



*A Different Me*



"How was your game?" asked Rebecca, looking up from where she'd been dicing vegetables on the kitchen counter. Her voice, while feminine, was a little deeper than one might expect.

"Fine," was Sebastian's monosyllabic answer. He shoved his hands in his pockets, repeating, "It was fine."

"Care to elaborate?" asked his stepmother, her tone hopeful as she grinned at the boy. He'd just turned eighteen, but she still thought of him as a child. Part of that was because he'd never quite sprouted the way they'd all hoped, and he remained quite short. Even the muscle he'd added over the previous six months of intensive weight training hadn't done much to affect his slight frame.

"Not really," he answered, looking away. "I went two-for-three, but we lost. You'd know if you were there."

"I told you I had to work," she said.

"Yeah," was his noncommittal response. "I know."

It wasn't so much that he'd wanted his stepmother at his baseball game. He didn't. Or rather, he wouldn't admit it, even to himself. But he was so used to having someone there cheering for him that he'd take whatever he got - even if it was the woman who'd tried to establish herself as his mother. To say he was of two minds on the subject would be an understatement. But teenagers were full of contradictions, and Sebastian Prince was no exception.

"I'll be at the next one," she said. "I promise."

He shook his head. "Don't bother," he said. "I don't want to be too inconvenient for you. You've got your life. I've got mine. And there's no reason for the two to intersect. It's not like we're related, right?"

He'd practiced the statement a hundred times, knowing full well how the remarks would cut to the core of his stepmother. But he didn't care. He wanted to hurt her. And he knew exactly how.

"But yeah," he said, turning to leave the kitchen. He started to leave. "I've got homework to do. Thanks for asking about my game."





"She's trying, you know," said Olivia. "You should give her a chance."

"You mean 'it' is trying," argued Sebastian, collapsing onto his girlfriend's couch. He massaged the bridge of his nose. "She's not a real woman."

"You don't mean that," Olivia responded, sitting down. "You're not that much of an asshole."

Sebastian glanced over at his girlfriend. She was only a year older than him, but she was far more mature. And he knew he was lucky that she put up with his nonsense. After all, she was as perfect of a girl as he could imagine. Blonde hair. Blue eyes. A body that most women could only dream of. And on top of all that, she was as smart as anyone he knew. Olivia was the total package, and they both knew it.

He sighed. "I know," he said. "I'm just being a dick. I'd never say that to her face."

"Just behind her back," Olivia stated.

"Don't be like that," he said.

"Don't say transphobic things," responded Olivia.

Sebastian didn't answer. It wasn't that he hated his stepmother. He didn't. In fact, he liked her. She was young enough to understand his references. She liked a lot of the same things he did. And she really wanted to be a good mother. But when his father had died, he had put up a wall. As far as he was concerned, the only person with any right to parent him was dead.

"Fine," he said. "But that doesn't mean I have to let her act like she's my mom. She's not."

"If you say so," Olivia said. "But I think you're just being stubborn."

"Yeah, well - that's me," he said. "Stupid, stubborn Sebastian."



"How old are you, son?" asked the scout. Sebastian had seen his like before. Old, battered face. Alert eyes. Weather-beaten skin. He was an old-school scout, but Sebastian had no idea what team he represented.

"Eighteen," Sebastian said.

As soon as he said the word, Sebastian saw the expected reaction. He'd gotten used to it, over the years because he knew he didn't look his age.

Quite the contrary, he looked like he'd barely even started puberty. Smooth-faced, with a short, slight frame, he knew he wasn't anyone's picture of a perfect athlete. But in that small package was the best baseball player in the state. Even so, scouts were always surprised at just how small and youthful he looked.

"Right," the man said, looking down at his clipboard. "Sebastian Prince. Eighteen."

"That's me," said the baseball player. "I hit over .500 last year. Shooting for .600 this year."

"Only one homerun, though," the man muttered, almost under his breath. "Inside the park." He looked up. "Middle infielder, right?"

Sebastian nodded. "Yes, sir," he said, knowing full well that he had no shot with the man. Baseball was chock full of old-school thinkers who considered a player's measurables to be at least as important as their ability to play baseball. They wanted a certain height. They wanted a certain weight. A specific demeanor. Anyone who didn't fit those criteria was quickly dismissed.

In a perfect world, a player with Sebastian's skillset would be at least seven inches taller and forty pounds heavier. He would have power and strength. But Sebastian had never possessed either of those. Even as a kid, he'd been smaller than his peers, and that had never changed. Puberty came and went, and he barely cleared five feet, earning him the affectionate nickname "Mighty Mouse" from his teammates. He'd taken it good-naturedly, but he hated the moniker, just like he hated people like the scout standing before him.

As the scout continued his questions, Sebastian wished he could have just been average-sized. He wished he didn't have the subject of his diminutive size hanging over his head. But that wasn't the world he lived in. He couldn't change his size. All he could do was keep pushing to prove everyone wrong.





"Seriously?" asked Jordan. Though they weren't technically related – she was his stepsister – they had grown quite close, and he considered her his closest friend.

"You won the state's player of the year last year. How could he be so dismissive?"

Sebastian shrugged. "Because I'm not six-three?" he suggested. "To guys like him, it doesn't matter that I can hit. It doesn't matter that I can field. If they're going to spend a draft pick on someone out of high school, he better be a sure-thing."

"That's stupid," she said. "You are a sure-thing. I mean, you're –"

"I'm not a pitcher," he said. "That's knock number one. I'm not tall enough. I'm not heavy enough. And I don't hit homeruns. That means my chances of getting drafted out of high school are really slim. It doesn't matter how well I play."

Though he knew it was true, Sebastian hated his situation. Major League teams drafted potential, and no matter what he did, he didn't have as much potential as the roided up, homerun-hitting behemoth the next county over. No – if he ever wanted to make it to the big leagues, he'd have to go to college first, show out there, and then, maybe, he'd get his shot.

"It's not fair," Jordan said.

Again, Sebastian shrugged. "Nothing I can do about it, though," he said. "So, let's just drop it."

"Fine," Jordan said. "But I'm here if you need to talk."

"I don't," Sebastian insisted. "Let's just talk about something else, okay? What about the powderpuff game? Are you still doing it?"

"I guess," she said. "I'll make an idiot of myself, but I'll go out there. What about you?"

"Dressing up as a cheerleader?" he asked. "I don't know..."

"Come on – it's all supposed to be funny," she said. "A bunch of big, strong guys wearing cheerleading skirts while the girls play a game of flag football? It'll be fun."

Sebastian smiled weakly. "Yeah," he said. "I guess. I mean, I'll do it if you think I should."



"I wish you'd talk to me," said Rebecca. "I'm here for you, you know. I know you're going through a lot right now, and -"

Sebastian ignored her overture, interrupting her, "Why are you all dressed up? Do you have a date or something?"

"What? No," she said. "I've got a work thing."

"You look nice," Sebastian said, ignoring her denial. "I hope he treats you well."

"I said it wasn't a date," she said. "I have a meeting with a client. I'm not ready to start dating. Not after...not...you know."

"After my dad died," Sebastian said. "No - I get it. You have to wait a few more months before you replace him, right? What's the protocol there? Six months? A year? Probably not more than a year-and-a-half, huh?"

"W-why would you...I'm not...I d-don't know," she said, her eyes watery.

Sebastian didn't know why he'd said that. At times, he hated the fact that his father had married Rebecca. But he didn't want her to date anyone else, either. The very idea of her going out with another man felt like a betrayal.

"Yeah," he said. "Just a work thing. I get it."

"I...I don't..."

"I probably won't be home when you get back," Sebastian said. "I'll probably just stay at Olivia's tonight. So, you know, if you can get rid of Jordan for the night, the house is all yours." He winked dramatically.

"I...I don't know what to say," she said.

"Nothing to say," Sebastian stated. "We're both adults here. I know you need to get back out there. And I'm giving you that chance."





"What do you want from me?" asked Sebastian as he sat down. Leaning against the wall, he continued, "You want me to apologize to her or something? It's not like I was wrong."

"She had a work thing," Jordan said. "She wasn't going on a date."

"If you believe that, I don't know what to say," Sebastian countered. "She was going out on a date. And that's fine. I don't care."

It was a lie. He did care, though he had no idea why. He hadn't liked Rebecca when his father started dating her. He'd liked her less when they'd gotten engaged. And that dislike had only deepened when he found that she'd been born male.

None of that had changed when his father, Dennis, had succumbed to an unexpected heart attack.

But that didn't mean he wanted her to move on. Somehow, it seemed like a betrayal of a man who'd genuinely loved Rebecca. In Sebastian's eyes, his father was a combination of a superhero and a saint. He'd been as manly of a man as any he'd ever known, and he'd seemed absolutely invincible. He deserved more than a woman who could move on so quickly, especially when he'd overlooked her past.

"It was wrong to treat her like that," Jordan said.

"You have to say that," Sebastian argued. "She's your mom. Or dad. I don't know what to call her."

"The same thing I call her," Jordan said. "Mom. And you know that. You're just being a dick."

Sebastian rolled his eyes. He couldn't be blamed for not knowing what to call the woman; genetically, she was Jordan's father. At fifteen, she - then called Justin - had slept with her then-girlfriend, getting her pregnant. And at sixteen, she'd become a father. At seventeen, her girlfriend had left, leaving her to deal with both her gender identity issues as well as fatherhood. That Jordan had grown up to be fairly normal was an absolute miracle.

"Whatever you call her, you're biased," Sebastian said. "She shouldn't be dating again. It's only been six months."

"I agree, but I don't think she's dating," Jordan said. "And even if she is, it's not serious. She's just trying to distract herself from Dennis being gone. I get that."

"I don't," argued Sebastian. "And I never will."



"This just isn't your game, sweetie," said Olivia, laughing as she held the basketball.

"Shut up," Sebastian said, still reeling from the blocked shot. She hadn't even had to jump. "Just play."

Olivia's smile faded. She was only six inches taller than him, but those six inches counted for a lot on the basketball court. Added to her size advantage was the fact that she'd played quite a bit of basketball with her brothers growing up, which made her edge even more pronounced. Not for the first time, he questioned his decision to play with her.

Olivia shrugged. "We could play something else," she said.

Sebastian wanted nothing more than to simply end the game, then and there, but his competitive nature wouldn't allow him to quit. So, he gritted his teeth, saying, "You scared?"

"I'm not the one getting beat by a girl," she said. "But okay. You asked for it."

And then the game recommenced. It wasn't long before Sebastian realized his mistake. Despite his quickness and athleticism, Olivia's length advantage was too much to overcome. And what's more, she'd been taking it easy on him. Soon, as she lofted shot after shot over his outstretched hands, it became clear that he didn't stand a chance. But he endured, trying his best. It was far from enough, and the game ended with him having only scored a handful of points.

When they were finished, he said, "I let you win, you know."

"Sure you did," Olivia said. "We could go again, if you want. I don't mind if you go all-out."

"Nah," he said, trying to preserve his dignity. "I don't want to embarrass you."

They both knew it was a lie, but neither was willing to make a big deal of it. So, Olivia just accepted it, saying, "Yeah. That's what I was worried about, too." The sarcasm in her tone was obvious.





Rebecca held up her finger, mouthing, "One second" silently while she held the phone to her ear. "Yes," she said. "I understand. I'll put those numbers together for you, and I'll email them to you this afternoon."

As his stepmother continued her phone conversation, Sebastian stewed in his own irritation. He didn't want to be in her office. He didn't even want to talk to her, much less ask for a favor. But he didn't have a choice.

Finally, she said her goodbyes to her client, then hung up the phone. Focusing on him, she smiled, "I'm sorry about that. Mr. Jameson asked me to take care of his sister's mortgage, and she's a really demanding customer." She spread her hands in submission, saying, "But what can I do? He's the boss."

"Yeah," said Sebastian, wondering how she had ever convinced anyone to give her such a good job. As a mortgage broker, she made far more than his father ever had.

"To what do I owe this pleasure?" she asked. "You don't come by here often. Do you want to get some lunch or something?"

Sebastian shook his head. "No," he said. "I just...I just need some money. For baseball stuff. My bat cracked, and I need a new one."

"Aren't they guaranteed?" she asked. "I mean, can't you just send it back to the manufacturer, and they'll replace it?"

Sebastian sighed. So, she'd been paying attention when his previous bats had done the same thing. The composite bats that he used were incredibly live, but they were also prone to cracking. "Yeah," he said. "But if I do that, it won't be back before practice starts."

"Can't you just use someone else's?" she asked.

Sebastian gritted his teeth. He could use someone else's bat, but without the pop supplied by the space-age material from which his bats were made, he couldn't perform at the level he expected.

"No," he said. "I need this. Dad wouldn't have even asked. He'd have just bought it."

Rebecca didn't want to do it. Sebastian could see as much. But she'd also feel incredibly guilty if she didn't. In the end, guilt won. "Fine," she said, reaching into her purse. She retrieved her credit card, saying, "But don't spend too much, okay? And I want to hang out together one of these days."

Sebastian practically snatched the card out of her hand. "Yeah, sure," he said. "Definitely."



"I'm fine," Sebastian said. "Just leave me alone."

Olivia gripped his shoulder. "You're not fine," she said. "I don't know why you won't admit that. That's the worst I've seen you play in...well...it's the worst I've ever seen."

"It was just a practice game," he insisted. "It'll be fine. I'm just rusty."

While those two statements might have been true, they weren't the whole truth. The reality was that, because of his grief over his father's death, he'd steadily lost weight over the previous six months. In addition to that, he'd barely practiced. To some players, baseball was a seasonal sport, but to Sebastian, it had always been a year-round endeavor. And without that constant work, his skills had suffered.

"You need to get it together," she said. "Because we both know you're not getting into State next year unless you get a scholarship. And you can't get a scholarship unless -"

"I know!" he spat. Sighing, he repeated, "I know. It'll be fine, Olivia. I'm just in a small slump. I'll be okay, though. I've been through slumps before."

"Maybe you need to work out more or something," Olivia said. "Go to that hitting coach. You know, the one who played for the Braves."

Sebastian looked away. He didn't want to go to a hitting coach because he didn't trust them. His father had spent countless hours helping him perfect his swing, and he didn't want some stranger to screw it up. Even his high school's baseball coach knew better than to mess with a good thing.

"I said I'm fine, Olivia," he said. "Can't you just drop it?"

"Fine," she said. "But for the record, I think you need help."

"Noted," he said.





"Are you still losing weight?" asked Olivia.

Sebastian shrugged. "I don't know," he said. "Maybe a little."

She fixed him with a glare of disbelief, and he knew exactly why. Over the months since his father's death, he had lost a considerable amount of weight. In fact, he'd stopped even using the scales in his bathroom because the readings were so depressing. But even that couldn't make his appetite return. He knew he'd been experiencing the textbook symptoms of depression. Lack of appetite. Fatigue. Sleeplessness. Irritability. A general malaise. But he didn't want to acknowledge it, so he did everything he could to ignore it.

"You should eat more," she said. "Maybe start drinking those protein shakes I got for you. There was this guy I used to know - he played football. You know, a quarterback. He had like, a bunch of division one offers. But they all had the same criticism. He was too light. So, he'd eat like a jar of peanut butter a day. And eventually, he gained a ton of weight."

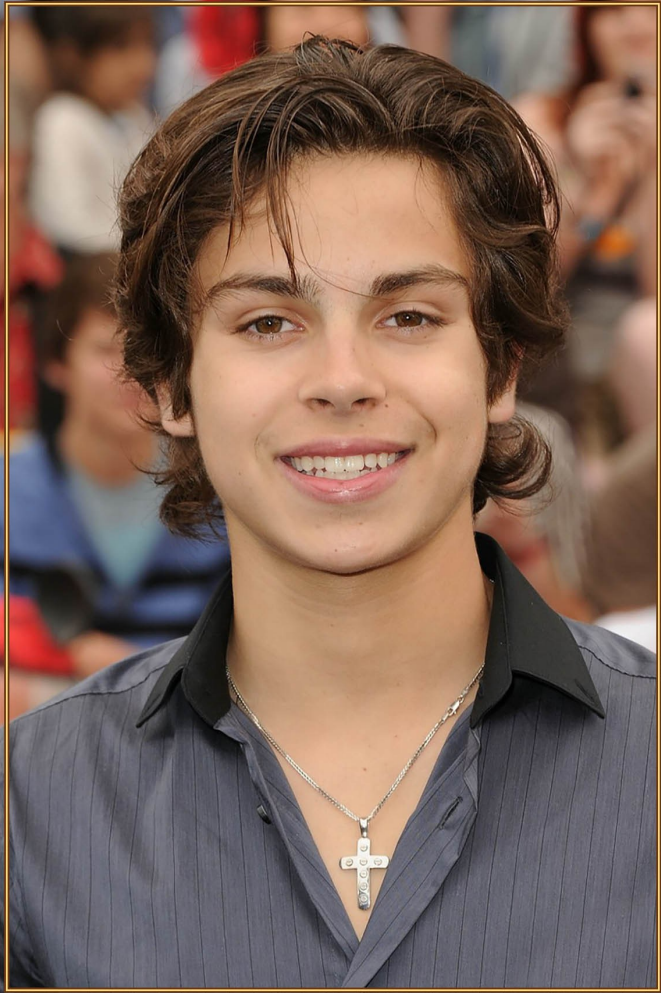
Sebastian didn't need to listen to the details of her story to know that she was talking about her ex-boyfriend, who'd gone on to star at quarterback for the recent national champions. He was everything Sebastian wasn't - big and strong and perfect - which made him feel all the more self-conscious.

"So you want me to eat a jar of peanut butter every day?" he asked.

"You do know I'm allergic to peanuts, right?"

"You are?" she asked. "I mean, I knew that. I just...I just thought you could find something else like that. You have to force yourself to eat. You know, nobody's giving you a scholarship if you weight less than a female gymnast."

He shook his head. "I know," he said. "I'm fine. I swear, I'm fine. Just...you know...I'm fine. That's all. I'm okay."



“And for the North Carolina State Player of the Year,” said the emcee, who stood behind a podium on the raised stage. “Playing second base for the Grant Grayson High School Cougars, Sebastian Prince!”

Sebastian, who’d been waiting for his name to be called, stood up from his front-row seat. He was flanked by the state’s other award winners, and he tried to ignore the fact that, even with them seated, he was only barely taller than even the shortest. Forcing a smile, he ascended the steps onto the stage.

He took the award – a plaque that seemed a lot less grandiose than the award might imply – and shook the presenter’s hand. Then, he stepped behind the podium. Adjusting the microphone, he said, “Wow.”

The crowd laughed as he continued, “I’ve been working towards this for most of my career. Me and my dad. Going up to the cages to hit every single afternoon since I was four. Taking infield when I was dead tired. Bruises. Sore muscles. Broken bones. An elbow surgery. Through it all, he was there, pushing me to be the best I could be.”

He wiped a tear from his cheek. “He died last year,” Sebastian said into the microphone. “But I think he knew I was going to get this award. I think he knew from the moment I hit my first ball off of a tee. He was my biggest fan. He was my best critic. He made me the man I am today.”

Sebastian lofted the plaque into the air. “This one’s for you, dad,” he said. “I love you.”

The crowd cheered, but Sebastian didn’t hear it. He could hardly even think, the emotions were so palpable. He had barely talked about his relationship with his father since the man had died. And even that pretty speech didn’t truly convey their bond. The man had been hard on him – probably too hard – but he’d also gotten the most out of Sebastian. And for that, he’d be eternally grateful.

As he sat next to his peers, Sebastian wondered if he could ever push himself as hard as his father had.





"You need a haircut," said Jordan, Sebastian's stepsister. "You know that right? Unless you're reconsidering my idea..."

"No," he said. "I'm not."

"Come on!" Jordan said, playfully hitting him in the shoulder. "It would be hilarious, and you know it."

Sebastian sighed. Jordan had recently become obsessed with the idea of him showing up to the upcoming powderpuff football game, completely dressed to the nines. She wanted him in full makeup, a skimpy cheerleading costume she'd found online, and a wig. She'd even talked about him doing a full-on drag queen impression, complete with exaggeratedly feminine movements and voice.

"And everybody I know would make fun of me," he said.

"Not if you make sure everybody knows it's a joke," she said. "You really need to stop being so serious all the time. Learn to make fun of yourself. If you did, you wouldn't be so sensitive about your height."

"Fuck you," he said, though there was little animosity in his voice. Jordan was the only person in the world to whom he was able to admit his self-consciousness about his size. He knew she wouldn't judge him, and it was nice to get such things off his chest.

"It's not like anybody would think you were a real girl or anything," she said. "There's a long tradition of guys crossdressing for laughs. I mean, think of all the guys who've done it on Saturday Night Live. Or what's that horrible movie you like? Sorority Boys?"

"It's not horrible," he argued. "It's funny."

"Which just proves my point - it'll be hilarious," she said. "And maybe you'd get out of this little funk you're in."

He sighed. "Fine," he said. "I'll do it. But if this goes wrong, it's your fault."



"Oh," said Jordan, who'd just walked in to see her stepbrother drying off after his shower. She was stunned to see how much weight he'd lost. From behind, he almost looked like a girl - especially with his ever-lengthening hair. "Shit. Sorry."

Sebastian quickly wrapped the towel around his waist. "Jesus, don't you knock?" he growled, turning to face her. Seeing him without a shirt was even more telling; he'd lost almost all of his muscle tone.

"I said I was sorry," she stated. "We live in the same house. It was bound to happen eventually."

"That doesn't mean you barge into the bathroom without knocking," he said. "I mean, fuck, Jordan."

"Quit being a baby," she said, trying to ignore his abnormally thin body. "It's not like you have anything I haven't seen before. And besides - it's not like I'm interested in that sort of thing."

"Just because you're a lesbian doesn't mean you get to just peep on me whenever you want, you perv," he said.

"As if I was peeping," she said. "I was just coming in here to tell you dinner was ready. Not that you're going to eat, though."

"I'm not hungry," he argued.

"Seriously, though - how much weight have you lost?" she asked.

"Not that much," he lied. "I'm fine."

"Did you quit working out?" she asked.

"I've been doing some calisthenic stuff," was his next lie. Since his dad had died, Sebastian had been unable to find the motivation to go to the gym. And as a result of that lack of gym time, combined with his lack of food, his muscles had all but disappeared. However, he did his best to ignore it, deciding that it wasn't as bad as he made it out to be. He'd always been hard on himself in that arena, so it wasn't anything new for him to hate his body. "It's specifically for baseball players. They don't want us lifting weight as much - you know, for flexibility."

"If you say so," she said. "So - not coming down to dinner?"

He shook his head. "Nah," he said. "I'm good. Thanks, though."





"So," said Sebastian. "How is it?"

"How is what?" asked Olivia. "I've told you before - you have to be more specific if you actually want me to have a conversation with you. I can't read your mind, baby."

Sebastian took a deep breath, steadying his nerves. He hated when she called him "baby", and she knew it. In fact, he hated pet names. They were degrading. But "baby" was the worst because of his issues with his size. But he swallowed his anger.

"Living with your new roommate," he said. Being a year older than him, Olivia was already in college. "You got a new one this year, didn't you?"

Olivia smiled. "Oh - yeah," she said. "Aaron's great. He's really sweet, and he's a good roommate."

"He? I thought...I mean...I thought it was Erin," he said. "With an 'E'. You're living with a dude?"

"God - you're not going to freak out about this, are you?" she asked. "Two people can live together and not have it get sexual. I mean, you don't hear me bitching about you living with the school slut, do you?"

"Jordan is not a slut," he said. "And besides - she's my stepsister."

"Tell that to last year's basketball team," Olivia said. "Or is she still pretending she's a dyke now? I guess she might like girls, too. I mean, she might have gone through the entire school's male population and is starting on the girls now."

Sebastian wanted to argue, but he knew it would do little good. He and Olivia had had that argument before, and Olivia's opinion of Jordan wouldn't soon change.

"Can we just agree to disagree?" he asked. "Let's just talk about something else. How's school?"

She laughed. "You wouldn't understand, sweetie," she said. "It's all really complicated. Let's just watch a movie or something, okay?"



"I like it," said Jordan, flicking his shoulder-length hair. "It makes you look cool."

Sebastian didn't know if he agreed, but he'd had enough girls tell him the same thing to make him rethink the idea of getting it cut. In fact, it had surprised him how quickly it had grown. Maybe it was the new shampoo Jordan had given him. Or maybe he was just lucky.

"Yeah," he said. "I kind of like it. I don't like having to take care of it, though."

"It'll be great when the powderpuff game comes around," she said. "You are still doing it, right?"

Sebastian nodded. "I said I would, didn't I?" he said.

"Yeah, but you've been really hesitant to try on your costume," she said. "We need to see if it fits."

"I thought it not fitting was kind of the point," he said. "You know, boy in a cheerleading outfit?"

"It'll fit," she said, looking him up and down and pointedly ignoring his comment. "We might have to get you some new panties. And you'll definitely need to spend a couple of days getting comfortable with the tuck. But -"

"Wait - what are you talking about?" he asked. "Panties? Tucking?"

"Just trust me," she said. "You're going to look great. I bet we could even fool a few people into thinking you're a real girl."

"W-what?" Sebastian asked. "That's not -"

"It'll be great," she said. "You'll see."





"I hate that you cut it," Jordan said. "The powderpuff game is only six weeks away."

"Olivia made me," Sebastian responded, running his hand through his freshly-cut hair. It had gone from shoulder-length to jaw-length in a single afternoon. And though he was loathe to admit it, he missed feeling it tickle his shoulders.

"You really need to put your foot down with her," Jordan said. "She has no right to run your life."

"She's my girlfriend," Sebastian said.

"And she's shackled up with some guy," Jordan pointed out. "And she cheated on you last year, in case you forgot. She doesn't deserve you."

Sebastian didn't address her points because he couldn't really argue them. Olivia was living with another guy, though it was purely platonic. And she had cheat on him. However, she had been drunk, and she had told him right away. It wasn't like she ever would have made that decision sober.

"She didn't like it," Sebastian said. "She said it made me look too feminine."

In reality, she hadn't said it exactly that way. Instead, she'd said that she hadn't agreed to go out with a "sissy", and that if he insisted on keeping his hair long, she would find someone else to date. It hadn't helped matters that she was topless when she'd said it.

"We can use extensions, right?" he asked. "That's what you had planned before I let my hair grow out, right?"

"Yeah, but that's not what I wanted," she said. "I guess this is going to have to do. I don't like it, but I can't put your hair back on. Just talk to me before you make any other changes, okay? At least until after the game."

"Fine," he said. "But you owe me."

"Yeah, sure - whatever," Jordan said. "I owe you. Whatever that means."



"If you tell anybody about this, I'm going to kill you," said Sebastian, holding the pair of panties. He wore only a pair of nondescript, gray boxers. "You understand that, right?"

Jordan smiled. "Just put them on," she said. "It's not a big deal. They're just underwear."

Sebastian sighed. "They're not just underwear," he stated. "You would understand if you were a guy."

"But I'm not," she said. "And besides - when you go out there, what do you think you're going to wear under your skirt? The bloomers are super tight, so you're going to have to wear something pretty skimpy underneath. I mean, even these are probably too loose."

"Explain to me again why I'm doing this now," he said. "I can't just wear them when the time comes?"

"Sizing," she said. "Plus, you need to get used to this. You need to act like a chick. And you can't do that if it's your first time wearing panties."

Sebastian didn't argue. They'd gone over the plan a hundred times, and each time he'd raised an objection, his concerns had been shot down. Jordan was going to get what she wanted, one way or another, and there was nothing he could do about it. She'd needle him, making him feel guilty and silly for resisting all at the same time. So, if she wanted him to get into the role, he had little choice but to agree.

Sighing, he ducked into his room, closing the door behind him. Unceremoniously, he stripped off his boxers and pulled his - or rather, Jordan's - panties up his freshly-shaved legs. That was another seemingly-unnecessary condition. Settling everything into place, he tucked his manhood between his legs like he'd seen on the video Jordan had shown him. It wasn't perfect, and when the day came, he'd use tape, but it was a good start to giving him the smooth groin Jordan expected. Finally, he stepped out of his room and struck a pose for his stepsister.

She let out a wolf-whistle. "Lookin' good, sexy," she said. "Turn around."

He did as he was told. "A little baggy," she said. "You don't have much a butt back here. But you'll be fine. Just wear these to school today, and I'll give you some more for tomorrow. By the time the game comes around, you'll be used to wearing them."





She pushed her breasts together, and Sebastian nearly fainted. Not for the first time, he counted himself lucky that such a beautiful girl would ever consider dating him. But he kept himself under control as he lay back on her dorm room's bed. "Where's your roommate?" he asked.

"The perfect Aaron."

"He's not perfect," said Olivia, letting her arms fall to her sides. Her breasts, barely confined by her light-blue bra, bounced enticingly. "And he's out with his friends. He'll be back later if you want to meet him."

"I think I'll pass," Sebastian answered, idly tossing a baseball up and down as he tried to appear unconcerned. "Are you really changing your major?"

She nodded. "Communications is a waste of a degree," she said. "I'm going pre-law, now."

"Do you really want to be a lawyer?" he asked, turning to prop himself up on a bent elbow.

"I want to be rich," she said. "And law is the way to do that. Aaron's pre-law, too. He says that someone like me could really be successful."

"What's that supposed to mean?" asked Sebastian.

"It means that I'm smart and outgoing," she said. "I've never even made a 'B'. I know law school can be hard, but I have to believe I'll graduate at the top of my class. And when that happens, I'll have a lot of job opportunities."

"Where do I fit into all this?" he asked. "I thought you wanted to be a sports reporter. We were going to be a couple like Christian and Samantha Ponder, right? We were going to be rich and famous."

"That was just talk from two naïve kids," she said. "Like when people say they want to be a cowboy or an astronaut or a professional athlete. I thought you knew that."

"Y-yeah," he said. "I guess. Yeah. I knew that."



"I want us to be friends," said Rebecca.

"You've probably said that a hundred times," was Sebastian's irritated response. "I know."

"But do you believe that?" she asked.

He shrugged. "I don't know," he said. "I mean, I guess you do. Yeah. That's the right answer, isn't it? That's what you want me to say, right?"

"Why do you always do that?" she asks.

"Do what?" was his response.

"Make jokes," she said. "Every single time I try to get serious with you, you act like you're on a sitcom or something. Your dad's death was hard on me, too. It was hard for both of us. I don't know why you won't open up to me."

Sebastian was silent for a long moment before he looked up, asking, "Do you really want to know?"

"I do," she said. "I want to know why you've always been so hostile with me."

"Because you're a freak," he said. "Everybody says so. Do you want to know what Uncle Rick said when he found about you? He still calls you 'that tranny who turned his brother gay'. Everybody else in the family thinks that, too. I think that."

Rebecca looked down at the floor, obviously weeping. "I...I'm sorry," she said. "I didn't...I didn't know you felt that way."

Sebastian felt a surge of guilt in the pit of his stomach. The truth was that he didn't care that she was transgender. That was just a way to dig at the woman who had, in the end, monopolized his father's time. When Dennis had met Rebecca, the time he spent with Sebastian wilted away. And for a while, Sebastian was okay with it. He was happy that his father was happy. But then he'd died, and Sebastian had realized that he had missed out on quite a bit of father-son time. He blamed Rebecca.

He sighed. "I'm sorry," he said. "I didn't mean that. I mean, Uncle Rick is an asshole. But I don't hate you. I don't. I'm just having a hard time with everything that's going on. I've been slumping at the plate and Olivia's busy with school. I just...I didn't mean that. I'm sorry."

"It's okay," Rebecca said, wiping the tears from her eyes. She forced a smile. "I'm here for you. I am. I don't care if you hate me or whatever. I am here for you."



Sebastian looked in the mirror. "Shit," he said. "This is freaking creepy."

The word didn't begin to describe his reaction to wearing makeup for the first time. He had always had a soft-featured face, and he'd been called "pretty" before. But he had never expected to look so much like a girl. It was unnerving.

Jordan threw a towel to him, which he caught. "Dry off," she said, nodding toward his damp chest. He'd just washed off some foul-smelling concoction intended to rid him of what little chest hair he possessed, and his torso was still a little wet.

Wiping off the water, he said, "This is crazy. You realize that, right? I never expected it to look like this."

Jordan grinned. "I did," she said. "Did you shave your legs, too?"

Sebastian pulled up his sweatpants, revealing his completely smooth legs. He'd been shaving those for a few weeks, but at Jordan's insistence, he had also included his groin and underarms as well. The result was that his body was as smooth as any girl's.

"Nice," she said. "You're going to look great in that costume."

"Are you sure about this?" he asked. "I mean, I'll do it. You know I'll do it. But don't you think people will get the wrong idea if I show up looking like a real girl?"

"Nobody's going to think you're a girl," she said. "They all know you. Everybody will see the joke for what it is."

"And what, exactly, is the joke?" he asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Seriously?" she said. "I thought you knew. Okay, so here's the thing. These sorts of activities are super sexist, right? They imply that girls can't play football and that boys can't be cheerleaders. The very idea of anybody going against that is seen as so improbably that they build an entire event out of making fun of it. But what if a boy shows up looking as good as the cheerleaders, right? It's the same as if some girl were to show up looking like The Rock. It shows them how stupid their ideas of gender roles are."

"Oh," he said. "I thought it was just a...well...I just thought it was a joke about a guy crossdressing. You know, like we talked about."

"I don't know where you got that idea," she said. "We're making a statement here. You and me. You're practically a feminist now."





"You'll be okay, though, right?" asked Rebecca.

"We'll be fine," Sebastian answered.

"Because I won't go if you don't want me to," she said. "I can send Jacobs. He's been on me about -"

"I'll be fine," Sebastian insisted. "Just go. It's not a big deal. We'll be okay. We're both adults."

"I know, but I hate leaving you here by yourselves," Rebecca said. "I feel like a bad mom."

"You're not," Sebastian stated. Since his insulting statement from the week before, Sebastian had been making a point to be nice to his stepmother. It was difficult, because he still resented her. But he knew that her heart was in the right place.

"I always wanted a son, you know," Rebecca said. "Did I ever tell you that?"

Sebastian shook his head. "No," he stated, glancing at the clock. He wanted nothing more than to be left alone, and not just because he didn't want to share a "moment" with his stepmother. That was part of it, but he was also cognizant of the upcoming powderpuff game. And something told him that Rebecca wouldn't approve of the plan. So, he and Jordan had agreed not to start getting him ready until Rebecca had left for her business trip.

"It's true," she said, sitting down. "When Amy told me she was pregnant, I just...I just sort of assumed it would be a boy. It didn't work out that way, of course. And when I transitioned, that kind of became impossible. I love Jordan more than anything, but the idea of having a son never left my mind. I guess what I'm trying to say is that I hope that one day you can think of me as your mother because I already think of you as my son."

"Yeah," Sebastian said, feeling uncomfortable. He knew she was waiting on him to say something, but he had no idea what to say. So, he remained silent for a long moment before he made a show of looking at his phone.

"Oh - you'd better go, or you'll miss your flight."



“Are you ready?” asked Jordan, standing in front of a very scared Sebastian. She had spent the previous ninety minutes doing his hair and makeup, but Sebastian couldn’t help but wish that it had taken longer. Much, much longer. He was terrified of what would come next.

His eyes flicked to the bed, where he saw the skimpy, green-and-black cheerleading outfit. “I don’t know about this, Jordan,” he said. “I mean, I could get in trouble, right?”

“Trouble? How?” she asked. “We’re making a statement here. It’s for women’s equality. How could they get mad at that?”

He shrugged. “I’ve been thinking about it,” he said. “You remember what happened when all the girls got mad about the dress code?”

She nodded. “We all came to school wearing just our panties,” she said. “And they caved, right?”

“After they threatened to expel every single one of you,” he stated. “I remember Dr. Lathan saying that students don’t have the right to protest like that.”

“But they didn’t expel anyone,” she pointed out. “And they loosened the dress code. We don’t have to wear those stupid skirts every day anymore. We can wear real pants.”

“That’s what I’m saying, though,” he responded. “They didn’t expel anybody because they couldn’t expel everyone. But with it just being me...”

“You’re not breaking any rules,” she said. “This costume isn’t that much more revealing than the real cheerleading uniforms. And it’s an afterschool activity. They won’t do anything if it’s not during school hours.”

Sebastian started to voice another objection, but Jordan silenced him by saying, “Just trust me. It’ll be fine. Now, let’s get you dressed, okay? We don’t want to be late for your big show.”



"Wow," said Jordan. "I mean, seriously. Wow."

"Do I look stupid?" he asked. "I do. I look stupid. I don't want to do this."

He'd forgotten that his original interpretation of Jordan's plan had been for exactly that. Once, he might have taken comfort in an inability to look good wearing a woman's cheerleading costume. But as he stood in front of his stepsister, cheap pom-poms in hand, he felt an inexplicable desire to pass. Sebastian wasn't quite ready to confront that fact, so he simply ignored it.

"You look amazing," she said, stepping forward. She rubbed the skirt's fabric between her thumb and forefinger, lifting it to reveal his green bloomers. Or more importantly, it revealed his smooth groin. The tape was holding well. "This is going to be so awesome."

"I still don't know about -"

Jordan grabbed his wrist. "Come on," she said, dragging him toward the door. "We're going to be late."

Sebastian should have been able to simply snatch his arm away from his stepsister, but the idea never even crossed his mind. There was something about being dressed like a girl - and so convincingly - that sent him into a submissive mindset. He never even voiced his objection as she led him to the car.

"Do you remember your routine?" Jordan asked.

He nodded. "I do," he said. It was a simple cheer, but she'd made him practice it a hundred times. "Are you going to stay?"

"Of course I'm going to stay," she said. "I'll be in the stands. I'll be waiting for you."

"Because I really don't want to spend longer wearing this than I have to," he said. "I just -"

"I'll be there, Sebastian," she promised. "Just relax. This is going to be fun."



“Well,” said Silas, a blonde boy Sebastian had played baseball with for most of his life. “What do we have here?”

“Looks like a sissy to me, Silas,” said Cooper, who was leaning against a wall of lockers. “Are you a sissy?”

“Hey...um...guys,” said Sebastian. “I was just...I was just looking for my stepsister, Jordan.”

Grant, who wore a gray shirt and a backwards baseball cap, looked around. “No Jordan here, sissy,” he said. “Just us. So, maybe you’re looking for us, huh? What do you think, Silas?”

“I think she was definitely looking for us,” said the center-most boy. “What do you say, sissy? How about we make this the best day of your life?”

“Come on, guys – it’s me,” said Sebastian, resisting the urge to panic. He could easily recognize the danger in the situation. “You know I’m not...this was all just a joke. You saw me at the game, right?”

“I saw you dancing like a cheerleader,” Silas said. “Shaking that cute little ass. I always knew you liked dick, Prince. I just didn’t know you’d turn out so damned cute.”

Sebastian had heard enough. He turned on his heel, and sprinted down the hall. Not for the first time, he cursed his stepsister for not being where she’d promised she would be. In fact, she was nowhere to be found. Everything had gone perfectly – he’d come out, and he had cheered like they’d practiced. The only hiccup had come when it came time to leave. He’d been searching for Jordan when he’d run into four of the school’s most notorious bullies.

Turning this way and that in the maze of hallways, he ended up taking refuge in the girl’s locker room. It was blessedly empty, being after school, and he quickly found his way into a corner, where he hid. Sebastian knew the other boys couldn’t keep up with him, she felt secure in the knowledge that he was safe.

Until he heard the door creep open.

“He wouldn’t come in here,” said Eddie, the boy who’d remained silent in their previous confrontation. “It’s too obvious.”

“She came in here,” said Silas. “I know she did.”

Sebastian crouched, trying to make himself as small as possible while he wondered what had happened to his stepsister.





“There you are,” said Silas, grabbing Sebastian by the arm. He dragged the much-smaller figure to his feet. “Why’re you running?  
We were having a nice little conversation back there.”

“I...I...um...I just...”

Words failed Sebastian. He was so afraid that he simply couldn’t articulate a sentence. And that frightened him even more because he’d dealt with bullies before. He’d gone down swinging enough times that he was confident in his own ability to give as good as he got. But the look in Silas’ eyes unnerved him. The other boy didn’t want to beat him up. No. He wanted something else.

“Just leave him alone,” prompted Eddie. “He’s going to -”

“Shut the fuck up, Eddie,” barked Silas. He pulled Sebastian close, fumbling with his skirt. After only a moment, he became frustrated, and simply dragged the thing down Sebastian’s legs. “You even look like a girl down there, huh? Come clean, Prince - you’ve been a girl all this time, right? You’ve been aching for some real dick.”

“W-what?” he managed as Silas shoved his hand down his bloomers. Tears streaked down his cheeks, ruining his makeup. “I’m not -”

“What the fuck?” Silas half-screamed, retracting his hand as if he’d been burned. “Tape? Seriously?”

He slapped Sebastian across the face, sending the other boy onto the floor. “This fucker’s dick’s taped down between her legs,” he said.

“Come on, Silas,” said Grant as he gripped his friend’s arm. “This is going too far.”

“Nah,” Silas said, jerking away as he hooked his fingers under the waistband of his pants. “This little bitch is going to suck my cock. Or she’s going to get the beating of her faggot life.” To Sebastian, he said, “You heard me. On your knees, slut.”

Sebastian could see the anger flashing in Silas’ eyes. He could see the lust there as well. And he knew the other boy was dead serious. In a split second, he made his decision. He’d rather suck a dick than be killed by someone twice his size. He crawled to his knees as Silas grinned, pulling his cock out.

And that’s how the principal, Dr. Lathan, found them - Sebastian on his knees in front of Silas, who had his pants around his ankles.







"Sit," said the principal, and Sebastian obeyed. He felt incredibly awkward and exposed, and not just because he was barely dressed. He'd wrapped his ruined skirt around his waist, but it did little to preserve his modesty. But more than that, he was embarrassed at the situation in which Lathan had found him.

The man made a few marks on a sheet of paper upon his desk, then looked up. "The boys have explained what happened," he said.

"It wasn't my fault, Dr. Lathan!" insisted Sebastian. "I didn't -"

The man silenced him with a raised hand. "I don't want to hear it," he said. He shook his head. "I never would have expected something like this out of you. Crossdressing? Solicitation? Sexual acts on school grounds?" He took a deep breath. "Surprising. Disappointing and surprising."

"W-what? I didn't...solicitation?" he said. "W-what are you talking about?"

"You somehow convinced those other boys you were a real girl," he explained. "And then, you got each of them to follow you into the locker room where you wanted to exchange sex for money."

"I...I didn't do -"

"There are four upstanding young men who'll say otherwise," the principal said. "And only one of you. And given what I saw with my own two eyes, I am more inclined to believe them than you."

"B-but I didn't do anything wrong!" Sebastian exclaimed, tears streaming down his face. "I didn't try to...to...get them to pay m-me for anything!"

"And I suppose you're not a crossdresser either," the man said with a smirk. "Face it. You're caught. There's no defense for what you've done. I hope it was worth it, because you're expelled."



“Expelled?” asked Rebecca. “How are you expelled?”

She’d rushed home, cutting her business trip short as soon as the school had informed her of Sebastian’s situation. And in that time, Sebastian had seriously considered running away. He was, after all, eighteen. He could get his GED, join the Army, and nobody would ever have to know about what had happened. But he just couldn’t make the move.

Instead, he simply lay on his bed, wearing nothing but a pair of old boxer shorts, as he stared at the ceiling, thinking of increasingly far-fetched ideas of ways to get out of his situation. By the time Rebecca got home, he’d made his way to the truly improbably, which included fleeing to Mexico and starring in their baseball league.

He looked up. “I’m sorry,” he said before explaining what had happened. He didn’t have the energy or the presence of mind to lie. Nor did he embellish his account. Instead, he told her the simple truth. “And then, t-they must have lied about what happened. They told the principal that I was...that I was, like...a...a prostitute or something. And he believed them because there were four of them.”

“And because of me,” Rebecca said, sitting next to her stepson. She put her arm around him. “He knows I’m transgender. And he knows I’m your stepmother. When he saw you like that, he probably just assumed you were like me.”

“W-wait,” said Sebastian. “Why would he know?”

“Do you remember the transgender bathroom thing from a couple of years ago?” she asked. Sebastian nodded. “Well, I threatened to sue the school if they adhered to that stupid law. He’s hated me ever since.”

“S-so this is your fault?” Sebastian asked.

“No,” she said. “It’s those asshole kids’ fault for assaulting you. But we’ll get this fixed. I promise. We’ll figure out how to make this right.”





"W-where were you?" asked Sebastian, who sat on his bed, staring at nothing.

"I'm sorry," said Jordan, who had finally showed up. "I can explain."

"Good," he said, glaring at his stepsister. "I really want to hear why you weren't where you were supposed to be. I want to know why you stranded me. I really do want to know what was so important that you couldn't be there to pick me up."

"Mom told me what happened," Jordan said. "Are you okay?"

"No," was Sebastian's short, honest answer.

"Okay," she said, sitting on the bed next to him. "I know you're going to hate me for this. But I wasn't there because I met a girl. You know Kelly Hays, right? The cheerleader? Well, I was standing there watching you do your routine, and she just came up to me and started flirting. Before I knew what was going on, we'd ducked behind the bleachers and we were making out. I mean, she actually let me finger her right then and there."

"So you left me to be sexually assaulted by a bunch of assholes because you wanted to hook up with some chick?" Sebastian asked.

"Not just some chick - Kelly Hays," Jordan said. "Like, my dream girl, Kelly Hays."

"Good for you," Sebastian said.

"I...I didn't know what happened was going to happen," she said. "I just thought you'd have to wait a few minutes."

"But you promised," Sebastian said. "You promised you were going to do something, and then you didn't. I mean, fuck, Jordan. Fuck. Those guys were going to...they...I don't...I mean they were going to..."

He couldn't even say it. He couldn't even think about it without bursting into tears. Jordan put her arms around him as he wept. "I f-felt so powerless," he said. "And...a-and Dr. Lathan just...he just ignored it. He's supposed to be there for stuff like this, but he just...he j-just...I...I don't..."

"It's going to be okay," Jordan said, rubbing his back. "I promise, it'll all be okay."

"What?" asked Sebastian, smiling hesitantly. He wore one of Jordan's robes because anything else felt coarse and unpleasant on his still-smooth skin. The cream he'd used to remove the bulk of his body hair had left his skin sensitive. "What conditions?"

"Well," said Rebecca. "They aren't conditions, per se. More like the school called my bluff."

"What bluff?" he asked.

"I sort of threatened to call the ACLU for discrimination against transgender students," she said. "That backed them down from expulsion, but it also sort of gave them the idea that you were transgender."

"What?" he blurted. "But I'm not -"

"I know you're not, sweetie!" she said. "And nobody can make you do anything you don't want. But if you really want to avoid the consequence of what happened, you're going to have to sort of play along."

"What does that even mean?" asked Sebastian. "And I didn't do anything wrong. It was those guys who cornered me! They should be expelled!"

"I know," Rebecca said. "And I think Lathan does too. That's why he's not expelling you for that. He's kicking you out because of what you did at the powderpuff football game. He called it a 'suggestive protest' which was 'meant to corrupt young men and women alike'. His words. He's perfectly within the scope of his authority to punish you. Unless we make it a discrimination thing. And the only way to do that is for you to pretend to be transgender."

"Y-you want me to pretend to be a girl?" he asked. "Like, for real? Not as some kind of a protest or a joke? Like, you want me to pretend to be one full-time? Are you crazy? Are you out of your mind? I have a baseball scholarship to -"

"Um...that's another thing," she said. "Coach Reynolds was there, too. You're off the team. He says it's conduct detrimental to the team."

"I...I don't...I don't know..."

"I'm just telling you your options, sweetie," she said. "But if you want my advice, bit the bullet. It's only for a year, and you might learn somethings about yourself."







"I'm not saying I'm going to do it," Sebastian stated. "I'm just asking how this works. I mean, could I just pretend for a few weeks and then go back on it? Tell them I changed my mind or something?"

"From everything you know about your principal, do you honestly think that's an option?" asked Rebecca. Sebastian shook his head. "Right. There's no way he's going to let this slide. He'll be watching you until you graduate."

"T-that's an entire schoolyear," Sebastian said. "You want me to pretend to be a girl until next year?"

"I want you to graduate high school," Rebecca said. "Because if Lathan expels you from Grayson, you'll be banned from any other public school in the district. And I wouldn't put it past him to keep you out of the private schools, too. Most of them are religious, anyway, so they wouldn't look too kindly on what happened."

"S-so this is my only choice," Sebastian said.

"I think it is," she stated. She rummaged through a bag she'd left on the floor and retrieved a series of garments. She handed them to Sebastian. "Try those on. I think they're your size."

Sebastian stared at them for a long moment before asking, "Can I have some privacy?"

Rebecca nodded. "Sure, sweetie," she said. "Just let me know when you're ready to tell me what you want to do."

Sebastian nodded. As soon as Rebecca left the room, shutting the door behind him, he stripped off Jordan's robe and his boxers. After a couple of seconds' indecision, he slipped the white panties up his legs, following it up by donning the gray cotton bra. Once he'd put on the underwear, he stepped in front of a full-length mirror and stared at his reflection.

He forced an insincere smile. "I'm really going to do this, aren't I?" he asked his reflection.





"You can't be serious," said Olivia, as she clasped her green bra. Sebastian couldn't help but think that he'd soon have to get used to wearing such garments. "I mean, really? This is the solution you and that dumb bitch came up with?"

"She's not dumb," Sebastian said. "And there's no other way."

"So, you're just going to throw it all away, then?" Olivia asked. "What about baseball? Are you really transgender? Is this your weird way of telling me you think you're a girl?"

"What? No!" he said. "I told you - this is the only way I can graduate. Let me explain it all again. I'm -"

"I understood your explanation perfectly well," Olivia said. "What I don't understand is your logic. You could go to another school. I mean, the state line isn't that far. You could get homeschooled. You could -"

"I can't do any of that," Sebastian said. "I can't move. I can't get homeschooled. This really is my only option."

Olivia shook her head. "I can't believe I live in a world where the best solution to any problem is for my boyfriend to live as a girl for over a year," she said. "It's just stupid."

"Stupid or not, it's the only way," Sebastian said. "And my baseball scholarship to Mississippi State will still be there. I already talked to the coach. I told him I hurt my knee and wouldn't be playing next year. He still wants me, and my offer still stands."

"What about getting drafted?" she asked. "I thought you stood a good chance of someone taking a shot on you."

Sebastian shook his head. "No," he said. "With the slump lately, the scouts have stopped coming. I don't have a shot now. Not until I show them something new in college. But we always knew it would be -"

She pulled her top on. "You know what? Whatever," Olivia said. "I'm tired of talking about it. If you want to prance around like some sissy, that's fine. Just come talk to me when you want to be a boy again."

Sebastian reached out, gripping her elbow, but she pulled it away. "No," she said. "Just...just no. I'll text you later. I just need some time to process this."



“Olivia’s really pissed, huh?” asked Jordan, watching her stepbrother fasten his knee-length skirt.

“So am I, if you hadn’t noticed,” Sebastian said. “It’s so stupid. If I didn’t have that scholarship waiting on me, I would’ve just dropped out and got my GED.”

“You look good, though,” Jordan said, shifting in her seat. “Those falsies make it look like you’ve got real boobs.”

“Fantastic,” Sebastian deadpanned. “Just what I always wanted – to look like I have tits.”

“Have you been practicing your answers?” Jordan asked, referring to how Sebastian was supposed to respond when people asked him about his transition. Even if he’d truly been transgender, it wouldn’t have been an easy thing to explain. Being effectively forced into pretending made it exponentially more difficult.

“I’ll be fine,” he said, though he was incredibly nervous about seeing his friends and classmates. It wouldn’t be easy for people to understand how someone like him – a star athlete – could suddenly become someone different. And while he didn’t expect outright bullying – the school would be on the lookout for that – he did anticipate being shunned. And that was fine by him. The less attention, the better, as far as he was concerned.

“I really am sorry,” Jordan said. “I wish I could go back and change it. I wish I could go back and pick you up so none of this would have ever happened.”

“Or maybe not push me into doing it in the first place,” Sebastian said, slipping his white blouse on. “There’s that, too.”

“Yeah,” she said, looking away in shame. “That too.”





"You look nice," Rebecca said, standing over her stepson. "How was school?"

"Oh, great. Just great," said Sebastian, smiling sarcastically as he lay on the bed. "It was awesome. Wonderful. I can't wait to go back to school tomorrow. And I love getting home and having to wear skirts because my stepmother wants me to 'get used to it'. That's fantastic."

"You don't have to be so dramatic," Rebecca said, sliding onto the bed.

"I kind of feel like I do," Sebastian said, rolling over. He hated the feel of his skirts swishing around his legs as he moved. It kept him from forgetting that he had over a year of pretending to be a girl remaining. "But if you want the truth, it sucked. It absolutely sucked."

Rebecca put a comforting hand on Sebastian's forearm. "Tell me about it," she said.

"What's there to tell?" he asked. "Like, the entire school was making fun of me. And the teachers didn't care. They just looked at me like I was some kind of a freak. Oh, and the gossip. Apparently, everyone believes I've been sucking dick for money for the past year. So, there's that. They all think I'm a whore because that's what Silas and those assholes told them."

"I'll go talk to the principal," Rebecca said. "He'll -"

"No!" Sebastian said. "He's the worst. You know, he made me choose a new name? For my records. He made me pick a girl name. I panicked and I picked 'Daphne'. Like freaking Scooby Doo. So, that's my official name at school now. So that's awesome."

"We can fix it," Rebecca suggested. "I'll -"

"Whatever," Sebastian said. "I don't even care. It's just a name, I guess. But the worst of it was when they made me go to the nurse. She actually took blood. And she gave me a prescription for female hormones. Said that she needed to monitor my estrogen levels to make sure my transition is on schedule. She gave me a shot and everything."

"Jesus," Rebecca said. "I...I didn't...I didn't expect that. But it's fine. You might see some temporary changes, but as soon as you quit taking the hormones, you'll go back to normal. I promise."

Sebastian sighed. "I wasn't ready for this," he said. "I just wasn't. I don't know if I can do it. I don't know if I can keep going like this."

"You can," Rebecca stated. "You're stronger than you think. And I'm here for you. It'll get better. It always gets better."



"You have a real knack for this," said Jordan. "You missed your calling."

"I hate your right now," the newly-named Daphne said. He'd forced himself to attach the name to his identity, even to himself, and after a week, it had started to stick. Still, he couldn't think of himself as a girl. He wasn't quite there yet. "You realize that, right?"

Jordan smiled. Like Daphne, she wore a dancer's leotard and ballet shoes. "Lots of girls do ballet," she said. "It'll distract you from school, and it'll make your movements more feminine."

"Yeah, no - I understand why I'm doing it," he said. "I just hate it."

That wasn't entirely true. There was a part of him - perhaps a big part - that actually enjoyed the physical activity. Like Jordan suggested, it was a good distraction. And like baseball, it was based on a repetition of movement, so it was easy to lose himself in it. But the inherent femininity of the activity was all-too-apparent. Everything from the graceful movements to the leotard said one thing: girl.

Things at school hadn't gotten much better. The whispers and the rumors still followed him wherever he went, but the outright hostility had mostly died down. It was enough to make him think that he could, perhaps, make it through the whole ordeal. But it had only been a week. Surely, he thought, more obstacles were in store.

"Are they going to make you do P.E. with the girls?" asked Jordan.

Daphne shrugged. "I don't know," he said. "Probably."

"Are you ready for that?" she asked. "Most of them are going to be really nasty to you."

"I'm kind of used to it by now," he said. "I've dealt with bullies before."

"Yeah," Jordan said. "I guess. Just don't take it too personally. A lot of them think you're just doing this for attention. Or that's what I heard, at least."

"Attention," Daphne said. "Right. Because that makes perfect sense."

"I didn't say it makes sense," Jordan said. "I'm just telling you what they think. They're stupid."

Daphne didn't respond because there was nothing to really say. He just plastered a smile on his face and, as gracefully as he could, established himself in third position.





"W-what are you doing?" asked Daphne.

"Getting ready for bed," said Jordan, pulling her shirt over her head and exposing her lacy, pink bra. Daphne immediately looked away.

"Oh, you've got to be kidding. You don't have to turn away."

"I kind of feel like I do," Daphne said.

"Jesus, Daphne," she said. "We're both girls now. You've got to get used to seeing stuff like this or people are going to think you're weird."

"They already think I'm weird," Daphne pointed out. "Or haven't you heard what everyone's been saying about me? What's the latest one? Is it that I was always a girl and that I was just pretending to be a boy so I could play baseball? Or is that I am a hermaphrodite?"

"They just don't understand," Jordan said, sitting on the bed in her underwear. She unhooked her bra, removing it, and Daphne forced himself to stare at a spot between her eyes. "You're different. They don't get how someone who was born a boy could look so much like a girl, so they make up stuff."

"But some of them have actually seen me naked," he said. "I got a handjob from Kara Brewton last year, and I overheard her telling someone that she thought I was always a girl. And the guys I played baseball with have seen me in the shower. They know I've got a dick. How can they -"

"What do you want me to say?" asked Jordan. "People are stupid. That's just how it is."

"I know," Daphne. "I do. I just...I just wish this wasn't happening to me. I wish I could just go back."

"It'll be over before you know it," Jordan stated. "You'll see."

"I hope so," Daphne said. "I really do."



"Well," said Olivia, her hands on her hips. "Aren't you just adorable."

At only three inches, her heels were fairly modest, but that, combined with her natural height advantage, made it so that Daphne had to look up at his girlfriend. He'd never felt so small in his entire life, partly because of the size difference, but mostly because he was wearing his school uniform, which consisted of a plaid skirt, white blouse, and matching shoes. He knew that her assessment of his appearance was spot on.

"You don't have to rub it in," he said.

"And you didn't have to pretend to be a girl," she responded. "But here we are. What do you want, Sebastian?"

"Daphne," he said. She cocked her head in confusion, and he elaborated, "It's Daphne now. Rebecca says we should use my new name so it's easier to adjust."

"Jesus," she said, shaking her head. "Daphne. What the hell do you want? I've got finals coming up."

"Yeah," he said. "I know. It's just that I wanted to talk."

"I'm here," she said. "Talk."

"I don't want to end it," Daphne stated. "I know this is weird. I know you didn't sign up for this. And I'm sorry for putting you in this sort of situation. But you have to understand that I didn't ask for this. I just want to go back to normal."

"Normal," she scoffed. "We're way past normal. I don't even know what staying with you looks like anymore. Is it even allowed? Are you going to pretend to be a lesbian? I don't know."

"I don't either," admitted Daphne. "But I want to try. I love you, and I don't want this to push us apart."

"How about this?" answered Olivia. "What if we were friends? I know it's not what you want, but it's the best I can do right now."

Daphne's shoulders sagged. It wasn't what he wanted. But it was obviously the best he could have hoped for. "That's fine," he said. "I...I can do that."





"It's weird," Daphne said. "It is, right? I'm not going crazy, am I?"

"No," said Jordan. "It's strange. I'm honestly not sure what to make of it. What are you going to do?"

"Well, I'm not going," he said. "I can tell you that much. There's no way I'm going to prom with a boy."

"It would probably make things easier," Jordan said. "I mean, he is kind of cute."

"I don't care if he's Brad Pitt," Daphne stated. "I'm not gay. And I have no desire to go on a date with a guy."

However, there was a small part of Daphne that wanted to just roll with it. When Dylan Keith had asked him to the dance, he'd been so surprised that he couldn't even answer. He'd only been pretending to be a girl for a month, after all. He wasn't ready to attend a dance. But he kind of wanted to – not because he liked the boy. No. He didn't. But he did want some semblance of normalcy. And in high school, normalcy meant going to the prom. Daphne did everything to suppress that urge.

"Suit yourself," Jordan said. "I'm going, though. Kelly already asked me."

In the chaos surrounding Daphne's transition, everyone seemed to overlook the fact that Jordan had started openly dating one of the most popular girls in the school. They weren't shy about it, either, but Daphne's situation was much more gossip-worthy.

"I just want this school year to be over," Daphne said. "And next year, too. I wish I could just fast-forward to graduation so I can go back to normal. But I can't do that. So, I'm just going to keep to myself, stay quiet, and hope everybody forgets I even exist."

"You know that's not going to work," Jordan said.

"Maybe not," he answered. "But it's better than the alternative. I'm tired of people staring at me. I'm tired of the whispers. I just want to be normal."

"Then you need to embrace it," Jordan stated. "Try to be a normal girl. Not a girl who's hiding in the shadows. People will get used to you."

"Yeah," Daphne said. "Maybe. Or maybe they'd make fun of me until the day I go back to being me. You know, either way."



"I wish I knew how to deal with this," said Olivia.

"It's okay," said a panicked Daphne, who was furiously pumping his fist, trying his best to perform. "It'll be fine. I just...just give me a minute, okay?"

"So, I'm not good enough for you now?" Olivia asked. "Because that's what it looks like."

"No - it's not that!" he insisted. "I'm just...I mean, it's probably the hormones."

"Hormones? What hormones?" Olivia asked.

"Oh," Daphne muttered. "Yeah. About that - I'm sort of taking estrogen."

"W-what?" she asked.

"It's not my fault!" he said. "When I went to school for the first time as...as Daphne, the nurse insisted on putting me on hormones. She said they wanted to show their support for me. And she checks my blood every week to make sure my body chemistry is right. If I go off of them, they'll know I'm not what I'm pretending to be, and the whole thing falls apart."

"It seems less and less like you're pretending," Olivia said. "And more like you're really transitioning into a woman."

"It's not like that!" insisted Daphne. "I swear. Rebecca said that everything will go back to normal as soon as I stop taking them. She said -"

"Did it ever occur to you that your stepmother is insane?" Olivia asked. "She pushed all of this, right? And she's transgender. Do you think it's possible that she just snapped? That she's trying to make you like her?"

"W-what? No," he said. "It's not like that. She wouldn't...s-she wouldn't do that. She cares about me."

"From where I'm sitting, it looks like all she cares about is getting another daughter," Olivia said. "But what do I know? I'm just your girlfriend. Or rather, I'm a girl who's your friend now. I keep forgetting. It'll be easier now that you can't get it up. So, maybe this is a good thing. It'll help me to treat you like the girl you're trying so hard to be."





"I'm not accusing you of anything," said Daphne. "I'm just asking questions."

"It sure sounds like you're accusing me of manipulating you into this situation," said Rebecca. "Who put you up to this? It was that girl, right? Olivia. She never liked me."

"Just answer the question," Daphne said.

"No," she answered. "I didn't plan this. I was just reacting to your bad decisions. I only have your best interests at heart. I wish you could see that."

Daphne sighed. He hated thinking the worst of Rebecca. She'd done nothing but support him. But old prejudices remained in the back of his mind, and they'd sprung to prominence as soon as Olivia suggested that Rebecca had orchestrated his sudden feminization. Logically, it made no sense. But with everything that had happened, that didn't really seem like a prerequisite for reality. And so, the idea had festered, bursting forth with an accusatory interrogation of his stepmother.

"I know," he said, shaking his head. "It's just been so difficult. I don't know how you did it."

Rebecca smiled. "I couldn't have," she said. "Not in high school. Teenagers can be evil. I knew that. I didn't transition until I was twenty. And even then, it was hard. People everywhere like to gossip."

"How did you deal with it?" Daphne asked.

"I moved," she said. "I remember the look Jordan's kindergarten teacher gave me the first time I showed up in a skirt. Back then, I couldn't pass. Not even close. I looked like a skinny guy in a dress. And she gave me this look like I was less than dirt. Then and there, I told myself that as soon as I could pass, I would move. I would start over. And two years later, I did. I moved here. I enrolled in night classes. And I finished my degree. And unless I tell them, nobody here knows about my past."

"I wish I had that option," Daphne said.

"Yeah," Rebecca stated. "But you're stronger than me. And a lot prettier. You can get through this. I know you can."

"T-thanks," was Daphne's response. "That means a lot."



"I wish I could be there," a naked Daphne said, looking back at his stepsister who, since he'd begun his "transition", had started to ignore the concept of privacy. In the previous two months, she'd seen him nude enough that he'd stopped even caring about his modesty.

"You can be," she said. "A lot of people are going to support them."

Daphne frowned. Without him, the baseball team hadn't skipped a beat, and they'd ended up rolling through the state playoffs without much difficulty. On the verge of another state championship, the whole school seemed to have caught baseball fever, and most of the student body had plans to go upstate over the weekend to support their boys.

"Yeah - that'd be weird," he said. "Even for me. So, no. I'm not going up there."

"Suit yourself," his stepsister said, shrugging. "The hormones are starting to work, I see."

"What's that supposed to mean?" he asked.

"Please - you know what I mean," she said. "Or haven't you noticed your hips getting wider? Your skin's softer. You even smell different."

Of course, she didn't know the half of it. It wasn't very noticeable, but already, Daphne could feel the beginnings of his budding breasts. His nipples were incredibly sensitive, and he could feel a slight jiggle whenever he moved certain ways. On top of that, he'd begun to experience dramatic mood swings. One minute, he'd be happy and the next, he'd be weeping in the corner. And even though he knew it was the result his altered hormones, he couldn't stop it.

He shrugged. "Kind of the point, I guess," he said. His tone was nonchalant, but he was alarmed at the changes. However, there was nothing he could do about it, so he resolved to simply endure what he had to endure.



"Hey, Mr. Garner," Daphne said, leaning into the car. "How are you?"

"Wow," he said. "Olivia told me you were...you know...about your situation. But I didn't expect this. You're adorable."

Daphne smiled at the compliment, but he was dying inside. He hated the idea of his girlfriend's father seeing him dressed and acting like a girl. But he had no choice - which seemed like a near-constant refrain.

However, instead of responding to the compliment, he smiled at Olivia's brother, Heath. "How's it going, Heath?" he asked.

Stone-faced, Heath ignored Daphne's greeting. It wasn't really all that surprising, considering the fourteen-year-old had once idolized the young man he knew as Sebastian. Like Daphne, he was a budding baseball player, and he'd often professed his desire to be "just like Sebastian" when he got older. So, it must have been quite a shock to find out that his idol was transitioning into womanhood.

"Heath - don't be rude," Mark, Olivia's father said. "Say hello to Sebastian."

"Daphne," corrected the older boy-turned-girl. Heath continued to ignore the exchange. "It's Daphne now."

"That's pretty," Mark said. "Look - if you want, you can come by for dinner sometime. Just because Olivia hardly ever leaves campus doesn't mean you and I can't still be friends."

Daphne's smile almost faded. He wasn't the most astute of observers, but he knew when someone was flirting with him. And Mr. Garner was definitely coming onto him. He didn't know what to say or do. Thankfully, a groan from Heath made his response unnecessary.

"Can we go? I've got practice," the younger boy said.

"Oh, shit," Mark said, looking at his watch. "Yeah - we've got to go. Come by sometime. I'd love to see you again."

"Yeah, sure," Daphne said, standing up. "I'll do that."

Mark flashed a hundred-watt smile. "It's a date, then," the man said before driving off.





“Hey, Rebecca, I -”

Daphne froze as he pushed open the door, forgetting what he'd intended to say next. He was far too mesmerized by what he saw. On Rebecca's bed were two people having passionate sex, which, if he was honest, wasn't all that surprising, in and of itself. He'd seen enough porn not to be stunned by such a scene. However, what did surprise him was the fact that he knew both of the participants.

Rebecca was, of course, one of them. And the sight of her, bent over on all fours, moaning in lust, was enough to scar his mind for life. It wasn't that she was ugly. She wasn't. Nor was it that she wasn't sexy. She was. Rather, it was the simple fact that he'd come to regard her platonically. To him, she was a mother - or rather, she was as close to a mother as he would ever likely have.

And then, on top of that was the answer to a question he'd asked himself a hundred times. Almost from the moment he'd learned the truth of her past, Daphne had wondered if Rebecca had gone “all the way” in her transition. Of course, he wasn't rude enough to have asked, but he couldn't help but wonder. And now, staring at her in all her glory, he had his answer. Her genitals looked as feminine as any he'd ever seen.

But even that information paled in comparison to the other discovery. On top of Rebecca was a man he recognized. A man he'd known for almost four years. A man who, until recently, he'd regarded as something of a father figure.

“C-coach Reynolds?” he muttered under his breath. It wasn't loud enough for either of the couple to hear, but it echoed in his head like a gunshot.

It didn't make sense. None of it did. But he couldn't look away. In fact, he didn't until Rebecca opened her eyes and looked right at Daphne.

“Oh, shit,” she moaned, the man still pounding in and out of her pussy.



Daphne had never seen his stepmother move so quickly. She pulled away from Coach Reynolds in an instant, simultaneously trying to cover herself while apologizing profusely to him.

“Shit,” she said, covering her heaving breasts. “Shit. I’m sorry, Daphne. God, I’m sorry.”

“W-what the...I was....I don’t...”

Daphne couldn’t handle it. He’d assumed that his stepmother was having sex with someone – she was a good-looking woman and she obviously had needs. However, he hadn’t expected her to be doing it in his father’s house. And he certainly hadn’t expected it to happen between Reynolds and her.

“I’m just...I’m sorry,” he said. “I’m going to...um...I’m going to be in my room.”

And he retreated, his head spinning. He could hear the couple’s voices, though he couldn’t make out their words. He didn’t care, in any case. Nothing they could say could make it better. Nothing they could do could make him forget what he’d seen.

Mechanically, he dressed for school, donning his uniform as he tried to think of something – anything – else. After a few minutes, he heard a knock on his door. “Come in,” he said, and a robed Rebecca entered.

“I thought you were already gone,” she said. “You weren’t supposed to see that.”

“I had a free block during first period,” Daphne said. “I was going to go in late.”

“I’m sorry,” Rebecca said. “I guess you want an explanation.”

“You’re an adult,” he said. “You can do what you want to do. I just wish you’d do it when I wasn’t home. I don’t want to see that.”

“Do you want to talk about it?” she asked.

“Absolutely not,” he answered. “In fact, can we just pretend this never happened? I really don’t want to think about it.”

“Fair enough,” Rebecca said. “Fair enough.”





Daphne went into the kitchen, still trying to scrub the memory from his brain. So, he was more than a little surprised to see Coach Reynolds leaning on the bar.

"We need to talk," he said, his gravelly voice low. "And I don't want your stepmom to hear."

"What's there to talk about?" Daphne asked. "Because from where I'm standing, it looks like -"

Without warning, he gripped Daphne's shirt, pulling him close. Shoving his finger in the feminized boy's face, he said, "Listen, and listen good. I don't want to have to say this twice. You won't mention this shit to anybody. Do you understand?"

"W-who would I tell?" was Daphne's terrified response. When he'd played baseball for the man, he'd never really realized how much bigger he was. How strong. But up close, and with a snarl on his face, Daphne saw it up close and personal.

"Nobody," he warned. "Not your friends. Not whichever dude's fucking you. Not your little stepsister. Nobody."

"O-okay," Daphne said. "I won't tell anybody."

The man released him. "Good," Reynolds said. "Good. I knew we could come to an arrangement."

Just then, Rebecca walked into the kitchen, smiling. "Do you need a ride to school?" she asked Daphne.

"N-no," he said. "I can drive."

"Right," she said, her face still flushed. "Right. Sometimes I forget you're almost a grown-up."

"They do grow up fast," the baseball coach added. He leaned in, kissing Rebecca. "I'll see you this weekend, yeah?"

Rebecca glanced at Daphne, who struggled to hide his fear. "Maybe," she said. "I'll have to check my schedule."

"Fair enough," the man stated. He turned to Daphne, saying, "Remember what we talked about."

Daphne nodded, watching the man leave the room. He didn't breathe until he heard the front door shut behind his former coach.





"I don't want to go," said Daphne. "Why won't you just let me be?"

It had been almost a month since school had let out, which meant that Daphne had been pretending to be a girl for close to five months. And he'd spent the majority of his time away from the rigors of high school huddled in his room, playing video games and trying to forget that he was, in fact, becoming more and more feminine by the day.

"Because," said Olivia. "I want you there. And you owe me."

"But why do you want me there?" he asked. "I don't want to go to a pool party."

"Because I think it'll be good for you," she explained. "You can go somewhere nobody knows what you are. You're constantly complaining about how everybody at school treats you like you've got a disease. Well, at this party, nobody's going to have any idea that you're not a girl. That'll be good for you."

Daphne sighed dramatically. "Fine," he said. "But if I'm uncomfortable, I'm leaving."

Olivia smiled. "I knew you'd see it my way," she said. Holding up a finger, she said, "Wait here. I'll be right back."

As she disappeared out of his room, Daphne wondered aloud, "Where would I go?" Obviously, no one was there to answer, leaving him to wonder what Olivia had planned. He didn't have to think about it long, however, because his girlfriend soon returned with a bag.

"Here," she said. "A present. I want you to try it on."

Daphne rolled his eyes as he retrieved the garment from the bag. It was a mass of pinkish-red strings and a couple of tiny strips of fabric. It took him far longer than he cared to admit to realize that it was a bikini. An incredibly skimpy bikini.

"Try it on!" Olivia prompted. Knowing that there wasn't a way out of it, Daphne took off his shirt. "Oh, God. They're getting big."

Daphne smiled shyly. "Yeah," he said. "If you consider an A-Cup big."

He quickly put on the bikini, adjusting himself. "A-are you sure this isn't too small?" he asked. "It seems too small."

"You might need to tape yourself down," Olivia said. "But no. It's perfect. Absolutely perfect."

“How do you know these guys again?” asked an incredibly uncomfortable Daphne. He wore the bikini Olivia had gotten for him, which was far skimpier than anything he’d ever worn in public. Her bikini wasn’t any better, either; in fact, it might have covered less of her body than his own.

“From school,” she said, handing him a wine cooler. “They’re good guys. Just relax.”

He took the offered drink, twisting off the cap. A strong smell of alcohol assaulted his senses, but he swallowed his objections. He wasn’t much of a drinker, but even he could acknowledge that he needed a little liquid courage. It was either that or leave. And he’d vowed to stay. So, he turned the bottle up, swallowing its fruity contents.

“I wish you would have told me there would be a bunch of guys here,” he said, looking around. “What if I slip out of my bottoms?”

“They know you’re trans,” Olivia said. “They don’t care. All they care about is that you’re cute.”

“T-they know?” he said, feeling a sense of panic. “I thought you said –”

Olivia gently pushed the drink up to Daphne’s lips. “Drink,” she said. “Like I said – they don’t care. Just quit thinking about it and have fun. Get in the pool. Try to act like you’ve been to a party before.”

Daphne took a deep breath. She was right. He needed to relax. So, with a heroic gulp, he drained the wine cooler and set off to do just that. He slipped into the pool between a pair of tall, tattooed guys, and they immediately started chatting him up. After a few minutes, the alcohol started to kick in – as small as he was, he didn’t have much tolerance – and he began to relax. Before he knew it, he was laughing as the handsy guys flirted with him.

In his inebriated state, Daphne didn’t care that their hands were all over him. All he cared about was that, at last, someone seemed to accept him for what he was. They didn’t care about what was between his legs. They didn’t care that he’d been a star athlete. No – they just saw a pretty girl. And for them, that was enough.







Olivia grabbed Daphne's arm. "What the hell are you doing?" she asked.  
"Where's your top?"

A topless Daphne waved his hand toward the pool. "Over there," he slurred, pulling away. "You said to relax. This is me relaxing. Maybe you should relax too."

Daphne stumbled into the house, leaving a stunned Olivia behind. Inside, there were probably five or six guys, all with lust in their eyes. She'd seen it enough to know what was coming, and though she'd tried to warn her "boyfriend", he wasn't hearing it. There was nothing she could do as she saw Daphne pull his bikini bottoms off.

"See?" he said, giggling as the guys surrounded him. "Told you I had a thingy. Now show me yours."

Olivia was close to panic. She'd planned the whole thing to embarrass Daphne, but she hadn't intended on him running with it. She wanted to call someone. She wanted to grab Daphne and run away. But she didn't. She just watched as one of the guys pushed the now-naked Daphne onto the white, leather couch. She couldn't look away as they surrounded the feminized boy. And she couldn't do anything as one of them pushed his hard cock into her boyfriend's mouth.

But even as horrified as she was, she felt vindicated. Certainly, she knew Daphne never would have gone so far if he'd been sober. He'd made that much clear. But there was a part of him that wanted it. There was a part of him that was all girl - or at least, that wanted to be. But that didn't make what was happening right.

Barging into the room, she said, "No. Stop. I can't let you do this."

"But I want to!" argued Daphne. "I like sucking dick. It's fun."

"No you don't," Olivia said, grabbing Daphne.

"Just leave it alone, Liv," said one of the guys. "She likes it."

"Shut the fuck up, Tom," she said, glaring at him. "This is about as close to rape as you can come. So, don't test me." She tugged on Daphne's arm. "Come on. Let's get you dressed and out of here."

Daphne protested, but he followed. Or rather, he stumbled. And Olivia couldn't help but wonder why she hadn't just let nature take its course.



“Oh, God,” said Daphne, massaging his forehead as he sat up. He smacked his lips together, trying to place the taste in his mouth. He couldn’t. He just knew it was foul. So was the smell. Even without looking in the mirror, he knew he must look horrible. “What happened?”

“What do you remember happening?” asked Olivia, who’d been sitting patiently ever since she’d heard Daphne stirring. The night had been as difficult as expected, and Daphne had spent most of it hugging the toilet.

“I don’t know,” he admitted, looking down at the oversized tee-shirt. “Whose shirt is this?”

“Mine,” she said. “What’s the last thing you remember?”

Daphne looked up. “I don’t know,” he said. “I guess playing with that beach ball in the pool? After that, it’s really blurry.”

“How blurry?” she asked. “Do you remember anything?”

Daphne shrugged. “Maybe that some of the guys were flirting with me,” he said. “But I mean...I didn’t do anything stupid, did I? You didn’t let me make an idiot of myself, did you?”

Olivia fixed him with an appraising glare, wondering whether or not she should tell him what he’d done. Certainly, he would be horrified.

But didn’t he deserve to know?

“Kind of,” she said, deciding against telling him the whole truth. “You sort of took your top off. You danced around like an idiot. And then you passed out. I brought you home. Or rather, to my house. I didn’t think you’d want Rebecca seeing you like that.”

“Y-yeah,” Daphne said. “Right.” His face went pale before he jumped off the bed, saying, “I...I think I’m going to be sick” as he ran to the bathroom.



"Look," said Daphne, extending his legs into a full split. "I told you I'd get it."

"Wow," said Jordan. "I mean, that's impressive."

"I've always been flexible," he said. "Just not quite this flexible."

"So, the dance classes are working, huh?" Jordan asked.

Daphne shrugged. "I guess," he admitted. "I mean, some of the other girls were kind of nasty at first, but they warmed up after a while. I've actually made a couple of friends, if you can believe it. I'm still getting used to acting like a girl all the time, but I'm getting there, I think."

"You think you'll be ready by next month?" asked Jordan.

"Ready or not, that's when school starts," he said. "I don't think it matters. Nobody's going to forget what I was."

"I think you'll be surprised," Jordan said. "People have short memories. As long as you act like one of us, that's how people will treat you. I mean, if that's what you want."

"It's better than the alternative," Daphne said. He didn't want to go back to being treated like an outcast, that was for sure. He didn't remember much from the pool party, but what he did remember, he liked. He'd almost forgotten what it was like to be accepted, but now that he'd tasted that feeling again, he wanted more.

"Yeah," Jordan said. "I wouldn't know. They never liked me."

"Kelly likes you, right?" Daphne asked. "How's that going, anyway?"

"Fine," Jordan answered. "You know, she hasn't come out to her parents, so we've been kind of sneaking around. But it's good. It's really good."

"I hope it works out for you, Jordy," said Daphne. "I really, really do."





"Sometimes, I wish this wasn't temporary," said Rebecca. "I mean, of course I want you to be who you want to be. That's not what I mean. I just...it's just nice to have someone who can relate to what I've been through."

"I know," Daphne responded. Without Rebecca's support, he knew that his transition wouldn't have been so seamless. She had all sorts of advice for all kinds of situations. She'd lived it, so she knew things that most people wouldn't even think about. "But it is temporary. When this is all done, I'm going back. You know that, right?"

"I do," Rebecca said.

The summer had been an unexpected boon to Daphne's spirits. Not only was it nice to not have an audience for his transition, it had allowed him to sort of find his own way. He wasn't so much pretending as he was becoming a different version of himself. And that was incredibly reassuring, given how the end of the school year had gone.

"Can I ask you something without you reading into it?" he asked. "Like, this isn't about me. I'm just asking about you."

"Go ahead," Rebecca said.

"Well - when did you know?" Daphne asked. "Like, did you just wake up one day and think, 'I'm a girl now'? Or was it something you'd always known?"

"That's kind of complicated," she answered. "I mean, I grew up in a pretty religious house. There wasn't a lot of understanding there. If you weren't straight, you were a deviant. I knew I had feelings, but I buried them deep down for a long time. And then, when I got Jordan's mom pregnant, I got kicked out, and I was exposed to a whole different world. I think that's when I started to realize all the ways I was different from the other boys. It didn't take me long after that to start experimenting with girls' clothes. And by the time I was eighteen, I knew what I wanted. By twenty, I'd started my transition."

"What happened to Jordan's mom?" Daphne asked.

"Honestly? I don't know," admitted Rebecca. "She ran off when we were seventeen. She couldn't handle it. I found her a few years back, and she wasn't very well off. I tried to help as best I could, but she didn't want anything to do with me. And now? She could be dead for all I know. I hope not. She was a good person. Or at least, she used to be. She used to be."



Daphne watched his girlfriend slip the vibrator into her pussy, wondering if he should be excited or not. Certainly, he could recognize that she was incredibly sexy, and he was still attracted to her. Or at least he thought he was. But without the promise of some sort of physical pleasure, it just felt like watching someone masturbate. He felt like an intruder.

"Come on," she moaned. "Lick me."

Daphne reluctantly complied. It seemed so pointless, mostly because she refused to return the favor. To her, it didn't make sense to pay attention to a limp dick. And Daphne's hadn't been hard in more than a couple of months. To Olivia, it was just a useless appendage. And Daphne was starting to think of it that way as well.

As he bent down, extending his tongue to brush against her clitoris, he thought back to all the times he'd bent her over, pounding himself in and out of that same pussy. Back then, it was like a treasure he'd have done just about anything to acquire. But now? He might as well have been licking her armpit, for all the pleasure it gave him.

"What's wrong?" she asked, looking down. "Why are you so distracted?"

"Nothing's wrong," he lied. "I'm having fun. This is good. I like it."

It sounded hollow, even in his own ears. And Olivia wasn't fooled.

"If you don't want to do this, just say so," she said. "I get it. But I'm just...I just don't want to waste your time. I can do this on my own."

"I don't want -"

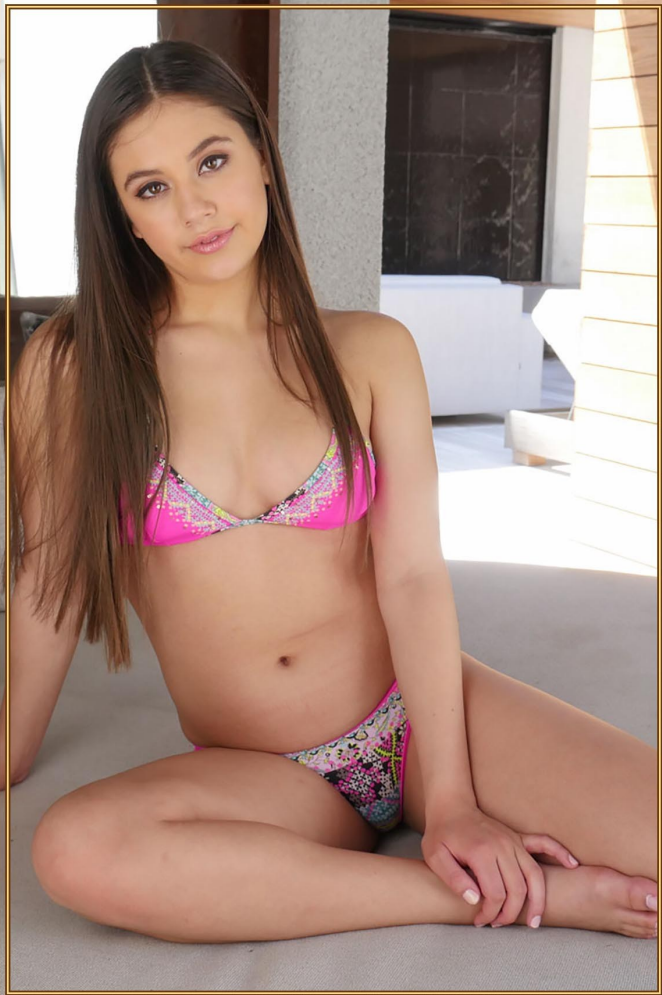
"Can we please just be honest?" she asked. "For once, can we just say what we want to say? Because what I want to say is that we should quit pretending we're still a normal couple. We're not. I don't even know if you like girls anymore, much less if you like me."

"W-what is that supposed to mean? I didn't just start liking guys because I'm pretending to be a girl," he said. "That's stupid."

"Pretending?" she asked. "Is that really what you think you're doing now? Pretending. Baby, I love you. I do. But if you're pretending to be a girl, then so am I. And that's okay. I don't blame you. I just think we need to figure something else out is all."

Daphne sighed. "Yeah," he said. "Maybe we do."





"Like, she doesn't have to be a bitch about it, right?" Daphne asked. "I'm not asking too much, am I?"

"I don't know if I'm the right person to ask," Jordan answered. "I'm not exactly unbiased."

"Just answer honestly," Daphne said. "She's being an asshole, isn't she? I can't help any of this."

"Honestly?" Jordan said. "I can kind of see her point. You put her in a bad position."

"I didn't do anything," he pointed out. "This was done to me. I didn't do it to myself."

"Yeah," Jordan said. "I don't think that matters because right now, as it stands, you're just not a guy. I don't care what you say or how you say it, there's no way you'll ever convince me that you even think of yourself as a boy anymore."

Daphne was about to respond. He was about to tell Jordan that she didn't know anything about anything. Until he realized that she was right. At some point over the course of the summer, he had quit thinking of himself as a "he" and started identifying as a "she". It was a strange realization, but it was undeniable.

"You're right," she said. "I wish you weren't, but you are. I am a girl. I mean, a temporary girl, sure, but still a girl."

"And Olivia's not a lesbian," Jordan pointed out. "She's just not. I've barked up that tree and she's just not into it."

"You tried to get with Olivia?" asked Daphne. She smiled. "Really? When was this?"

"My freshman year," Jordan said. "She wasn't so stuck up then. We were at the same party. I thought we had a connection so I tried to kiss her. It did not end well. She outed me to the whole school by the next Monday."

"Jesus," Daphne said. "No wonder you hate her."

"Yeah," Jordan said. "But I dealt with it. I'm fine. I got past it. But I still think she's a bitch. She's right about you, but she's still a bitch."



"You can join us if you want," said Kelly, who was sitting behind Jordan in the tub, gripping the other girl's breasts. Once, Daphne might have found the idea of getting into a tub with a pair of cute girls enticing. But as she sat on closed toilet, he could only think of how crowded it would be.

"I'm good," she said. "I just need Jordy to tell me what I need to know."

"Come on!" said Kelly. "I want to see that tight little body of yours."

"Leave her alone," said Jordan. "She's not into girls."

"You have no idea what I'm into," said Daphne. "But that's not the point. I just want to know where you put my keys. I need to go to the mall to get some new –"

"Just hold your horses," Jordan said, interrupting her stepsister as she held a camera aloft. "I've almost got the perfect angle."

Daphne sighed. She hated the version of Jordan that came out when she was around Kelly. She couldn't quite put her finger on it, but the other girl just seemed different when her girlfriend was around. More obnoxious. Sometimes aggressive. And certainly possessive.

"Just tell me –"

"God, seriously?" Jordan said. "They're on my dresser, okay? I swear, you have no sense of fun. It's always all business with you."

"Yeah, well – I've got to buy some new panties," Daphne said. "I would have gone earlier if you hadn't taken my car. And I want to get back in time to –"

"Don't care!" Jordan announced, laughing.

Daphne rolled her eyes as she left the bathroom, hearing Kelly say, "You are such a bitch sometimes."

"I'm not a bitch," said Jordan. "I'm the bitch. And you're my bitch."

Daphne didn't bother listening any further as she heard the telltale sound of water sloshing around as the two girls did whatever a pair of pretty, naked lesbians did in the tub.





Daphne looked at Rebecca, who sat in the SUV's driver's seat.

"I guess this is it, huh?" she said.

"Right," the woman responded, smiling at her transformed stepdaughter. "You've come a long way in a couple of short months. Are you ready?"

"I guess," Daphne said. "I feel better about it than I did at the end of last year. I think it could be good. For a while, I mean. Until I go back."

"Until you go back," agreed Rebecca. "I'm proud of you. You realize that, right? Not many people could have gone through what you went through and come out the other side. But you just kept going. You adapted. And you've grown as a person. That's a great thing."

Daphne grinned. "Come on," she said. "You're going to make me blush."

"And you're going to make me barf," said Jordan, who sat in the back seat. "God. Let's just go to school already. It's not a big deal."

"It is to me," Rebecca said. "And you should be proud of your sister too."

"Just tell her," Jordan said. "And then we can just move on."

Rebecca sighed. "Fine," she said, giving her daughter what could only be described as the evil eye. Turning to Daphne, she said, "I had to register you the other day, and I sort of wanted to do something special. You know, for a new beginning. So, I registered you under your new name. And...well...I gave you my last name. I can fix it if you want, but it would mean a lot to me if, at least for this year, you stayed Daphne Bell."

"I...um...I don't know what to say," Daphne admitted. "I'll let it stay. I mean, I wish you'd have told me. But I like it. A new name for a new me. Yeah. I like it."

"Good," Jordan said. "Everybody's happy. Now, can we please just go in?"

Daphne smiled at her sister, and the two got out. She couldn't quit grinning as she closed the door. And she laughed when Jordan said, "I'll be so glad when your car's out of the shop. Mom gets so sappy sometimes."





"Do you think they're going to get bigger?" Daphne asked, not knowing which answer she'd prefer. She gripped her breasts. "They might, right?"

"Maybe," said Jordan. "Now, can you please put some clothes on? We're in the kitchen."

"Says the girl who walks around topless all the time," Daphne said. "And who has sex in her sister's car."

"W-what?" asked Jordan, looking up from her phone. "Who told you that?"

"I found Kelly's panties under the seat," Daphne said. "I really wish you would respect my property."

"And I wish you'd put on some clothes," Jordan said. "But I guess we don't get what we want."

"I was going to go swimming," Daphne said. "And I like doing that naked. But whatever. I'll put on a swimsuit since you're so offended."

Despite her irritation with her sister, Daphne was in a good mood. The first week of school had come and gone, and it had left her feeling hopeful about the rest of the year. Certainly, there were still some rumors flying around. And she endured a few teases here and there. But it seemed like the school had collectively decided to move on. By and large, everyone just treated her like they did every other girl - which was exactly what she wanted.

"If you think the sight of a naked girl offends me," said Jordan, standing. "You really don't understand what a lesbian is."

"Gross," Daphne said. "You're my sister."

"Stepsister," corrected Jordan. "Remember that."

"Oh, I will, weirdo," said Daphne, rolling her eyes.



"How's school?" asked Daphne, stretching alongside what she was increasingly thinking of as her former girlfriend.

"Good," Olivia said. "I'm still on track to graduate early, so that's good. What about you? Picked a school yet?"

"I'm going to Mississippi State," Daphne said. "You know that. You know, scholarship. Baseball."

"Oh," Olivia said. "Still?"

"Nothing's changed," Daphne stated. "I'm still going back to being Sebastian when this is all over."

"Right," Olivia responded. "I guess I just figured that since you seem to like being a girl so much that you were just going to stay that way. Nobody would blame you."

"I don't want to be a girl," Daphne said, knowing full well how ridiculous the claim sounded, considering she was wearing a skimpy pair of shorts and a sports bra while doing yoga with a girlfriend she had no interest in even touching. But she maintained it nonetheless. "I want to be a guy. This is all going to be over in nine months. I'm counting down the days."

"You can't tell me you don't like any of it," Olivia said.

"It's not about what I like and what I don't like," Daphne said. "It's about what I am. And what I am is a man."

"Yeah," Olivia said. "So silly of me to not realize that. I guess I just pulled that whole assumption out of thin air. It won't happen again."

Her sarcasm wasn't lost on Daphne, but the other girl chose to ignore it. She ignored a lot of things, lately.





"I don't know how you can be friends with a bitch like that," said Jordan. "She spraypainted 'Dyke' on my locker last year. And that's not even considering what she said about you when you started your transition."

"She apologized for that," Daphne said. "And she's a nice person, once you get to know her. You'd like her."

"She's just collecting you," Jordan said. "That's what Brittany does. She collects people. Whoever's interesting at the moment. And right now, that's you. Next week, it'll be someone else. And she'll leave you hanging."

"You should like you know that from experience," Daphne said. She didn't understand why Jordan was being so contrary about her new friends. They were cool. They were pretty. And they were popular. And most of all, they seemed to like Daphne.

"I just don't want to see you hurt," Jordan said.

"Seriously - what did they do to you?" she asked. "And don't talk about the 'Dyke' thing. You laughed about that. I remember. What happened?"

"Fine," Jordan said. "Jesus. I wish you would just mind your own business sometimes. I had a thing with Brittany, okay? Right after Olivia outed me, she wanted to be friends. More than friends. We did some stuff, and I thought it was going somewhere. Until she just dumped me. She acted like she didn't even know me anymore. I guess the novelty of licking pussy kind of wore off for her. But for me, it was like getting punched in the stomach. I hated her. I still hate her because she looks at me as some sort of sideshow attraction. I'm a vacation to girls like her, and it trivializes who I am."

"Fuck," Daphne said. "Jesus. I didn't expect that. Are you...are you okay?"

"This was three years ago," Jordan said. "I'm over it. But I still hate her. And you should too because she sees you the same as me. You're not a person. You're just an interesting thing."



"How do you deal with it?" asked Daphne.

"I hate when you do that," said Jordan. "You ask some vague question, and I have no idea what you're talking about."

"Sorry," she said. "I'm talking about guys. This isn't something I was prepared for, but some of the guys at school are acting like they're...you know...like they're interested in me."

"You're a pretty girl," Jordan said. "It happens."

"But they know I'm not, though," Daphne pointed out. "They know I'm not a real girl."

"I think it's actually kind of progressive that they don't care," Jordan said. "You say you're a girl. You look like one. So to them, that's what you are."

"Progressive or not, I don't like it," Daphne said. "How do you deal with it when boys hit on you? I mean, you're not interested, right? You don't like them."

"Most of the guys at school know I'm gay," Jordan said. "But I guess I just tell them I'm not into that. They get the picture pretty quick. Why? What did you do?"

"Well...not...um...not that," Daphne admitted. "But to be fair, I didn't know what to do. I've never thought about how to deal with that."

"What did you do?" repeated Jordan.

"I sort of giggled a lot," Daphne said. "And I laughed at his stupid jokes. And...I might have agreed to go out with him sometime."

"Seriously? You didn't suck his dick right then and there?" Jordan said.

"Shut up!" Daphne said, her hands on her hips. "I know I fucked up. But I was super vague about going out. Maybe he took it as we'd go out as friends or something. In a group."

"Sure," Jordan said sarcastically. "Yeah. I bet that's it. Because teenaged boys are known for not jumping to conclusions about stuff like that. But seriously - who is it?"

"Billy Sims," Daphne said. "He sits behind me in English. And he's nice. But I'm totally not into that. Not at all."

"Yeah, well, maybe you should let him know that," Jordan said. "Because I'm pretty sure he's making plans for your wedding right now."





"What are you smiling about?" asked Rebecca.

"Nothing," Daphne said. "Just thinking about dad."

The older woman sat down. "What brought this on?" she asked.

Daphne shrugged. "I was just looking through some old pictures on Facebook," she explained. "I found some from a few years back. A fishing trip we took. Not even a trip. We just got up really early one Saturday morning and went down to the pier."

"Sounds nice," Rebecca said.

Daphne nodded, then looked out at nothing as she remembered.

"We got Slim Jims and those crappy sandwiches from the gas station," she said. "I remember that most of all, I think. We loaded up his truck with the poles, and we just went."

"He was like that," Rebecca said. "Impulsive."

"Yeah," Daphne agreed. "There was this old man there. You could tell he did it all the time. But he was catching these huge fish with every cast. Drum, dad called them. They were enormous. One after another. I bet he had fifteen fish by the time he left. And he loaded them all into this super old, red truck."

She felt a tear coming down her cheek. "And me and dad couldn't catch a thing," she said. "We caught like one fish, and neither of us even knew what kind it was. But neither of us cared, you know? We were cool with just being out there."

Daphne was silent for a long moment before saying, "I wish he was still here."

"Me too, sweetie," said Rebecca. "I do too."



"Yeah, no - I get it," said Jordan. "You're super flexible now. Ballet will do that."

"No - I'm not talking about that," Daphne said. "Just look at this tuck. There's nothing. I dare you to find any evidence that I'm a boy."

Without hesitation, Jordan reached out, caressing Daphne's smooth groin. She could feel the tape, but it wasn't as prominent as she might have expected. The caress lingered for far too long, and she bit her lip.

"Um...Jordan?" Daphne said. "You can stop anytime now."

Jordan blinked, coming to her senses. "Shit," she said. "I'm sorry. God. I didn't...I didn't mean to...it's just that you're super pretty and...no. No excuses. I'm sorry, Daphne. I didn't mean to do that."

"It's fine," Daphne said, smiling to relieve the tension. While her stepsister's touch had definitely crossed the line, it wasn't altogether unpleasant. It had been a long time since she'd seen that sort of lust in another girl's eyes. And in any case, they weren't related, so if something happened, it wasn't really wrong. Maybe slightly. Maybe a little more than slightly.

"I shouldn't have done that," Jordan repeated. "I'm sorry."

"Forget it," Daphne said, closing her legs. "But did you feel the tape? I'm using this new stuff that's a lot thinner. And I found a new tutorial online. I mean, I bet I could walk around naked in the girl's locker room, and nobody would even look twice. I mean, sure - if you look really close, you can see it. It's not like I have a real vagina. But it's as close as I can get."

"That's great, Daphne," said a still-embarrassed Jordan. She hiked her thumb over her shoulder. "I'm going to go. I've got...some...um...things to do. Yeah. Things. I've got to go. I'll see you later, okay?"

"Yeah," Daphne said. "Sure. I'll see you later."





Wearing only her panties and a pink trucker-style cap, Daphne danced to the music like no one was watching.

"Shake that ass," said Jordan, who stood in the doorway, leaning against the doorframe as she giggled.

Daphne stopped in her tracks, blushing as she scrambled to turn off the blaring Taylor Swift song. "What are you doing in here?" Daphne demanded. "Haven't you ever heard of privacy?"

"Your door was cracked," Jordan said. "I didn't know you liked Taylor Swift."

"I don't!" insisted the former boy. "I mean, she's okay. It's catchy."

"Right," Jordan said, smirking. "Catchy."

"What are you even doing home?" Daphne said. She'd thought she had the house to herself, which was why she hadn't bothered to censor herself. "I thought you had a thing with Kelly."

"She cancelled again," Jordan said, stepping into the room. She planted herself on Daphne's bed, lying back. "I think she's embarrassed by me or something. Do you know she still hasn't come out to her parents? Or anybody, really. She tells everyone at school that we're just friends."

"Maybe she's not ready," Daphne suggested, sitting next to her stepsister.

"Or maybe she's just using me," Jordan said. "Maybe she's just another tourist who thinks having a lesbian booty call makes her edgy or something."

"It's not like that, and you know it," Daphne said. "She cares about you. Maybe she isn't ready to tell everybody she's gay, but she does like you. I can tell."

Jordan sighed. "I hope you're right," she said, propping herself on an elbow. "Now - let's see some more of those patented, Daphne dance moves!"



"God," said a topless Jordan. "I don't want to go to school. Do you want to ditch?"

Daphne barely even noticed her sister's near-nudity. In the locker rooms at school, she'd seen enough naked or near-naked girls that the sight of their nudity had more than begun to lose its luster. And that should have been cause for alarm. But it wasn't. Daphne was far too wrapped up in her role as a young woman.

"You skipped yesterday," Daphne said.

"And I'll probably skip tomorrow," Jordan pointed out. "Come on. We can go to the beach. Kelly's in, too."

"And be a third wheel while you two make out?" Daphne asked. "No thanks. I'd rather be at school."

"There's going to be a lot more than making out going on," Jordan said, winking at her stepsister. "And don't be such a downer. We've probably only got a week or two before the weather starts turning. After that, no more sexy girls in skimpy bikinis for, like, four or five months."

"I think I'll be okay," Daphne said.

"Seriously?" Jordan said. "You're really not going to come?"

"I've got a test," Daphne said. "And I don't want to -"

Jordan lay back, groaning dramatically. "Ugh - you are such a goody-two-shoes," she exhaled. "It's no wonder your mom's favorite daughter."

"I'm not her favorite," Daphne insisted.

"Please," Jordan said. "You're her perfect, little girl. I'm just a disappointment. But that's cool. I'm fine with that. But think about this - while you're sitting in class taking a test, I'll be between Kelly's legs having the time of my life."

"Good for you," Daphne said, laughing. "I'm sure she'll appreciate the attention."





"What's wrong?" asked Rebecca.

"Nothing," said Daphne, forcing a smile. She'd been sitting in the same wicker deck chair for almost an hour, staring off into space. "I'm fine."

"You don't have to pretend to be happy all the time," Rebecca responded. "You know it's okay to be sad. It's normal to have bad days. For someone in your position more than most, it's okay."

"It's nothing," Daphne said. "It's stupid. I know it's dumb. But I can't help wondering what dad would think of all this. I mean, he had a son. A boy. And now, I mean...look at me. Even at school, almost everyone just skates over what I used to be. Half of them don't even believe I was ever a guy. What does that say about me? What would dad think?"

"He would support you," Rebecca said without hesitation. "He loved you."

Daphne looked away. Rebecca knew a very different Dennis Prince than Daphne had. She saw the loving father, the man who'd do anything for his son. But Daphne had known him for a lot longer. She had seen the man who had demanded absolute perfection from his son. She knew the man who had spent hour after hour molding his son into the best he could be. And Daphne knew he wouldn't have approved of that same son's transformation into a young woman. There wasn't a doubt in her mind.

But her dad was gone. He'd been dead for almost two years. And it didn't really matter what he might have thought. She knew that speculation about a dead man's opinion was a futile exercise. But that didn't make it any easier to disregard.

"I know," she lied. "But he wouldn't like it."

"Maybe not," Rebecca said. "But think about this. He married a trans-woman. He loved me. He didn't care about my past. It's not a stretch to think he would accept your situation for what it is."

"Yeah," Daphne said, though she didn't believe it for one second. "You're right. Of course you're right. I guess I'm just in a weird mood."



"Olivia?" called Daphne, pushing into the house where her pseudo-girlfriend had grown up. She glanced at the driveway, where Olivia's green Jeep was parked. "You here?"

"Come on in," said Olivia's father, Mr. Garner. He sat on the couch, wearing a tee-shirt and a pair of sweatpants. Daphne stepped inside, closing the door behind her, and Garner said, "She's not here, though. Out with that roommate of hers. What's-his-name. Aaron or Alex or something."

"Oh," Daphne said. "I'll come back then, I guess."

"Don't be silly," the man said. He patted the couch. "Have a seat. It's been a while since we talked."

"O-okay," Daphne responded, quickly covering the distance between the door and the couch. She sat in the indicated spot, acutely aware of how close she was the older man. "How have you been, Mr. Garner?"

"Please - call me Mark," he said, grinning. He put his hand on Daphne's leg, his thumb stroking back and forth across her bare skin. "We're both adults here."

"Mark," Daphne echoed, the name rolling off her tongue. "I...um...I should go. I'm not...I mean...I should just go."

"Or you could stay," Mark suggested. "We could get to know each other better. I'd like for us to be friends. Special friends. Do you know what that means?"

"I...I do," Daphne admitted. She wasn't so naïve that she couldn't read the situation. Nor was she ignorant of the growing bulge in his pants.

"And do you want to be friends?" Mark asked. "No strings. No expectations. Just special friends."

Daphne swallowed hard. "Yes," she said before her latent masculinity could object.



“You’re so tight,” Mark said, his fingers exploring her ass as he bent her over the table.

“B-be gentle,” Daphne pleaded. She was deathly afraid of what was coming, but it was something she’d been dreaming about for months. Literally, almost every night, she dreamed about having sex with men. However, as much as she anticipated it, she couldn’t shake the fear of being deflowered. Nor could she escape the shame of it. After all, in her heart, she was still male enough to know that she shouldn’t want such things.

Mark gripped her ass. “I’ll take care of you,” he said. “Just trust me.”

Daphne did. And she didn’t. But she couldn’t stop it. Even if she wanted to – and she didn’t – it had already gone too far. Mark had her in his sights, and he wasn’t about to be deterred. So, she just gripped the table as she felt the man’s cock brush against her anus. She shivered in anticipation and desire. Fear and reticence.

“Relax,” he said. Daphne tried unsuccessfully to comply.

She gasped in surprise and pain as he forced himself inside of her. “God,” she breathed. “It hurts!”

The declaration was inadequate to describe the pain she felt. It was like he was splitting her in two. Her ass was on fire as he pushed further in. One inch. Two inches. Three. Four. He kept going, slowly but deliberately, until she felt the tickle of his pubic hair on her cheeks. Tears streamed down her cheeks as he started to withdraw, excruciatingly slowly. By the time he’d pulled almost all the way out, the pain had started to subside.

Back in, he went. Faster. And out. In. And out. Each thrust came incrementally faster, and the pain lessened with each stroke, giving way to pleasure. In. And out. Again and again. Faster and faster. Until he was jackhammering in and out of her, their flesh clapping together with each jab of his thick cock.

She moaned as the pleasure eclipsed the pain, leaving it far behind. She pleaded with him to go harder. Faster. She screamed for him to grab her hair, to choke her. She wanted him to dominate her. To treat her like an object. She didn’t want him to make love. She wanted him to fuck her. And that’s exactly what Mark gave her.





"No," said Jordan. "You didn't. You wouldn't. R-right?"

"I did," Daphne responded. After keeping it to herself for two days, she'd finally caved and told her stepsister about her liaison with Olivia's father.

"And I liked it."

"But I thought you liked girls," Jordan said. "You never even hinted that you...Jesus...this is...but he's so old!"

"He's not that old," Daphne said. "And he's really big. You know, down there."

"How big?" Jordan asked.

Daphne picked up her phone, opened the appropriate photo, and turned it face Jordan. "That big," she said. Jordan's mouth dropped open, and not just because Mark's cock was so big. It was, but her reaction was also due to the other subject of the photo – Daphne's cum-covered and smiling face.

"What does this mean?" Jordan finally managed. "About you, I mean. Are you gay? Straight?"

"Honestly? I have no idea," Daphne admitted. "But it was fun. I guess the way I'm looking at it is that I'm stuck like this for the rest of the year, right? I may as well just go with whatever, you know? If I want to be with a guy, then I'll be with a guy. If not, then, well, I won't. And then, when I go back to being Sebastian, I'll just go back all the way."

"I...I don't think that's how sexuality works," Jordan said.

"With my situation? Who knows what works how? I mean, seriously," Daphne countered. "I'm in uncharted territory. All I know is that I never even considered doing anything like this when I was a boy. But now? Now, it just feels natural. I don't know if it's the hormones or whatever, but that's just how it is."

"I hope you know what you're doing," Jordan said.

"Me too," agreed Daphne.





"I'm not ashamed of it," Daphne said, her hands on her hips as she stood naked before her stepsister. "You won't get me to say that I am, so just leave it alone."

"That's not what I'm saying," said Jordan. "God - why does everything have to be so combative with you? I'm just pointing out that you'd look super hot if you had a pussy."

"I'm hot without it," Daphne said. "Or haven't you noticed all those guys who keep calling me? They know what's between my legs. I mean, a few of them played baseball with me. They've seen it. But they're all scrambling to get me to go to homecoming with them."

Jordan shook her head. "You really don't see what's happening, do you?" she asked. "They don't like you. They just want to try something new. It's the same thing that's happened with me with, like, half the cheerleading squad."

"I'm not you," Daphne said. "I don't know why you can't see that. Your situation sucks. I get that. You've had some people treat you shitty. But that doesn't mean everybody's going to have that happen to them."

"But -"

"But nothing, Jordy," Daphne interrupted. "I know what I'm doing."

"No you don't!" Jordan insisted. "That's my point. You've been a chick for all of six months. There's no way you're ready for this kind of attention."

"Maybe not," Daphne said. "And I'm sure I'll make some mistakes. But they're my mistakes to make. Not yours. So just leave it alone. I'll be fine."



"Is it too much?" asked Daphne, holding up the dress she'd chosen for the homecoming dance. "It is, isn't it?"

Rebecca shook her head. "It's great," she said. "It's going to look amazing. I wish Jordan would go to dances."

Jordan, who sat in the nearby chair texting her girlfriend, didn't look up as she said, "Dances are misogynistic. And besides, Kelly can't go with me. She still hasn't come out to her parents."

"You could go separately," suggested Daphne. "Or you could go with me and Tyler. I'm sure he wouldn't mind."

"Pass," said Jordan. "You can go hang out with that douchebag, but I won't be caught dead in his general vicinity."

"Jordan Marie Bell!" Rebecca exclaimed. "You apologize to your sister right this second. That's her date you're talking about."

Jordan sighed, rolling her eyes. "I'm sorry I insulted your date," she said. "I'm sure he's a real stand-up guy."

Daphne said, "He's not that bad. I know you don't like him because he plays football, but -"

"I don't like him because he used to beat up kids and take their lunch money," Jordan pointed out. "He's, like, a cartoon version of a bully."

"Not anymore," Daphne said. She was well aware of her date's past. But she also knew that he was big, strong, and handsome. And he'd always been nice to her.

"Yeah, well - that's great for him," Jordan said. "I hope you two will be very happy together."





"Don't mind her," said Rebecca after Jordan left the room. They'd spent the previous fifteen minutes arguing while Daphne sat, awkwardly fingering the sequins on her new dress. "She'll never admit it, but she's just jealous."

"I know," Daphne said without looking up. She knew good and well that Jordan's dislike of Tyler had nothing to do with her attitude. She was frustrated with her own situation, and she was taking it out on anyone who happened to be nearby. But that didn't make it any easier to endure.

Rebecca sat down next to her stepdaughter. "I never got to go to my school dances," she said.

"Why not?" asked Daphne.

"Well, I got Jordan's mother pregnant my sophomore year," she explained. "She got kicked out of the house a few months later, and I had to drop out to get a job so she'd have somewhere to live."

"Do you regret it?" Daphne asked, trying to wrap her head around suddenly assuming that sort of responsibility. It seemed like an alien concept to her young mind.

Rebecca shook her head. "At first, maybe," she admitted. "I was so scared. And I was just starting to understand that I was different than the other boys. But as soon as Jordan was born, as soon as I held her in my arms, I knew it would all be worth it."

"That's sweet," Daphne said, smiling.

"Yeah," Rebecca said. "You'll understand when you have kids. They make everything worth it."



"Sometimes I wonder if I even should go back," said Daphne. It had been almost two weeks since homecoming, after which she'd given Tyler the sort of blowjob he wouldn't soon forget, and she'd had something of a crisis of identity ever since.

"Back to what?" asked Jordan. "Back to being a boy?"

She nodded. "I don't know," she said. "I mean, it seems almost like a dream. I remember it fine. But it's almost like it's somebody else's memory, you know? And when I try to act like a boy, it feels weird. Like I'm pretending."

"You're not serious," Jordan said. "I know you're not. This whole thing is just a mind-fuck. It's bad enough that you had to act like you were transgender. But then you turned out to be so pretty that everybody sort of just accepted it. It's basic psychology. Positive reinforcement."

"But what if I always was transgender and I didn't know it?" Daphne asked. "I mean, your mom didn't know for sure until she was like sixteen or seventeen. What if I'm like that?"

"You're almost nineteen years old," Jordan said. "If you were transgender, you would have had some kind of hint by now. Or before all of this, I mean. And you'd know for sure."

"I feel like I do," Daphne said.

"You don't," Jordan argued. "You might think you do, but you don't."

"You can't know that," Daphne said.

"I can, and I do," Jordan countered. "I know you, Daphne. I knew you when you were Sebastian, and I know you now. And believe me when I say that this is just you trying to cope with a fucked-up situation. So, just drop it for now, okay? When it comes time to go back, you'll make the right decision. I know you will."





"You've been coming over a lot," said Olivia, opening the cabinet and retrieving a glass. She went to the refrigerator and filled it with water as she asked, "What's up with that?"

Daphne shrugged. "Your dad's helping me with some accounting stuff associated with my dad's estate," she lied. "Right, Mr. Garner?"

"Right," the man said, not bothering to look up from his phone as he entered the kitchen.

"Oh," Olivia said, taking a sip of the water as she leaned over the counter. "I guess that makes sense."

All the while, Daphne's heart threatened to pound out of her chest. The real reason she'd been coming over to Olivia's house so often was that she was in the midst of a torrid affair with her father. But that wasn't exactly something she was prepared to admit to the girl who'd once been her girlfriend. With Olivia home for Christmas break, it threw something of a monkey wrench in those sorts of activities.

"How were your classes this semester?" Daphne asked.

"Fine," the blonde girl said. "I mean, it's a lot of work, but I'm getting through it. I don't know where I'd be without Aaron, though. He's helped me so much."

"Good," a distracted Daphne said. "I'm glad you're doing well. I really am. But yeah. I guess I should get going. I'll...um...I'll talk to you both later, I guess."

“Do you know what’s weird?” asked Daphne.

“I know lots of weird things,” Jordan answered. “You need to be more specific.”

“God, you can be such a bitch sometimes,” Daphne said, rolling over on the bed. “About me, stupid. Do you know what’s weird about me?”

Jordan narrowed her eyes. “This is a trick question, right?” she said. “Because there are a lot of weird things about you. I mean, your whole life right now is kind of weird.”

“You know what I mean,” Daphne said. “But anyway – here’s what I was going to say. What’s weird is that I played baseball all my life, right? Like, everything I’ve ever done has revolved around that. But I haven’t picked up a baseball in almost eight months. I haven’t even watched a game on T.V. And I don’t miss it at all. What’s up with that?”

“Maybe you didn’t like baseball as much as you thought,” Jordan said, shrugging. “Maybe you just did what people expected you to do, and you liked it because you were good at it. Maybe you’re just past that now. It’s not like anybody expects it from you anymore, so you’re kind of free.”

“I guess,” Daphne said. “I mean, that makes sense.”

“It’s kind of like me and all the feminist stuff,” Jordan explained. “People expect me to do that now. The protests. The fundraisers. The clubs. They want me to be a man-hating bitch. So that’s what I am most of the time.”

“I’m not sure that really –”

“But the reality is that I just don’t care half the time,” she said. “I don’t. I mean, if some woman is weak enough to let some asshole walk all over her, that’s kind of on her. But I can’t say that. I have to stand up for her because that’s my identity. It’s the same as you – or the old you, at least – and baseball.”

“Yeah,” Daphne said. “Maybe.”





"Take it, slut," growled Tyler as he plowed into Daphne's ass, pinning her to the bed with his superior weight. As Daphne had learned, she liked being physically dominated. It was one of her biggest turn-ons. "Tell me what you want."

"That cock," breathed Daphne. "Gimme that big dick, baby. Harder. Harder!"

And Tyler gave her exactly what she wanted, pounding in and out of her like a jackhammer. He was so much different than Mark; youth gave him stamina and strength, but he lacked Mark's restraint. He didn't have the older man's experience. It wasn't worse. But it was definitely different, and in a good way. Variety, after all, was the spice of life.

After only a few minutes, Tyler came, shooting thick jets of his seed deep into Daphne's ass. She reveled in it, though if she was honest, she would have preferred for it to go on longer. It wasn't that she wasn't satisfied. She was. But she wasn't as satisfied as she might have liked.

As he withdrew, he gripped Daphne's ass. "It's hard to believe you were a boy," he said. "To think, I used to be jealous of you."

Daphne rolled over. "Of me?" she asked. "Why?"

"Seriously?" the boy asked. "You had the hottest girlfriend in school. And you were on your way to playing professional baseball. I mean, you ruled the school. Every guy wanted to be you."

"Really?" Daphne asked. "I didn't know that."

"And now almost every guy wants to get with you," he said, climbing on top of her. He kissed her deeply. "Even if you do have that little thing between your legs."

Daphne frowned. "You just had to ruin this, didn't you?" she said.

"W-what did I say?" Tyler asked.

Daphne struggled to extricate herself from his embrace. "Just let me up, okay?" she said. "I'm going home."

Tyler grinned evilly. "And what if I don't want you to go?" he asked, pinning her arms to the bed. She tried to wriggle free, but his grip was like iron. A sense of panic began in the pit of her stomach, and her heart started to beat faster. Suddenly, she was back in that locker room, surrounded by a group of angry boys. Unbidden, moisture started to gather in her eyes. "Shit," Tyler said, letting her go. "I'm sorry. I was just fucking around. I didn't mean to -"

"I'm going to go," Daphne said, slithering off the bed. She gathered her clothes and left, not even bothering to dress herself.





"I want you to be honest with me," said Olivia. "What's going on with you and my dad?"

"N-nothing," blurted Daphne. "Why do you...I mean...what have you heard?"

"What haven't I heard?" Olivia said. "But that's not what this is about. I just want to know if you're fucking my dad. It's okay if you are. I'd just like to know."

Daphne looked away, unsure of how to respond. On the one hand, her every instinct said to lie. No girl would enjoy finding out that someone younger than her was having an affair with her father, let alone if that woman was someone with whom she was recently involved. But there was something else hovering at the edge of that urge, pushing against it. She needed to be honest. As flawed as Olivia was, she deserved to know the truth.

Finally, after a long moment of silence, she looked up, saying, "Yes."

"I knew it," Olivia said. "And I assume the rumors about you dating some boy from your school are true as well."

Daphne nodded. "It's not like I planned it," she insisted. "I just...I mean...it just sort of happened. I don't know what else to say except that I'm sorry I didn't tell you."

"It's okay," Olivia stated. "Because I have a confession to make, too."

"You're sleeping with Aaron," Daphne said. "I know. I've known for a while."

"You knew?" she asked.

Daphne shrugged. "I guess," she said. "I mean, I get it. I wasn't there. And even if I was, it's been a long time since I could fill that role, right? It makes sense."

"Right," Olivia said. "You're right. But you should know that what Aaron and I have is getting serious. That's why I'm telling you now. We've talked about getting married when we graduate."

"Oh," Daphne said. In his mind, he kept telling himself that everything would go back to normal when he transitioned back to manhood. But as he processed the idea of Olivia marrying someone else, that notion seemed increasingly more naïve by the second. "Yeah. Good for you. I'm happy for you. Really. I am."



“Come on,” said Jordan. “Get in. I won’t bite.”

“I’m not...I mean, I’m not really that comfortable with that,” said Daphne, looking down at her stepsister in the bath. She was undeniably sexy, but she was also off-limits. And Daphne didn’t really like girls much anymore.

“Seriously?” Jordan asked, frowning. “It’s okay to like girls. You know that, don’t you? I mean, did you ever?”

“Did I ever what?” Daphne asked, knowing full well what Jordan meant.

“Like girls,” Jordan provided. “It’s okay if you don’t. I get it. I mean, I don’t swing that way, but if you like dick, that’s fine. Lots of guys are gay.”

Daphne ground her teeth together. She knew Jordan was manipulating her by calling her sexuality into question. It was obvious. But that didn’t silence the screams from her near-dormant masculinity. The old Sebastian wouldn’t have hesitated. He would have jumped in that tub with his hot stepsister, no questions asked. He wouldn’t have thought about the morality. He wouldn’t have considered the consequences. He would have been a man. And Daphne wanted a piece of that attitude back.

So, she nodded. “Fine,” she said, stepping into the tub. “But if your mom catches us, I’m telling her you seduced me.”

“Honesty is the best policy,” the other girl said, leaning close as Daphne sat down. Almost immediately, her hands found Daphne’s torso as she bent over to kiss her nipple. “I’ve been wanting to do this for a while now.”





Daphne knew she'd made a mistake from the moment their lips touched. There was no fire. No electricity. Even with Olivia, there had been some spark. But with Jordan, it was, for lack of a better descriptor, like kissing her sister. However, she pushed on, giving it the fair shot she'd committed to giving it.

"God," Jordan said, looking down on her stepsister as Daphne licked between her spread legs. "You are so hot."

Daphne pulled away. "I can't do this," she said, still kneeling between Jordan's legs. "It's not you. God, I wish it was you. But it's not. It's me. I just...I just can't."

"We're not really related," Jordan said. "This is perfectly okay."

"It's not that," Daphne said. "Like I said, I wish it was different. But I just...I don't what's happening to me, but...b-but I just...I just don't like girls anymore."

"You don't like girls," Jordan echoed. She groaned, looking skyward. "Are you kidding me?"

"I'm sorry," Daphne said.

"Jesus fucking Christ," Jordan said, standing up. She stepped out of the tub. "I swear to God - first Kelly, and now you. What the fuck is wrong with me?"

"Nothing!" Daphne said. "And what happened with Kelly?"

"She broke up with me," Jordan said. "Or to be more honest, she let me know that we were never a real couple because she's not really a lesbian. She was just going through a phase." She barked a harsh laugh as she grabbed a towel. "Everything's a phase when it comes to being with me."

"Jordy, I'm -"

"Save it," she said. "Just save it. You can't help how you feel, right? I'm just...just leave it, okay? I don't want to talk about it anymore."







"She'll get over it," said Rebecca. "She's been through breakups before."

Daphne shook her head. "I don't know," she said. "She really liked Kelly. And I think Kelly liked her. I just don't know if Kelly's ready to admit that she's \_."

"That girl knew exactly what she was doing the moment she set her sights on Jordan," Rebecca stated. "She never gave it a shot because she's not really gay. She was curious. Maybe bisexual. But she was using Jordan, plain and simple."

Daphne didn't respond because the story sounded familiar. Not only had Jordan been through similar experiences before, but she'd also had to endure Daphne's rejection. And for that, Daphne felt guilty. But she didn't regret it because, as difficult as it was, it was better than leading her on.

"What about you and that boy you went to homecoming with?" asked Rebecca. "Tyler, right?"

Daphne shook her head. "Yeah - that's not really going so well," she said. "I don't know if he's that much different than Kelly."

"Oh," Rebecca said. "Right. Been there."

"How do you know when it's real?" asked Daphne.

"Honestly? It's hard sometimes," she said. "I was lucky to find your dad. He was one of the few people I've ever met who truly didn't care. And I told him early. Like, second date early. He just looked me in the eye and said, 'That's interesting,' before ordering his meal. He didn't mention it again until I brought it back up."

"I was an asshole to you when I first found out, wasn't I?" Daphne said. "I called you all those names."

"Nothing I haven't heard before," she stated. "And I'll hear it again, too. You've got to have a thick skin, sweetie. That's the best advice I can give you. And I'm not just talking about being trans. I'm talking about life. Don't let stuff like that bother you, and you'll be so much happier."

"That's easier said than done," admitted Daphne.

"Yeah," Rebecca said. "But you'll get there. I know you will."



"You don't have to be like that," said Daphne. "I told you that I'm sorry."

"And I told you that there was nothing to apologize for," Jordan said. "I wish you'd just accept that so we can move on. You don't like girls. I get that better than most. It's just like I don't like guys."

"But you don't know how fucked up that is for me to admit," Daphne stated. "I'm not supposed to be like this, right? This isn't who I was meant to be."

"Are you sure?" Jordan asked.

"What's that supposed to mean?" asked Daphne in response. "I didn't have any control over this."

"You say that, but you're the one who agreed to wear that costume," Jordan said. "It might have been subconscious, but you definitely put yourself in that position. You didn't even argue with me when I started dressing you up. And I saw your face the first time you looked in the mirror. You weren't just curious. You were –"

"Are you saying that I wanted to be a girl all along?" Daphne asked, interrupting her stepsister. "That's stupid. I was happy as a guy."

"Were you?" Jordan asked. "Because from where I was standing, you seemed miserable. You were barely even trying in baseball anymore."

"I was in a slump," argued Daphne. "That happens."

"You were in a slump because you didn't practice for six months," Daphne said. "It was simple. And you chose that route. I'm just saying that maybe you wanted this to happen. Maybe you were looking for a way out of being Sebastian. Maybe you didn't want to deal with that life anymore. And this was your answer."

"That's just dumb," Daphne said, though she couldn't deny that it made at least some sense.





“What are you going to do?” asked the half-dressed Jordan.

“I don’t know,” Daphne said. “I wish I did.”

“No – you wish someone would decide for you,” said Jordan. “But nobody’s going to tell you whether or not to live the rest of your life as a girl. You have to make the decision yourself.”

“I know,” Daphne said. “And, for your information, I don’t want someone else to decide for me. I’m just confused.”

Jordan shrugged. “Whatever you want to tell yourself,” she said. “But it seems easy enough from my perspective. What makes you happy? That’s the only question you need to answer. Do you feel happier as a girl or as a boy?”

“It’s more complicated than that,” Daphne said.

“It doesn’t have to be,” her stepsister said. “Look – my advice? Stay as a girl. Coming from someone who’s seen you both ways, you’re better off like this. You don’t even have anything to go back to as a guy. No girlfriend. No baseball. No –”

“I still have my scholarship,” Daphne pointed out. “If I want it.”

“And you honestly think that’s still on the table?” Jordan asked. “Seriously – you’re not that stupid, are you? They’re not going to give a baseball scholarship to someone who hasn’t played in two seasons. It’s just not happening. But yeah – keep dreaming about that. I’m sure it’ll work out perfectly well.”

“You don’t have to be a bitch about it,” Daphne said.

“I kind of feel like I do,” was Jordan’s only response. “But whatever. Girl or boy – I don’t care. Just do what you want.”

“I don’t know,” said Daphne, stretching. “I just like it. I honestly have no idea why. I’m used to competition, you know? That’s what baseball was. I wanted to win. But this? I just do it because I want to be the best I can be. Not better than somebody else.”

“I know the feeling,” said Olivia. “I did ballet until I was sixteen.”

“Really?” asked Daphne. “I never knew that.”

“It was before we got together,” she said. “I quit to focus on cheerleading. It was stupid, honestly. I wish I would have stuck with dance.”

“I can see why,” said Daphne. “It’s hard, but in a good way, you know?”

Olivia didn’t respond outside of favoring Daphne with a tight smile. While there was still some tension between the two, their relationship had progressed into a wary friendship. Daphne couldn’t help but hope that it would continue along that track.

“This is nice,” Daphne said. “You and me, just hanging out like this. I’m glad you came.”

“I’m glad you invited me,” Olivia admitted. “With my finals coming up soon, I needed to work off some stress.”

“Glad I could help,” Daphne responded, grinning.

“Yeah,” Olivia said. “It’s weird, though. We had to break up to actually become friends.”







"What was transitioning like?" asked Daphne, sitting on the bed.

"You know as well as I do," Rebecca answered. "Probably better, considering you did it far more recently."

"But mine wasn't real," Daphne said. "I'm talking about doing it for real. What was it like deciding to live the rest of your life as a woman?"

"Difficult," was Rebecca's simple answer. She sighed. "You have to understand that nothing back then was easy. Transgender people now have it a lot easier. They're more accepted. I know it's been less than fifteen years, but nobody in my life accepted it. Nobody. Not my mom. Not my dad. Definitely not my friends or coworkers. I had no choice but to leave town."

"Why did you do it, then?" asked Daphne. "Why didn't you take the easy route?"

"Because it wasn't a choice," Rebecca said. "Not really, at least. I was miserable as a man. When I looked in the mirror, I hated the person looking back at me. Even now, I'll sometimes see a glimpse of the man I was, and I'll feel that again. It was either transition or end it."

"End it?" Daphne asked. "You mean, you thought about suicide?"

"More than I care to admit," Rebecca stated. "Jordan kept me from going through with it. She saved my life for long enough that I was able to find my way."

Daphne stared at the carpeted floor for a long moment before she asked, "What am I going to do? I like being Daphne. I do. But I don't know if that's who I really am. And I definitely don't know if Sebastian's who I am, either. I'm so lost, and I've got to make a choice soon. The year's almost up."

"I wish I could help you," Rebecca said. "But it's something you're going to have to figure out on your own."

"I know," Daphne said.



"This is the last time," said Daphne, looking up at Mark as she gripped his cock. "We can't keep doing this."

"If you're worried about Olivia," he said. "Don't. She doesn't have a say in my love life."

"It's my decision," she stated. What she left unsaid was the fact that, whatever decision she made, she wanted a fresh start. She didn't love Mark. And he didn't love her. Their coupling was just convenient. But Daphne wanted something more. She wanted to have a real relationship with someone, regardless of whether it was as a girl or a boy.

"It's a bad decision," Mark stated. "We have a good thing going here. Why mess it up?"

Daphne sighed. "I'm going off to college," she said. "I won't be coming back."

"Not even during the holidays?" he asked.

"Is that what you want?" asked Daphne. "A holiday booty call?"

"Don't put words in my mouth," Mark said. "I'm just saying that we can keep this thing going. I like you, and -"

Daphne sighed. "Seriously?" she said. "You don't like me. You like the idea of me. You'd be better off with a real girl. One your age, maybe. I don't know. But this is it. This is the last time."

"Fine," Mark said. "But don't think that if you want to come back, I'll just let you."

"You will," Daphne whispered under her breath before taking the man's cock into her mouth. And she knew it was true.



“What is it with every girl I know and nudity?” asked Daphne. “I mean, seriously – put some clothes on.”

“Says the girl who likes to run around her back yard with her dick hanging out,” Olivia pointed out.

“I like to swim naked,” Daphne said. “That’s not abnormal.”

“And I’m in my house, in my room,” Olivia said. “I like the way the sheets feel when I’m naked. Sue me.”

“Whatever,” Daphne said, sitting down. “I just wanted you to know that I officially ended it with your dad.”

“I didn’t ask you to do that,” Olivia stated.

“But you wanted it,” Daphne countered. “So did I, if I’m honest. It was weird, and I never should have let it happen in the first place.”

“Okay,” Olivia said. “I’m not really sure how you want me to respond to that. Am I supposed to thank you or something?”

Daphne shook her head, grinning as she said, “I think we should just sort of move on. It’s done.”

“Good idea,” Olivia said. “But I do have one question for you. I know it’s a little awkward to talk about your sexual preferences, but sitting there, looking at me like this, you don’t feel anything? Like, if I told you that you could do whatever you wanted to me. Just ravish me. What would you say?”

“I would say no thanks,” Daphne stated without hesitation.

“Good to know,” Olivia said.





"Why are you smiling?" asked Jordan.

"I'm just glad you're being nice to me," Daphne said. "It's been a minute."

"Yeah," Jordan admitted. "Maybe I haven't been the best sister. You know, with the whole, coming-onto-you thing. And then me getting pissed. It wasn't your fault. I wasn't even mad at you, really. I was just frustrated with Kelly."

"Any chance of getting back together?" Daphne asked.

Jordan shook her head. "No," she said. "I read that whole situation wrong. I can see that now."

"I'm sorry," Daphne said, not knowing what else to say. Being dumped was difficult enough, but finding out your relationship was never real to begin with? That was infinitely harder.

"Not your fault," Jordan said. "Not her fault, either. It's mine. I should stop going after straight girls. That's my problem. I think I can turn them. How stupid is that, right? I've spent so much time arguing with people about sexuality not being a choice that I just sort of forget to apply that same logic to my own love life."

"Did you try to fight it?" Daphne asked. "When you figured out what all those feelings meant, I mean. Did you try to make yourself straight?"

Jordan shook her head. "No," she said. "I guess I thought about it, but it wasn't like I really thought I could ever go straight." She shivered. "Ugh. Just the thought of some sweaty, smelly dude pawing at me makes me want to vomit."

"Yeah," Daphne said. "I get that."

"Kind of how you react to being with a girl," Jordan said.

"W-what?" was Daphne's question.

"Look - I know you don't want to hear this," Jordan stated. "But you need to. There's no way you'll ever have a real relationship with a girl. You might try, but whatever girl you get will only ever be a beard. I don't care if you're a boy or a girl, your sexuality is as plain as it can be."



“This is just sex,” Daphne said, looking down at Tyler as she spread her legs wide. “So long as you get that, you can fuck me. But if you think this is ever going any further than that, just –”

“No!” Tyler said, fumbling with his fly. He unzipped it, saying, “I’m fine with that.”

Daphne was weak. She knew it. She had certain needs. It was an inescapable fact. And she’d called Tyler to meet those needs. But that didn’t mean she was going to put up with his bullshit. As far as she was concerned, he was just a giant, walking dick. A sex toy. Nothing more. And what’s more, he seemed eager.

“No,” she said, nodding at his exposed cock. “Not yet. You get to lick me first.”

“What?” he asked, furrowing his brow in confusion.

“You don’t get to pretend it’s not there,” she said. “I want you to suck my dick. And then I want you to lick my asshole.”

“I am not putting my mouth down there,” Tyler said, shaking his head as he backed away. “And I don’t suck dick. Not now. Not ever.”

“Then you don’t get my ass,” Daphne said, closing her legs. She almost laughed at his expressions, alternating between indecision, lust, and reticence. In the end, he just sighed.

“Fine,” he said, getting on his knees. “But you’d better not tell anybody I’m doing this.”

Daphne spread her legs. “I won’t tell a soul,” she said. “Now be a good little cocksucker.”



“He didn’t!” exclaimed Jordan.

“He did,” Daphne said. “And he was actually really good at it, too. That boy’s got a tongue you wouldn’t believe. He really got up in there.”

“But he sucked your dick?” Jordan asked as she spread her towel out next to Daphne’s. “Like, really sucked it?”

“Like a vacuum cleaner,” Daphne said. “He was down there for like fifteen minutes before he started tonguing my ass. I know he’d never admit it, but I think he kind of liked that part.”

“So, you flipped it on him,” Jordan said. “He was using you. Now, you’re using him.”

“I guess,” she said. “I just thought it was my turn, you know? I’d sucked his dick enough that it was only fair that he return the favor. Plus, I’m tired of people just pretending I’m not what I am.”

“And what’s that?” asked Jordan.

“I’ll have to get back to you on that,” Daphne said, laughing. “But I know I’m not his submissive little fuck buddy. Not anymore, at least.”

Jordan joined in on the laughter as she lay down on the towel. “Please,” she said. “We both know what choice you’re going to make. You might not have realized it yet, but you’ve already decided.”

Daphne didn’t answer, but she suspected that Jordan was right. She wasn’t completely ready to make the choice, but she was definitely leaning toward womanhood. A few more sessions with Tyler would go a long way toward making up her mind.





“Come on,” said Tyler. “Just let me lick it.”

“Beg,” said Daphne, who lay on her stomach, her legs spread wide in a split. It was prom night, and their relationship, such as it was, had progressed to the point where Daphne called the shots. And she was getting used to being in control.

“Please let me eat your ass,” the big football player said.

“After,” she said.

“After what?” Tyler asked.

“I think you know,” Daphne answered, smiling. “No? You never were very smart. After you fuck me. After you cum inside me, you can eat my ass. Not before.”

“B-but...but that...I mean...what about the...”

“That’s the deal,” Daphne said. “Otherwise, you get nothing. You can sit there and watch while I go downstairs and find Brian Davis. You saw him, right? When we were dancing? He’d do it.”

Tyler looked left, then right in quick succession. He knew he was trapped because he suspected that Daphne was right. Brian Davis was just kinky enough to do whatever Daphne told him to do. And if he wanted to compete, he had to do exactly the same thing.

“O-okay,” he said. “But you can’t -”

“I can’t tell anybody that you licked your own cum out of my ass,” she provided. “Yeah - I know. Now fuck me so you can get your treat.”







"I hate being out here in this thing," said Daphne, toying with her pink bikini.  
"It feels stupid."

"Quit whining, and tell me about Tyler," Jordan said. "Does he really eat his own cum? Like, for real?"

Daphne laughed. "Yes," she said. "But only out of my ass. It's not like he's cumming in his own hand then licking it up."

"You should make him do that next," Jordan said. "Or make him suck another guy off or something. You should -"

"I dumped him the day after graduation," Daphne said. "He begged me to stay with him, but I'm over that. Besides, I've got a decision to make."

"You dumped him? When he practically worshipped you? Seriously?" asked Jordan. "That's insane."

Daphne shrugged. "Maybe," she said. "But like I said, if I'm going back to being Sebastian, I'm -"

"Can you please just stop pretending that's even an option?" Jordan asked. "We both know there's no way you could go back to being a boy. You're too much of a girl."

"Like you know what I'm thinking," Daphne countered. "I might have already stopped my hormones for all you know."

"Did you?" Jordan asked, suddenly a little less sure of herself. Daphne let the question hang in the air for a long moment before answering.

"No," she said. "But that doesn't mean it's not possible. So, please, just let me do what I'm going to do. You keep saying it's my decision to make, and I'm the one who's going to make it. Without your input."

"Fine," Jordan said, "Point taken. But I still think you should make Tyler suck some big, black dude's dick. And take some pictures. Put them online. I bet his parents would love that."

"God, you're such a bitch," Daphne said.

"Which is why you love me," Jordan said.





"Do you remember your mom?" Daphne asked suddenly. The day of her choice was fast approaching, and she would grasp at just about any straw to avoid thinking about it. "Your real mom, I mean. Not Rebecca. The woman who -"

"I know what you mean," Jordan said, interrupting her stepsister. "And a little, I guess. I mean, she left when I was, like, five. So there are some memories, but they're kind of blurry. Mom says I look like her."

"I don't remember my mom," Daphne said. "She died when I was really little. Like two, I think."

"How did she die?" Jordan asked.

"She was hooked on pills," Daphne said. "Took too many, I guess. Dad was kind of vague about it. He didn't even tell me how she died until I was sixteen. And even then, he didn't really want to talk about it."

"I don't blame him," Jordan said.

"Do you ever think about going to look for your mom?" asked Daphne. "I mean, she's still alive, right?"

"Maybe? I don't know," Jordan said. "But the way I look at it, she left. She didn't care about me. She didn't care about our family."

So, I don't see any reason to care about her. Dead or alive, it doesn't matter. She's not my mom. Mom's my mom. And my dad. And everything else to me. That's what matters."

"That's sweet," Daphne said.

"But don't tell her I said that," Jordan responded, grinning. "Because I reserve the right to be a bratty teenager for a few more years."



"I've made my decision," Daphne said. She'd thought long and hard about whether or not she wanted to spend the rest of her life as a boy or a girl, but in the end, no matter how she thought about it, she just couldn't see going back to being a boy. It felt like an easy choice.

"And?" asked Rebecca.

"I'm a girl," Daphne said. "I don't think this happened by accident. I think this was meant to be. All of it. The whole thing. I think I was meant to realize that I was always supposed to be a girl."

Rebecca threw her arms around her daughter. "I'm so proud of you!" she said, tears in her eyes. She pulled away, holding Daphne at arm's length. "Not many people could make that decision. Even with how you feel, it's hard to choose this life. And I'm glad you had the courage to do it."

Daphne smiled, but she didn't feel courageous. In fact, going back to manhood seemed like the more difficult choice. Going through a transition all over again, re-learning how to be a guy, giving up the feminine things she'd come to enjoy – it all seemed like so much work, and for little purpose. If she was happy as a girl, there was no reason to change. And she was happy.

"Thank you," Daphne said. "For everything. I mean, throughout this whole thing, you've been there for me. You've given me great advice. You've supported me. And I'll never forget it."

"That's what moms do," Rebecca said.

"I didn't really get that before," Daphne said. "I mean, I understood the role of a mother. But I didn't get it. Not really. I'd never had that before."

"But now you do," Rebecca said. "No matter what else happens, I'll be here for you."

"I know," Daphne said. "I know."





"I see you're still as girly as ever," said Jordan. "Does that mean you've made the right choice?"

"It means I made the right choice," Daphne said, laughing as she undressed. "But I think you knew what I was going to do all along."

Jordan shrugged. "Maybe," she said.

"When did you know?" Daphne asked her stepsister.

"A lot sooner than you might have expected," Jordan said. "I think it was the moment I saw you in that cheerleading outfit that I knew there was something there. Obviously, I didn't expect you to go full trans girl. But there was something."

"Yeah," Daphne said. "I guess so."

"But if I'm hones," she explained. "The real moment I knew that you were a girl was that first day back at school. Do you remember?"

Daphne nodded. "You made fun of me in the car," she said.

"I did," Jordan said, smiling as she remembered the exchange.

"But in that moment, you seemed so much like a girl. The expressions. The mannerisms. It just felt right. That's when I knew. That's when it was clear that you'd never go back to being Sebastian."

"Way more insightful than me," Daphne said. "Because I didn't really decide until yesterday afternoon."

"That's a lie, and you know it," Jordan said. "You decided a long time ago."

"Maybe," Daphne allowed. "Maybe."

"Honestly?" Daphne said. "I wish I'd done it sooner."

"Sooner?" asked Jordan. "What? Made your decision? Why?"

"No," she said. "Like, sooner as in when I was younger. I wish I would have transitioned back when I was twelve or thirteen."

"God," Jordan said. "Why?"

Daphne shrugged. "I think about all the stuff I missed," she said. "I could have gotten more into dance. Maybe I would have had a future there. Or gymnastics. Maybe even cheerleading. That might have been fun."

"I can see it now - Daphne Bell, head cheerleader," Jordan said. "Prom queen. Homecoming queen. You could have had it all!"

"Shut up!" Daphne said.

"That's what you wanted, right?" Jordan said. "You wanted that all-American girl-next-door thing, didn't you?"

Daphne shrugged. "Maybe," she said. "Is that so wrong?"

"No," Jordan answered, smiling. "A little cliché, but it isn't wrong."

"Oh, ha ha," Daphne said. "Make fun of my little fantasies. But you're the one who writes about banging the cheerleading squad in her diary."

"And I stand by that fantasy," Jordan said. "Even if they are all bitches."







"You look nice," said Daphne, coming into her stepmother's bedroom.  
"What's the occasion?"

"I have a date," Rebecca said, looking down at her red dress. "With your old coach. It's a banquet for them winning the state championship this year."

"That's still going on?" asked Daphne. "You know he's a transphobe, right?"

Daphne shrugged. "Nobody's perfect," she said. "He's an okay guy, deep down. Really deep. But that's not really why I'm going out with him."

"Yeah," Daphne said, spreading her hands about ten inches apart. She grinned. "I saw why you're going out with him."

"Inappropriate. But not wrong," said Rebecca, laughing. "Seriously, though - you're not mad, are you? That I'm dating your coach?"

"Honestly? I couldn't care less," Daphne said. "That's from another life."

That wasn't entirely true, but Daphne wasn't about to say so. It was a little disappointing, seeing the baseball teams' success in her absence. It put something of a dent in her ego, knowing that they didn't really need her. But that didn't matter anymore, she kept reminding herself. She wasn't a baseball player. She wasn't even a boy.

"You're being very mature about this," Rebecca said. "Honestly, I expected you to object."

"I probably would have a few months ago," Daphne said. "But I've got other stuff on my mind. College. Boys. Shopping. You know - girl stuff."

Rebecca smiled. "Just don't overdo it," she said. "You don't have to be a walking stereotype to be a girl. Remember that."



"Okay, so I have a confession to make," said Olivia. "But you can't get mad at me, okay?"

"Yeah - I'm not making that promise," Daphne, who'd just told Olivia that she intended to remain a girl, said. "Just tell me what you're going to tell me."

Olivia sighed dramatically. "Fine," she said. "But I did this for your own good. I didn't think you could take it."

Daphne responded, "Just spit it out, okay?"

"So - remember when you went to that pool party with me?" Olivia asked. "The one with those frat guys?"

"The one where I got naked and sucked a dick?" Daphne asked. "The one where we both pretended that I didn't remember it because I was super drunk? That one?"

"Y-you remembered?" Olivia asked.

"Bits and pieces," Daphne explained. "Enough to know what I did, at least."

"Why didn't you say anything?" Olivia asked.

"I don't know," Daphne said, shrugging. "Embarrassment? I wasn't really ready to come to terms with liking guys yet. But I dreamed about that day for, like, months. I never would have gotten here without it."

Olivia shook her head. "I thought you didn't know," she said. "I've been carrying that around for months. You could have told me you knew."

Daphne shrugged. "And you didn't have to keep secrets," she said. "But here we are."





The future. Once, when she was still Sebastian, it seemed so concrete. Sebastian's path was set in stone. If he wasn't drafted into the major leagues, he'd play baseball in college.

He'd get his degree, and he would marry Olivia. They'd have children. They'd make their respective livings. And they'd be happy.

But that was before he became she. That was before she realized that baseball wouldn't make her happy. Neither would Olivia. Or any of the things she'd once thought important. No – she'd based her life on the lie of someone else's dreams. And as she stared off into the vast expanse of her uncertain future, she realized that she had no idea where she would end up.

Because with that uncertainty came choice, and with that choice came the possibility of true happiness. She still didn't know who she really was. She'd barely discovered her own gender. But she was eager to figure it all out.

No doubt, she would make mistakes. That came with the territory. She'd have her share of failures. No doubt, she would love. She'd lose. And she would encounter bigotry.

Being who she was came with those dangers. But throughout it all, she would have the support of her family. Her sister. Her mother. She knew she could depend on them through thick, through thin. Rain or shine.

She smiled, excited about the future, excited about who she was and who she might become. The whole world stretched out in front of her, and she was eager to find out where she fit into all of it.