyhose, the fabric catching the light with each subtle movement of his legs. He felt a wave of helplessness wash over him, the reality of their situation settling heavily on his shoulders.

The train rocked gently as it sped along the tracks, its hum a rhythmic backdrop to the memories that weighed heavily on Hanford and Max. Both



men stood stiffly, their backs straight, clutching their purses as though the contents might offer some semblance of normalcy in the surreal nightmare they were living.

Hanford's hands clenched around his bag, his eyes narrowing as he stared at the floor. The memories from the clinic burned in his mind with a sizzling sound. He could still feel the cold sensation of the clippers against his scalp, the humiliating buzz as every strand of his hair was shaved clean. He'd shouted at the staff, demanded they stop, but they had ignored him, proceeding with calm, almost cheerful efficiency.

When his head was bare, they'd brought back the wigs — jet-black with straight, thick strands that shimmered under the clinic's fluorescent lights. The stylists worked with quiet precision, gluing the hairpieces seamlessly to their freshly shaven heads. The result was strikingly feminine, the glossy black hair framed their faces in ways Hanford had never imagined. He'd caught a glimpse of himself in the mirror and had to look away, the transformation too jarring to process.