

Growing Into Herself

By RobClassact

Chapter 1

The bell rang and for Caitlin Landry it sounded like a blessing. Chem was her second to last class of the day and she hated every minute of it. Quizzes had just been returned and she had scored an 81%. She was horrible at chemistry and this normally would have been a godsend, but her friend and lab-partner Maureen had scored a 98%. Though Maureen, out of courtesy, didn't rub it in, Caitlin still felt a fair amount of jealousy. She was, however, used to Maureen outdoing her in just about everything but was still grateful for her friendship. They had been friends since grade school and Caitlin really had no qualms about playing second (or even fourth) fiddle to her. They were in their final weeks of their junior year in high school, and concerns over chemistry quizzes would soon be a thing of the past.

Jason Kline turned around to swap scores with Maureen. He had a major crush on her and had wagered with her that if he scored higher on the quiz, she had to go out with him Friday. He was grinning smugly as Maureen continued to load her school bag, casually pretending not to notice him.

"So I'll be picking you up at 7:00?" Jason grinned expectantly.

Maureen gave him a slight smile and continued to pack up her things. "Confident?"

Jason smiled bigger and nodded. "Ninety-seven percent, baby. What do you got?"

Maureen had already slid her quiz into her bag. "Ninety-six. Pick me up at 6:30."

Caitlin shot Maureen a quick look, but Maureen averted her glance and continued chatting with Jason. "Nice job. Now we see what it takes to get you to study. Maybe we'll make a higher stakes wager for the final." She said, tossing her bag over her shoulder. Jason laughed, then his eyes widened at the possibilities. Before the conversation could go on any further, Maureen nudged Caitlin toward the door, leaving Jason still gaping, barely managing a slight wave as the two girls left.

Maureen was one of those girls who seemed to be blessed with everything. She had what most considered to be the best smile in the school, along with dark brown eyes and thick brown hair. Her body wasn't stunning, but it was definitely nothing to sneeze at. She was a standout tennis and soccer player and naturally had great legs, the highlight of her toned 5'6" body. To top it off, she was an excellent student, not quite taking AP classes, but sticking to a few honors classes that would guarantee her ticket to a quality university. Maureen was well aware of her high status in the school pecking order, and often used it to her advantage while being careful not to

come across as bitchy or stuck-up. She was student council secretary, vice-president of honor society, and had been on homecoming court every year of high school. While she was friendly enough to everyone, she stuck to her inner group and enjoyed her status, knowing that it would eventually take her far in life.

Once they were well out of earshot of Jason, Caitlin whispered to Maureen, “Didn’t you get a 98?”

Maureen grinned. “Yeah, but he’s cute. Regardless, I figured it wouldn’t hurt him to put in an extra effort. The guy’s been averaging C’s all quarter. This way we both win.”

“I think he’s a scumbag.” Caitlin replied rolling her eyes.

“A cute scumbag.” Maureen persisted, smiling.

Caitlin shook her head in disgust, but before she could dig up more reasons to hate Jason, they were interrupted by Alexis who, as always, couldn’t seem to contain her excitement. Alexis was a different case entirely. From the very beginning Alexis’ attention deficit disorder and complete disinterest in all things academic made it obvious that she wouldn’t be moving mountains with her intelligence. By the end of her fifth grade year, however, she had shed a large amount of baby fat only for it to slowly migrate to one centralized location in her upper torso. By the time she reached high school, she was not only sporting boobs on the upper end of Double D, but sported a derriere which had been dubbed by most of the student body as “un-fucking-believable.” She stood 5’9” with bright blonde hair and green eyes. Her mother, the widowed owner of a real-estate company provided Alexis with the most expensive exercise equipment and beauty products available, and the only knowledge Alex truly accrued was related to maintaining her looks. By age sixteen, Alexis had begun modeling in her spare time, but couldn’t spell “moisturize” to save her life. While generally uncoordinated, Alexis’ near limitless energy and spunk (not to mention incredible body) easily earned her a spot on the varsity cheerleading squad. She was generally nice to everyone, too dense to be cruel and lacking the grace to overtake Maureen in popularity, but her money and unbelievable looks kept her in the popular crowd.

“You’ll never guess who asked me out!” Alexis gushed.

“Ben.” Caitlin replied without enthusiasm.

“YES!!! Alexis replied gripping Caitlin’s shoulders and jumping up and down, setting her tube top in motion and getting the attention of every male within viewing distance. Caitlin flicked Alexis’ hands off of her continued forward.

“I’m thrilled, and I’ll be shocked if he can navigate his way to your house.” Caitlin said dryly.

Maureen stepped in. “When?”

“In the gym. He came over and mumbled something about Friday.” Alexis bit her lip and smiled. “It was so cute! He could barely talk!”

“Are you sure he asked you? He could have asked your boobs and you might just be tagging along for the ride.”

Caitlin’s venom was entirely lost on Alexis. “You know, come to think of it, he did seem awfully interested in my new sports bra. You think I should wear it Friday?”

Caitlin groaned. “I’ll see you guys later,” and hastened toward her last class.

While Maureen and Alexis sincerely saw Caitlin as their friend, Caitlin always felt she got the raw end of the deal. She was neither as pretty nor as smart as Maureen nor was she anywhere near as drop dead gorgeous (or, thankfully, as dumb) as Alexis. She had light auburn hair and stood 5’4” with a respectable figure and an attractive face which she often caked in makeup. She was fairly athletic, and played on the JV girls basketball team and varsity soccer team, but wasn’t really a standout in either. Her inferiority complex around Maureen and Alexis only fueled her caustic temperament and she quietly bore the stigma of being the “bitchy popular girl.” This didn’t bother her much, but many of her teachers resented her languid attitude in class. Maureen was thankful that Caitlin provided an outlet for her own occasional bitchiness, and Alexis was simply not bright enough to interpret Caitlin’s cynicism as anything but hilarious. Despite this, Caitlin valued Alexis and particularly Maureen as close friends

Luckily for Caitlin, there was one class which she didn’t particularly despise, and that was her advanced painting class. She had enjoyed drawing as long as she could remember and always looked forward to her art class at the end of the day. The advanced art teacher, Mr. Knightley often praised her work and encouraged her to submit her art to art shows and contests, but Caitlin would have none of it. Though she was proud of the fact that she was a good artist, she was not proud of the company of students in the advanced art class, which consisted of mostly goth kids and complete geeks which she neither wanted to compete with nor be associated with. Most of the kids who took art resented Mr. Knightley because he wouldn’t let art class be an “easy A” and few students outside the artistically inclined took the second year class. She knew that at least appearance-wise, she didn’t really have the look of an art-geek, but she wouldn’t let that stop her from enjoying her one tolerable class period.

Most of the students were working on their final design projects for the course and Mr. Knightley was doing little beyond coaching and advising the students in the final few weeks. Caitlin had settled on a simple landscape with a few trees. While the picture itself was not particularly challenging, she had opted to use acrylics, which she had little experience with. Next to her, Nicole Ryder, one of the stars of the art department, was pouring herself into what appeared to be an armless zombie and an inside-out horse acting out some kind of violent hardcore pornography. Ordinarily, students weren’t allowed to address such extreme subjects, but Nicole’s work had appeared in three statewide galleries and she had earned a bit more freedom than most other students. Nicole also had the personality to match her works, sporting short, bright red cropped hair, a tattoo on her forearm, and more piercings than anyone could count.

Mr. Knightley, a tall, bald man wearing cargo pants and an old t-shirt stopped at Caitlin's canvas and studied it carefully.

"You've done an excellent job with the sky, but you might try something different." He pointed out, with his head tilted to the side.

"It's a blue sky." Caitlin replied. "To my knowledge that's not uncommon."

Nicole chimed in. "I think he wants you to paint like you're not some afroed schmoe on public television."

"Don't you have a metal detector to set off?" Caitlin shot toward her.

Mr. Knightley cleared his throat, clearing the air and sending Nicole back to her work. He leaned in to Caitlin and asked her to see him after class and continued over to Nicole's canvas where Caitlin overheard him commenting on the color contrast of the kidney hanging out of the zombie to the blood spraying out of the horse's open throat wound. She shuddered at the imagery and returned to her own work, working quietly and diligently until the end of class.

After class Caitlin tried to sneak out the door but Mr. Knightley called her out and she grudgingly headed over to his desk in the corner.

"This doesn't have anything to do with metal-face does it?"

"Not really," Mr. Knightley replied, "But I would like to talk about your work."

"What about it?"

Mr. Knightley clasped hands together and put them to his mouth, a gesture which Caitlin was quite used to with most of her teachers and had grown to hate. "Caitlin, I've been watching your work for the past two years, and I must admit you are quite gifted. The piece you are working on right now, for example, is quite good, but I think you could do more."

"Is this about the sky? I can make it purple or orange or plaid if you want." Caitlin offered curtly.

"It's not about what I want. I don't feel like you are really choosing to express yourself. I feel that you have more to say but you aren't letting yourself say it."

"Are you saying that I'm not creative?"

"No." Knightley replied. "I know you're creative. I just think you are curbing your creativity. For example, your final project is a landscape of grass and trees. Granted, you are using acrylics, but an artist of your caliber could handle something much more challenging."

Caitlin got his message. "So you're saying that my art piece isn't 'A material.' Oh! Ok, well if you want me to draw a bull sodomizing the queen of England like tank girl over there, I'm sorry; I'm going to have to decline."

"You know what I mean Caitlin..."

"Sorry Mr. Knightley. I'm not a Prozac psycho like your little prize students. I'll put a house on the grass if you want, but it's my final project and I'll do what I want." Caitlin headed toward the door, but then turned around quickly, shouting, "...and you can give me a fucking F minus for all I care!" And with that she stormed out, slamming the door behind her.

Caitlin rushed out of the studio nearly barreling through another student who happened to be entering at the exact same time. He muttered a few words of apology but Caitlin, livid with rage, had hardly noticed him. Art was one of the few classes where she actually felt half-decent about herself and now she was an underachiever there too? The whole episode had given her a headache and she briefly considered stopping by the convenience store for some aspirin but decided she would rather head home as quickly as possible. She wanted to vent, but she knew that Alexis was at cheer practice and Maureen had an ASB meeting. Often she would stay after school and work in the art studio but this particular day she obviously wasn't in the mood for artistic expression, though she had to admit that at this particular time she could almost justify some of the gruesome shit that Nicole vented onto her canvas.

Heading back to her locker, Caitlin was doing her absolute best to avoid everyone she possibly could, dumping textbooks and binders into her backpack with little to no regard for what she actually needed. She had barely noticed the approach of Steve Rubins, the men's soccer captain. A prototypical sleaze-ball jock, he was searching for the soonest possible opportunity to get laid. Having already failed with Maureen and unwilling to compete with the all-state fullback on the football team for Alexis, he saw Caitlin as his best bet. Caitlin naturally knew of her place on the pecking order. Despite the fact that 90% of the female student body (and possibly 2.7% of the male student body) would have been glad to take him up on his offer, Caitlin hated him purely on the basis that she was his third choice.

"Hey sweetie, what's the hurry?"

Not in the mood to talk, Caitlin muttered some semblance of a reply through her teeth.

Steve grinned and flashed a look of mock sympathy. "Rough day?"

Caitlin, still fuming, was fumbling to zip her bag and get as far away from him as possible. It made her miserable enough that she was third on his list, a fact made all the more painful that she had a huge crush on him.

"Look hon. How about you and I..." He trailed off as Caitlin turned to look him in the eye with a queer look. It was a mixture of intense rage and something else he couldn't place. Caitlin, in the meantime thought she was going to tell him off, but was distracted at how powerful her crush

was on him. The longer she stood there staring, the more awkward it would get, so she said the first thing that came to her head.

“Go blow yourself.”

Her embarrassment from her encounter with Steve compounded with her irritation over Mr. Knightley’s comments and sore spot from her comparatively poor score on the exam whirled through her head as she flung her bag into her car. Her mind raced around with rage and self-consciousness as she sped home. Throwing caution to the wind, she let her subconscious do the driving as she seethed to herself, cursing her teachers, her classes, and even her friends. *Why did Mr. Knightley love Nicole’s work so much? How does Alexis get by so well having the IQ of a raccoon? Why does Maureen never EVER have any problems? Why doesn’t anything good happen to ME!?!?* She punctuated her last sentence with a slam on the accelerator which sent her car screeching forward at a speed in violation of local speed laws. But Caitlin could care less about speed laws, and she also didn’t have time to really care about the Nissan which pulled into the intersection. Caitlin’s small sedan clipped the front of the vehicle, which sent her car spinning off the road. Luckily (?), her car was halted by the passenger side impact with a telephone pole. None of this mattered to Caitlin as her head slammed into driver’s side window, rendering her instantly unconscious.

Chapter 2

“Honey, I thought we were going to restrict reckless driving to highways and vehicular homicide.”

Her mother’s deadpan humor ushered her back into consciousness. Her whole body felt numb and her head, understandably, was throbbing. Looking around, she recognized the surroundings of a hospital room. She could see an IV in her arm, and she had the numb feeling of painkillers cruising through her veins. That was probably the only thing keeping her from freaking out at the moment. Caitlin groaned as her mother, a slight woman with graying brown hair rubbed her hand.

“Don’t try to move dear. Just relax. You hit your head pretty hard and you’ve got a few bruises, but nothing too serious.”

“My car?” Caitlin weakly.

“We’ll talk about that later. In the meantime, get some rest.”

Caitlin lay back just as her father came in, he was visibly worried. He looked at Caitlin, then at her mother.

“Road rage?” Her mother nodded in reply.

Her father sighed. “First the garage, then Mrs. Pepper’s dog, then a newsstand. I swear, honey, you need to stop venting your frustration on the road. Don’t they have tae bo classes at that school of yours?”

Caitlin smiled. In an odd contrast to her fiery temper, her parents were the most even-tempered people she knew. Her father was head editor of a nature magazine and her mother taught middle school. Caitlin’s older sister Tegan had been away at college for the past two years, following in her father’s footsteps as a journalist and taking summer internships. Caitlin, unfortunately, had yet to choose a direction and her parents didn’t pester her about it. Mr. & Mrs. Landry had, as of late, been rather concerned for their daughter’s growing tendency to vent her frustrations on the road. In the meantime, however, their main concerns were for Caitlin’s safety, so an exasperated Mr. Landry kissed his daughter’s forehead and slipped out. Caitlin swore she overheard the words “anger management” under his breath.

Caitlin was put out by her father’s comments, but was soon distracted by the fact that she was starving. It had probably been hours since she had a meal. As if on cue, a nurse came in with a small tray of food. Caitlin didn’t bother inspecting her turkey sandwich and soup, just digging into her meal. Before she knew it, her plate was empty and she was, to her surprise, still a little hungry. It seemed to take forever for the nurse to return. In her most pathetic sick-person voice, Caitlin politely requested another meal, and the nurse smiled and returned her another tray. She ate with a bit more restraint this time through, but ended up finishing the food still quicker than she planned. The nurse was walking by and noticed her empty tray. With raised eyebrows, the nurse came to retrieve her tray.

“Hungry?”

Caitlin was a bit flustered and muttered a soft affirmative. She still felt a bit hungry, but didn’t give it much thought as fatigue set in faster than she would have expected and she drifted off.

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“What’d you hit this time?”

She recognized Maureen immediately and blinked her way into consciousness. She felt like she’d slept for half a day but the clock indicated it had only been a couple hours. “Bitch,” she said, smiling. “I’m feeling well, thanks.”

Maureen set down a small pot of flowers on the table next to her bed. “Here. It’s pretty plain in here. This’ll spice things up a bit.” She gestured across the room. “Along with those.” She suddenly noticed a bouquet of nearly a dozen oddly colored balloons adorned with messages ranging from “Happy Birthday” and “Happy Anniversary” to “Mazeltov!” and “Good luck” which bore Alexis’ calling card.

“Hm. It’s nice to be thought of.” Caitlin said.

Maureen sighed. "Yeah, you'd think she'd be able to at least find one with 'get well' on it. She'd be here, but I think she has cheer or something."

The very idea of Alexis bounding into the room made Caitlin queasy, a fact not lost on Maureen.

"Don't worry; I doubt she'll be in today. Speaking of which. How long you gonna' be in here?"

Caitlin shrugged. "Dunno. I don't think it's anything serious. I think dad wants me in anger management classes."

Maureen couldn't help but smirk. "Truth be told Cait..."

"Hey, don't even start with me now," Caitlin glared, "I've had a rough day."

"Yeah? Well, relax. That's all you can do at this point. That and not think about it."

Caitlin grumbled and tried to make herself comfortable. She still felt a bit off kilter from the accident, but nothing she felt a few aspirin couldn't fix. "I actually think I'm going home tomorrow. The doctor's got a few x-rays to look at and I'm supposed to get as much rest as possible."

"I think that'd do you good. Take a couple days off, do a few finals, and it's going to be beaches, bathing suits, and baking in the sun for the next couple months."

Caitlin half-grinned. "Yeah, well this is the most relaxed I've been in months."

"I'll let you relax then. Will we see you tomorrow?"

"Probably." Caitlin replied, but she was suddenly distracted by sudden pangs of hunger which nagged at her belly. "I...uh...I've been feeling better."

Maureen looked at her quizzically. "I dunno. You look kinda' pale to me. You eaten today?"

"Yeah...just not much. I guess I should probably eat." Caitlin's hunger pangs were really starting to get to her. "Can you get the nurse?" She asked Maureen before she had a chance to think.

"No prob. Honestly, you'd think they'd be treating you better." Maureen stepped out. Caitlin's hunger pangs were really getting to her and she couldn't understand why. After what seemed like an eternity, the nurse came back in with a tray of food, which Caitlin dug into heartily. She hadn't even noticed Maureen still hovering in the doorway.

"Wow, are they going to bleed you after they starve you?"

Caitlin's attention was divided between the need to satisfy her hunger and listen to her friend. She swallowed a large gulp of food in her mouth. She wished she could agree, but this was her third meal in three hours. While the hospital meals were paltry, but she knew that she would

never typically have eaten that much in such a short amount of time. In less than a couple minutes she had cleaned off her plate, much to the surprise of her friend. Caitlin was a bit embarrassed, but felt great following her meal. In fact, even her headache had eased up a bit, but had been replaced with an overwhelming tiredness. She waved at Maureen, and Maureen smiled and returned her wave. A warm comfort spread over her body as she, again, drifted off into a peaceful slumber.

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"I've never seen such a miraculous recovery." The doctor continued. "Your injuries were far from serious, but you've recovered from them much faster than I would have expected. All the tests came back negative. If I hadn't known better, I'd say you haven't even been in an accident."

Caitlin certainly felt great, but the doctor's explanation's was boring her already. He'd been talking continuously for about ten minutes, just enough time for Caitlin to call her mom to come pick her up, and she looked forward to getting away from the hospital as soon as possible.

"...the bruises, the internal injuries, it's all completely gone. I've simply..."

"...never seen such a miraculous recovery," Caitlin finished. "I'm glad to be the high point of your career," she said, digging through her purse for a hairbrush.

"You don't understand, this is totally unprecedented, I've never seen anything like it. I really think it'd be in your best interests to stay here longer."

"I'm not staying here any longer than I have to. You said it yourself, I'm fine."

"...but we really should..."

"Thanks for the help." Caitlin sped out of the room as fast as possible, not wanting to hear the doctor's voice any more, though she could hear his audible sigh from down the hallway. She set to work checking her messages, and sure enough there were at four from Alexis asking if Caitlin had received her balloons. She smiled at her friend's concern, but deleted the messages without listening to anything past 'Hey Cait! Guess what Ben said to me today!'" She was still a bit stiff from lying down so long, and her body felt awkward with the sudden amount of movement. She rotated her shoulders and stretched her arms, only to have the similar awkward feeling continue to nag at her. She couldn't quite place exactly what she was feeling, but she definitely felt uncomfortable. Her first impression was to inspect her body, but everything seemed normal enough. Her mom had been waiting for her in the waiting room.

"You're looking better," her mother smiled. "I guess you just needed a car accident to clear your head."

Her mom launched into a lecture about reducing stress and constructive ways of dealing with anger, but Caitlin was hardly in the mood for it. As they settled into the car, she let the seat back some so she could either sleep or make it look like she was sleep so her mother would stop

talking. It was only a couple minutes to her house, but she figured she pass it off as fatigue from the hospital. Regardless...her mother continued.

“Your father was thrilled you were coming home this weekend. I was surprised with your speedy recovery, but he chalked it up to his ‘good ‘ol’ Landry genes.’ I swear the next thing you know he’ll be taking credit for your painting. Honestly, that man couldn’t draw a stick figure. Do you think it came from your Aunt Becky? She was quite the artist, and quite the lesbian. And she wonders why she doesn’t have children...”

Mrs. Landry was unusually chipper and talkative, and in Caitlin's lethargic state it annoyed her. Her body felt odd. She couldn’t quite describe it, as she had never had this particular feeling before.

Seemingly noticing her daughter’s unresponsiveness, her mother chimed in, “Need anything honey?”

Caitlin was about to decline when something stopped her. She did need something. “I’m hungry.” She said.

“How hungry?” her mother replied. Caitlin thought about it and replied. “Pretty hungry.”

“Well there’s a Subway right over here. One turkey sub coming up!” Her mother’s energy continued.

Her mother pulled into the parking lot and as they exited the car she noticed her hunger was a bit stronger than she initially assessed. She was tempted to almost run into the Subway, but she kept her cool and tried to stay composed as she slowly began to realize that at that moment she wanted a six inch turkey sub more than anything else in the world. The couple minutes it took to take their order seemed like an eternity, and fortunately her mom opted to eat in. It was extremely strange. She was used to cutting the turkey sub in half, but after eating her usual amount, she didn’t feel full, and continued to eat the whole thing. It was only six inches, but she was surprised at her appetite. Her mother had noticed her daughter’s larger than normal appetite, but said nothing. “Feeling full?”

“Oh yeah.” Caitlin replied, but in actuality she was lying. She was still hungry, if not more so than she had been before she ate. She felt odd about asking for more food though and did her best to hide her hunger. “I’m actually feeling a lot better mom. I was thinking about stopping by Alex’s on the way home so I can just walk from here.”

Her mom seemed surprised. “Are you sure dear? That appointment seemed to really take it out of you.”

Caitlin’s hunger was beginning to bite at her and she was anxious to send her mother on her way. “Yeah mom. I really could use some fresh air. After all, it’s the first sunny day of the year.” Despite some reservation Caitlin’s mother left, reminding her not to stay out too late. Caitlin

went to the bathroom in order to hide the fact that she hadn't left Subway, but in fact she was pacing trying her best to handle the unusual hunger pains.

After no longer than a minute, she exited the bathroom and after a quick glance to the window to see if her mother was still around, she got back in line. She ordered a footling steak & cheese sub, knowing she couldn't possibly eat it all and she could always just take some of it home. As she said this she waited impatiently for her sandwich to be made. As the employee asked her about toppings she found herself growing increasingly impatient and hungry and she was thankful to have cash. Though she had planned not to stay and let the employees assume the sandwich was for her, she quickly sat down and tore into the sandwich. She couldn't recall the last time a sandwich, or even food period, had tasted this good. Much to her surprise, she completed not only half the sandwich, but the whole thing in less than five minutes. Even more to her surprise, she was still hungry!

"Oh my god." She said quietly to herself. "What's wrong with me?" She remembered what she had learned a year ago in health class about the body taking some time to realize it is full and she left the subway waiting for that knowledge to kick in.

Unfortunately it never happened and not even two blocks from the Subway she found herself in a Burger King eyeing the value menu. She figured if she ordered enough, the employee would assume she was ordering for her family. She had a ten dollar bill in her pocket and she opted to buy more than she needed just to be sure. She ended up ordering four cheeseburgers, two orders of chicken nuggets, two small fry orders, and two apple pies.

After receiving the order she immediately began snacking on fries, and decided to take the back way home so that no one she knew would see her, Caitlin Landry, walking down the street pigging out on a large bag of Burger King. In the privacy of the back road, she stopped and opened up a cheeseburger, digging into it ravenously. Four large bites and a big gulp later she was working on the second burger. She had quickened her pace in an attempt to get home but could only move so fast while still scarfing down fast food. In the back of her head she was still wondering, "What the hell is wrong with me?"

Eight minutes, an apple pie, three burgers, and seven chicken nuggets later she was making her way up the back balcony as quietly as she could. The last thing she wanted to have to do was explain the extra-large Burger King bag to her mother. She slipped in the back door and headed up to her room where she shut her door and began finishing her meal. She finished the rest of the fries and the last burger before she finally began to feel full-ish. She had never felt so grateful to feel full, but at the same time she looked at the leftover wreckage from her meal and wondered to herself how she could have possibly eaten over four pounds of food in a half hour.

She suddenly felt extremely tired, and she eyed the clock. It was around four in the afternoon, and her need of a nap didn't strike her as unusual, especially considering her recent food binge. She went to recline on her bed but couldn't get comfortable. Her jeans were constricting her a bit more than normal. She groaned, imagining the damage she'd probably done to her figure. There was no doubt about it, her pants were choking her legs and they'd have to come off. After some effort she managed to peel her jeans off of her legs. She examined her legs for excess cellulite or

dimples, but, to her surprise found her legs to be just as firm as she remembered. “Odd,” she thought to herself. While bending over and examining her legs she even felt the fabric bunching a bit under her armpits, but at this point she was way too tired to be even thinking straight. She considered the tautness in her shirt, but decided to lie down anyways. Despite her mild discomfort, she was asleep in seconds.

Chapter 3

Caitlin slowly began to feel herself drift back into consciousness, but along with that came a glaring feeling of discomfort. It was bright outside and the clock read 9:17. She’d slept for nearly fourteen hours! Her mind snapped back to her discomfort as she noticed that her breathing was somewhat constricted. Her shirt was still on and it was gripping her body tightly. Still kind of groggy, she attempted to slide her arms into one of the sleeves, but found that she could not do so. There simply was not enough room for her to complete such a maneuver. She glanced down at her midriff noting that more was showing than should have been, especially in her seated position. She took hold of the bottom hem and peeled the shirt upwards. This maneuver worked much better and she felt notable relief at getting the shirt peeled off from around her chest. She slipped the remains of it over her head and guided her arms through the sleeves. She tried to take a deep breath but noticed that her bra continued to give her discomfort. She rotated her arms a bit, letting her previously constricted shoulders and arms get some needed circulation, but something felt...different. It was still dark in her room, but noticed that she didn’t feel quite right. She struggled to find the right words. She almost felt bloated, but it didn’t come with the typical nauseous feeling. As she stood up, she felt even more disoriented, but she still couldn’t place why. She reached for the lamp and flicked it on.

Immediately one thing was obvious to her. Her bra looked ridiculous. Her boobs were filling the cups and then some. She was clearly wearing an undersized bra, yet she knew that could not possibly be the case. She knew her bra size like she knew her birthday and would never buy the wrong size. Caitlin then considered the possibility that she put on weight. Heading over to her mirror she inspected herself for evidence of the 6000 calories she consumed before she went to bed. Oddly enough she didn’t look particularly different outside of the fact that her bra was clearly a size too small. She removed it and checked the tag, though it read 34B just as she expected. Eyeballing herself in the mirror, she noted that she definitely didn’t look like a B-cup. Perhaps a C, but definitely not bigger than that. She put her fingers to her chest to check for anything unusual. No pain which would have indicated swelling, no lumps, nothing. She was about to head to her closet to grab a larger shirt when she looked once more at her reflection. Something else did seem to nag at her but she couldn’t quite place it. It became more apparent as she attempted to get dressed. She had changed out of her Capri pants which she had soiled with mustard and ketchup and had slid into her jeans only to have the cuffs slip up to nearly her ankles.

“Okay, what the fuck?” She muttered under her breath. “Why the hell would my pants be too...”

The answer didn’t take long to come up with, but it would take some time to process. She was at least an inch or two taller. Her perspective in her closet mirror wasn’t unfamiliar; it was what she

was used to, when wearing heels. However, she was at the moment barefoot and standing half undressed with her pants unbuttoned and her cuffs at her ankles. She could also feel that, in addition to the ill-fitting cups, her bra generally was constricting much more than her boobs, but her entire torso and shoulders. Confirming her suspicions, she reached up to grab her towel from the top of the door frame and found it noticeably easier to reach. She instantly broke into a cold sweat and stumbled backwards onto her bed. She was almost dizzy with anxiety.

“What...the...fuck?” She asked no one in particular as her breathing came shallower. She felt on the verge of passing out when her phone started ringing with the Maureen’s characteristic ring tone. Her mind was still whirling, and it took three rings for her hand to subconsciously reach out and grab her cell and flip it open before she even realized what she was doing.

“Hey stranger, what’s up?” Maureen’s voice chirped. “It’s like we haven’t seen you for days.”

Caitlin, taken off guard, searched for words. “Um...yeah, you know. I’ve been feeling kinda...odd lately, getting out of the hospital and all.” She glanced down at her chest and ill-fitting jeans. “I haven’t been feeling myself lately.”

Maureen wasn’t sure what to make of Caitlin’s queer demeanor, but shrugged it off.

“Feeling a little under the weather huh?”

“Yeah, I’m pretty sick.” Caitlin agreed, liking the sound of that excuse. I’ve been all bloated, and generally nauseous. I feel like I can barely walk.” She was being fairly truthful at this point. “I’m definitely in no condition to leave the house,” she said, almost chuckling to herself at this point at her honesty.

“Wow, bummer.” You know, Alexis is over here, we might just stop on by...”

“No!” Caitlin cut her off suddenly. There was an awkward pause, and Caitlin searched for a way to resolve it. “The doctor says I may be coming down with the flu...from...being so weak and...stuff. I’d really hate to make you guys sick. The flu’s a real killer.” She was determined to deter Maureen, but she knew that it was futile at this point.

“You kidding’ me? You think I fear the flu? Dad’s gotten me more flu shots than I can even remember in the past year. It’d take the elephant flu to get past my immune system at this point, and the flu might do Alexis some good. She could use some slowing down.”

“You know, I really thi...”

“Don’t worry! We’ll be over in a sec! We’ll bring soup and stuff.” Caitlin could hear Alexis’ voice in the background.

“Does she need my heating pad? How about my leg weights? I have a thigh-master.”

Maureen sighed heavily. “I gotta’ go, Alexis needs the difference between influenza and cellulite explained to her. See you in five!”

Maureen clicked off and Caitlin was left staring dumbfounded at her phone. There were no secrets among them and Maureen knew Caitlin’s body probably better than Caitlin herself knew it. While two inches and a cup size may have seemed trivial, Caitlin knew that to Maureen, and particularly Alexis, it was the rough equivalent of her growing a coat of purple fur and a second eye in the middle of her forehead. She searched around her room. Her need to hide her predicament was currently trumping her worry about the predicament itself. She considered wearing shorts which, the way she cut them, never really looked long anyways. That didn’t hide the problem of her being suddenly two inches taller. Then there were the boobs. A bra was definitely out of the question, as her new boobs wouldn’t look right at all exploding out of it. No bra wouldn’t fly either. Her new perkiness would be like a neon sign to Maureen’s hawk eyes.

The sound of a car pulling into the driveway snapped her to attention. In a sudden flash of panic she grabbed her two largest sweaters and stuffed herself into them and yanked a down comforter from the top shelf of the closet. The padding would be her best bet. *Nothing like a little padding to hide a little more padding* she thought. The only problem now was looking like she actually was in need of all the insulation. Her anxiety, combined with the layers and the eighty-five degree heat outside were immediately posing a problem. It still beat the alternative though.

Just as she settled in, Alexis burst in, all giggles and bright eyes, followed closely after by Maureen carrying a handful of items, including a few DVD’s, a thermos, a small bag of ice, a couple of medicine bottles, a teddy bear, magazines, and what appeared to be a thigh-master.

“Guess who made head cheerleader!” Alexis shouted, clearly unable to hide her joy. She shot one leg in the air and launched into an impromptu cheering session. “ALEXIS! ALEXIS! A-L-E-X – OW!!!” She was stopped short by a sudden shove to the ground by Maureen who seemed anxious to be rid of her burden of gifts.

“Hey girl,” Maureen said, stepping over Alex. “Feeling under the weather?”

Caitlin feigned a groan, and let her face voice the discomfort of being way too hot. Maureen carefully placed each of the items on Caitlin’s nightstand, including the teddy bear which appeared to be holding a bottle of pills.

“I brought you a snuffle kit.” Maureen announced. “Everything you’ll need to be on your way to feeling better.”

“...and having great thighs!” Alexis chimed in, getting to her feet and gesturing toward the Thighmaster.

Caitlin smiled at her friends’ effort, but continued to make her best show of looking as miserable as possible. Every time Maureen looked at her she felt paranoid that despite all the layers she would somehow notice that the circumference of her chest was an inch and a half greater than before. Alexis she worried less about, since she was more caught up in explaining the proper

form for using the thigh-master and the surprising variety of ways in which it could be used. Maureen rolled her eyes and stacked the magazines and books next to the bed.

“I brought you a few movies too. Figured if you were too sore to move then you could just lie there and let your eyes do the work.” Maureen instinctively started picking up clothes and tossing them into the laundry bin, not seeming to suspect that anything was out of the ordinary. This made Caitlin relax a bit and simply enjoy the company of her friends. She even allowed her attention to go to Alexis and her demonstration of how the thigh-master could be used to work her triceps.

“...what the hell happened to your shirt?” Maureen suddenly chimed in. Immediately detecting urgency, Caitlin spun over to look at Maureen holding her mini-polo.

“Shit,” she muttered under her breath at Maureen’s open mouthed stare at the state of her shirt. The stress lines were evident and she would have to think quickly.

“I don’t know,” Caitlin spit out quickly, “I think my mom must have worn it.”

“Well I’d be pissed if my mom got mustard on my shirts. She’d have hell to pay. Anyways, I can see we’re obviously not going to entice you to get out of bed and go anywhere. You look a mess. We’ll come by tomorrow to check on you.” Maureen headed toward the door. Caitlin was relieved that her friends hadn’t noticed anything out of the ordinary, and actually felt sorry to see them go.

“See you guys,” Caitlin choked out in her best sick/misery voice.

“See ya’ Caitlin!” Alexis chimed, heading toward the door. As it was about to shut she popped her head back in. “On the plus side your boobs have gotten bigger!”

Caitlin’s eyes went visibly wide and she felt anxiety rush blood to her cheeks.

“W...wh...what?” Caitlin let out, stuck between confusion and surprise. Maureen rolled her eyes. “Whatever Alex, I’m sure the Thighmaster will even her out,” Maureen winked at Caitlin. “And don’t worry about Alex; she seems to be confusing the flu with cosmetic surgery. Come on Alex.” Alex seemed unaffected by the responses around her and her mind quickly wandered to another subject. “I wonder if my boobs will grow if I get the flu.” She pondered out loud. “Can I stay with Caitlin for a little longer?” Maureen grabbed her arm, gave a slight wave to Caitlin and yanked her out, shutting the door. Caitlin heard Alexis chattering all the way down the stairs and even out to the car, clearly picking up the word “boobs” repeatedly.

She lay in bed and waited for the sound of Maureen’s Dodge Neon to disappear before checking the window and getting up. She peeled off her sweaters, which, for various reasons, were soaked with perspiration. Once again, she was greeted with the unfamiliar sight of her chest which hindered her downward view more than she was accustomed to. “Well, I’ve got to do something. I can’t just sit in my room topless all day,” she thought to herself. She figured that what would serve her best would be a sojourn mall to grab some clothes that would at least give her some

comfort for the time being. She then realized that, chances are, someone she knew would see her at the mall and she wasn't quite ready for that, so she tried to imagine where she could get clothes where no one she knew would see her. It didn't take her long to figure that one out. "Wal Mart, here I come," she sighed to herself.

Naturally, clothes would be a necessity. She had stuffed herself into a sports bra and a large t-shirt, which actually made her look normal sized, for her anyways. Despite achieving the effect she desired, it was way too uncomfortable for practical usage. Pants were trickier, since her sweats fit but looked oddly undersized. She tried shorts, only to discover that her growth hadn't been limited to her height and chest. She knew she had some that would probably fit, but the only clean pair she had was a little too snug. In the end she settled for a long purple skirt which looked odd with the gray t-shirt, but she figured she couldn't be under dressed for Wal-Mart. She slipped on a pair of sandals and a large pair of sunglasses to complete her off-beat ensemble and made her way.

She took a forty-five minute drive out of town to the next closest Wal-Mart, just to ensure that the chances of someone she knew seeing her were slim. The Northshore Wal-Mart was fairly empty, as it was 10:00 in the morning. There was a coffee shop next door and she stopped in for a drink since she had yet to eat anything. The barista, a skinny kid with black dyed hair and plugs in his ears mistook her bohemian look for a beatnik and chatted with her. She even noticed him take a couple casual glances at her boobs; nothing too creepy, but the kind that told her that she had new attention-getters on display. In the past she occasionally wore a push-up bra if she wanted to turn heads, but a C-cup wasn't exactly small so she accepted that she should probably get used to it.

She was not yet convinced that all of her clothes would not fit her, so she felt she should limit herself to only a few purchases, namely bras. Taking a handful of sizes to the fitting room, she discovered that she was now a slightly smaller C-cup compared to the average B that she had been since the eighth grade. She wasn't sure how to feel about this. She was most certainly bigger than she used to be, but compared to the school as a whole she wasn't anything particularly special. After all, it wasn't as if she never wore push-up or padded bras anyways. If she switched to a normal bra, hardly anyone would notice. She considered buying a larger push up bra, but after trying it on she realized it would make her too conspicuous and the whole school would be convinced she had implants. She settled on a few C's and, on a whim, grabbed a D that was a little big.

After being in the sports bra all day, the new bra felt amazingly comfortable. She admired how she properly filled it out and how her new boobs looked in the bra. She looked at her t-shirt and remembered her undersized mini-polo at home that Maureen had gaped at. The thought of having clothes that fit was appealing in the face of a wardrobe that would be largely slightly small, and she went back out to the sales floor (still in her new bra) to find more clothes that fit. Feeling a growing confidence in not only her new stature and safety in her unfamiliar location, she felt safe to experiment a little. She grabbed a pink polo and some black form-fitting jeans (both slightly larger than she was used to) and was on her way back to the dressing room when she thought of her ill-fitting sandals. She made her way over to the shoe department and perused the rows of shoe boxes. Her size was only a bit larger than she had previously been, and she

spied a pair of platform sandals. The heel had to be at least three inches, and she grabbed them as well, taking them back to the dressing room. Inside, she slipped on the pants, shirt, and finally the shoes. When it was done, she stood back and looked at her reflection. She was taken aback.

While her previous height had been a modest 5'4" with the shoes and her two new inches, she stood a statuesque 5'9". Leaving the dressing room, she walked out onto the sales floor, and immediately noted her new perspective. She was awestruck as she looked around and admired the view. "So this is what it feels like to be Alexis," she thought to herself as she moved about. Though Alexis often wore heels for modeling, she rarely wore them otherwise because she lacked the proper grace to walk in them without falling frequently. She couldn't believe how good it felt to be taller. She felt confident, and most notably, sexy. She headed back to the shoes and dug around for another pair of platform sandals, and found another pair of with four inch heels and a one inch platform. She paid for her purchases, and, before leaving changed into her new bras, shoes, and pants, and made her way out.

On her drive home her mind was going a mile a minute. She thought about her sudden change, and what this really meant to her life. Two inches and a cup size seemed trivial, but that would make her as tall as Maureen and somewhere in the league of (but still significantly below) Alexis' legendary bust. While that all seemed exciting, she knew that even if she were to suddenly sprout six inches and three cup sizes, she would just be "the hot bitchy supermodel who hangs out with Maureen and Alexis." Suddenly her changes didn't seem as exciting, but almost seemed as if they could be just a bigger wall keeping her as she always was. She thought of the punk emo coffee shop employee and how he chatted it up with her just because he thought she was a hippie. It felt kind of nice to have a little genuine conversation as opposed to the gossip and biting sarcasm that she normally stuck to. She imagined walking into school the next day with her platforms, black pants, purple tank top and students simply dismissing her as just trying to get attention. When she got home, she had convinced herself that the idea of reinvention just wasn't viable to her and she tossed her bag into the closet and dialed up Maureen to gossip about Jill Stevens' eating disorder and Megan Wollery's ugly red braces.

Chapter 4

A few days went by and with each day Caitlin thought less and less of her changes. Her mother made a comment to her about her height and Caitlin just played it off, neither acknowledging nor denying her sudden spurt. She got surprisingly few looks or comments regarding her body, which both relieved and depressed her. Maureen said nothing regarding her change, but Caitlin did notice Maureen wearing heels more often than normal, which made her laugh. Caitlin considered tormenting her friend by wearing heels as well, but she didn't want to call attention to her growth. Additionally, most of the guys they hung out with were pretty tall so, again, no one really noticed. Alexis, strangely, took absolutely no notice of Caitlin's upward growth, yet could not stop commenting on Caitlin's rather subtle outward growth. Caitlin was thankful that Alexis saved her questions until the two were alone, and Alexis finally accepted the explanation "they just grew" to which she responded "cool!"

Despite the glaring evidence in her wardrobe that she had, indeed, grown a bit, she found herself not thinking much of it. Perhaps she simply hadn't noticed that she'd been growing steadily over the course of a few months and it took a blow to the head and some time off her feet to realize it. That didn't necessarily explain the two days' worth of calories she consumed, but she had all but suppressed that memory to the point that it hadn't even happened.

Caitlin had one week of classes left, finals week, and then she would be free for the summer. As Tuesday rolled around, she found herself back in art class. With all that had happened she hadn't realized how close she was to actually finishing her landscape project. With another hour left of art class and another session on Thursday, she would need something to do. There was always Advanced Art mural project, but she shuddered at the idea of spending too much time with the other art students. She studied her canvas and, to her surprise, actually found the landscape to be a bit empty. Seemingly without thinking, she had set to work adding a bit of purple to the sky. She wasn't sure why, but for some reason her brush just went to the purple and began coloring in some of the bright blue of the sky. Purple was soon followed by a bit of red, some brown, and eventually a touch of black. By the time she was finished, she was happy with the progress of her project, though with such a vibrant sky, she would need to possibly balance out the rolling green hills. Looking around, she noticed that the only people left in the studio were Mr. Knightley, who appeared to be doing his best to pretend he wasn't shocked to still see her there, and Nicole Ryder throwing handfuls of paint at a canvas in the corner of the room, screaming obscenities the entire time. It was a miracle she had been able to drown her out, since normally Nicole could single-handedly ruin art class for her.

She had somewhat spaced out during her last painting session and felt oddly energized. She checked her phone and realized that she had missed eleven calls from Alexis and received a rather desperate text from Maureen. "Shit!" she thought to herself, remembering that she was planning to meet Maureen, Alexis, and Alexis' new boyfriend Ben at Starbucks at 4:00 and it was now 4:17. She wasn't as much concerned with tardiness, as much as she knew that Maureen would desperately need the company as Alexis her new boyfriend Ben, the star fullback of the football team, probably didn't make for riveting conversation. She quickly put away her art supplies and set her canvas in the corner of the room to dry, narrowly missing a splatter of green paint being hurled at high velocity. She turned to protest, but Nicole was clearly possessed by something other-worldly and cussing her out would do no good. She made a beeline for the door, silently praying that Mr. Knightley wouldn't stop her. Mr. Knightley, grateful that Caitlin had shown some signs of following his advice and fearing that any input on his part would not be well received, allowed her to pass by his desk without comment. As she exited, he smiled to himself and then turned his attention to Nicole, who had thrown her canvas to the floor and was now jumping on it. He sighed, and did his best to return to his reading.

Caitlin was on her way out of the studio and was heading for the back parking lot (her mother had lent Caitlin her car, as the middle school was already let out for the summer). She was almost at the door when an unfamiliar voice called her name.

"Hey! Caitlin right?" A boy shouted. Caitlin turned to look at him and barely stopped herself from gasping at his pierced appearance before she recognized him as the weird barista kid from the coffee shop a few weeks ago.

Caitlin tried her best to be courteous. "I didn't realize you went to this school." She said, still heading for the door.

"I don't." He replied. "My girlfriend Nicole goes here."

Caitlin's eyes went wide and she stopped in her tracks and turned to him in disbelief. "Are you Nicole Ryder's boyfriend?"

"Tristan." He said, not sure how he should respond given her reaction. "Once a week I attend the advanced art class here. I think Mr. Knightley is the best art teacher in the city."

"Oh." Caitlin replied, looking around. She was less interested in the conversation and more nervous about being seen talking to Tristan, given his appearance. "Well, I'm actually in a hurry, so..."

"That's cool." He said. "I just wanted to let you know that I really like your pieces. I think your stuff is really good."

Caitlin was taken aback. "Really?"

"Definitely." He said smiling. "I dig the abstract stuff, but there's something to be said for simplicity."

Caitlin was beginning to feel a bit uncomfortable about this conversation, mainly because she was weary of anyone who would willingly date Nicole Ryder. Tristan seemed like a nice enough guy. Tall and skinny, but with defined, almost sharp facial features and a smoky voice that likely came from a regular cigarette habit. She could definitely see him with Nicole, though she couldn't really picture Nicole with anyone. Not anyone human at least.

A silence hung in the air briefly, and Caitlin used the opportunity to head out the door. She still felt a bit weird talking to him, and also didn't even want to invite the possibility of letting Nicole see her with him. Tristan seemed surprised by Caitlin's sudden departure.

"See ya' around Caitlin!" Tristan called out, but Caitlin was wrapped up in sending Maureen a text message. It was now 4:30 and she was concerned that Maureen, left long enough with Alexis and Ben, would either lose her mind or choke herself with a plastic stirring straw.

She arrived at Starbucks to see Maureen doing her best to stay interested in the banter, clutching what appeared to be a double-shot mocha as if it were sustaining her very existence. Maureen's eyes pleaded to Caitlin as she entered, and she smiled back knowingly. Caitlin ordered a Frappuccino and made small talk with Alexis, quickly becoming bored with the outing. Alexis was perched on Ben's lap and Ben appeared to be distracted by the expanse of cleavage on display through Alexis' low cut baby tee and his speech was limited to three-word sentences. While built like he could withstand a head on collision with a charging bull, he had boyish features and, like Alex, was too dense to be mean. Caitlin had confided to Maureen that Ben was the perfect other half to Alexis since their IQ's added together made an average person. Alexis

seemed even happier than normal, Maureen was going over the top to be courteous, and Caitlin grew increasingly bored. Ben appeared to catch wind of Caitlin's discomfort and made an attempt to reach her.

"Hey Katharine, what's up?"

"Excuse me?" Caitlin replied, irked. "What's my name?"

"Karen?" Ben was visibly unnerved.

"Wrong." Caitlin's frustration grew.

"Krist..."

"Wrong!"

Ben looked to Alexis for help, but Alexis, in the midst of a giggle fit, was not going to be much help. Ben looked back and forth between Alexis' mirth and Caitlin's icy glare and wasn't sure what to make of the situation.

"I'm sorry, I just..."

"...don't know my name?" Caitlin cut him off. "It's not like we've just met."

"Actually," Ben replied, "I don't think I ever really met y..."

"You've been eating with us at lunch for the whole year!" Caitlin fumed. She suddenly pointed to Maureen. "What's her name?"

"Maureen Jacobs." Ben responded without skipping a beat.

"You know her full name but don't know mine! What the fuck?" Caitlin was boiling at this point. Alexis had busted into a full belly laugh and Maureen was trying unsuccessfully to shush her. She abandoned her tactic and turned to Caitlin.

"Caitlin, Chill. I'm sure he..."

Caitlin cut her off. "What? Just didn't really notice that I was sitting there?" She was practically shouting "I mean, Jesus! I..." Caitlin's expression quickly changed. She realized what was happening and what she was freaking out about and went flush.

"It's no big deal Ben." She spit out. "Really, I don't mind." And with that, she walked quickly out of the shop, without even taking her drink. Alexis had finally suppressed her giggles when she noticed Caitlin's absence and scanned the shop for her. "Did Caitlin go to the bathroom?" Maureen sighed, and took another sip of her mocha. Ben, who finally worked his way back to his senses, blinked a few times before a light suddenly clicked on in his head. Smiling, he turned to

Maureen. "Caitlin! Oh!" He said, putting his palm to his head, before cocking his head slightly to the side.

"Didn't she used to be shorter?"

Caitlin, meanwhile, was rushing toward her car, flustered and embarrassed that her inferiority complex had so drastically made itself apparent in public. Her cheeks felt hot and she almost felt as if she were breaking out in a sweat. She wiped at her forehead with her sleeve, when suddenly she felt a new sensation, a powerful pang of hunger which seemed to come out of nowhere. All thoughts about her embarrassing episode only minutes earlier were pushed out of her mind as she stopped immediately and looked about trying to find somewhere to eat. The only thing nearby was the Chinese buffet, the coffee shop, and a McDonalds a few blocks down the road. The thought of fast food made her cringe, but the idea of bursting into a Chinese buffet and gorging herself didn't seem attractive either. She started to head toward her car when another hunger pang stopped her and she whirled around to the buffet, noticing that it was fairly empty. Quickly glancing side to side, she made a run across the street and silently prayed to herself that she wouldn't see anyone she knew.

She got in the door and looked around frantically. To her relief, not only was the restaurant devoid of anyone she remotely recognized, it was fairly empty and contained a lot of booths out of view of the window. A petite, non-Chinese girl greeted her and before she could finish Caitlin replied "Just one! Buffet!" The girl seemed to take forever leading her to a booth and while the waitress had left to retrieve silverware, Caitlin had already headed for the buffet, grabbing two egg rolls in one hand and eating them both. In the back of her head she reminded herself that she was in public and probably shouldn't act too primal, but as she thought this she was scooping food onto her plate until it was stacked high with chicken, two more egg rolls, a heaping pile of rice, broccoli, beef, and chow mien. She actually reached her seat at the same time as her waitress, nearly knocking her over and also nearly spilling her food. She tore her napkin apart and dug into her food ravenously, hardly noticing the shocked look given to her by the waitress. The food tasted incredible and getting food in her felt amazing.

After what had seemed like hours, Caitlin was finally done, and she laid back, her senses slowly returning to her. She was full, and reached down to touch her distended belly and was shocked by the tautness of it. It visibly bulged out from her shirt and skirt, displaying most of her mid-section and belly button. She tried to think back to how much she had eaten and had some difficulty. She looked around, seeming to realize for the first time that she was in a Chinese buffet and had spent a good amount of time ravenously stuffing her face. The more she thought about it, the more confused she became, feeling like this whole thing shouldn't be happening. Suddenly snapping out of it, her waitress returned with the check. The girl looked unsure of what to say, and was startled when Caitlin suddenly spoke up.

"How long have I been here?"

The waitress looked at her watch and replied, almost equally perplexed. "About a half hour."

Caitlin was stunned, and then noticed that her hand was still rubbing her exposed belly. She looked up at the waitress who had been gaping at her, and averted her eyes at Caitlin's sudden gaze. Caitlin suddenly spoke up without thinking. "How much did I eat?"

The waitress shook her head in disbelief. "It couldn't have been less than six plates. I dunno. Seven? Eight plates?" She said. "I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it. You ate pretty much all of our eggrolls." The waitress seemed almost as shocked as Caitlin. "Do you do this often? You must have a hell of a metabolism."

Caitlin's mouth fell open. This was like a nightmare. "I...I need to go. Now." She tossed a ten and a five at the waitress and waddled to the door, her fullness hindering her full range of movement. She noticed that as she continued to make her way out the door she was beginning to feel tired. Her car was a block away and she nearly ran out into traffic in her haste. The car honked, shaking her out of her sudden drowsiness. She hurried across the street and had reached her car when she suddenly heard her name.

"Caitlin! What're you still doing here?" Alexis' unmistakable voice asked.

Caitlin instinctively reached to her midsection to pull down her shirt which was continually riding up over her rounded (but slightly less round than she remembered) belly. Fortunately, the car was between her and the group, and after a brief moment of just simply staring back at them, wide-eyed and gaping, Caitlin opened her door, started the car and sped off leaving the three staring bewildered after her. Her heart was racing and too many thoughts were going through her head for her to really make sense of any of them. Her panic was the only thing keeping her awake at this point, as she could feel her whole body growing warm and heavy with fatigue. She put a hand to her belly again, noting that while it was still much larger than she had ever seen it, it was less than half the size it was when she first noticed it in the restaurant. The restaurant! She must have eaten twice the amount she ate last week! *But that's impossible!* she thought to herself. *That would be, like, seven or eight pounds of food!* She gasped and swerved as she almost wandered off the road only a few blocks from her own house, and parked crookedly in her driveway as she dragged herself up the sidewalk and into her house. She was so tired by this point that the words of her parents seemed to be a blur to her as she wandered up to her room and collapsed onto the bed.

Chapter 5

The first thing Caitlin noticed when she woke up was that she was having some difficulty breathing. She was sweaty and she could feel moisture on her pillow from her perspiration. She tried to take deeper breaths, only to continually run into difficulty expanding her lungs wide enough. She half-mindfully rolled over onto her back only to be greeted by an unusual sight. Her open polo shirt collar gave her a clear view of what appeared to be an explosion of cleavage bound tightly in her shirt and bra.

"Holy fuck."

Caitlin was almost out of breath and panic was gripping her. Her chest obviously had not been that size when she went to bed, otherwise she never would have gotten to sleep in the first place. She wanted to panic more, but was still having some difficulty breathing. She grabbed the bottom of her shirt and peeled it upwards until it cleared her bosom and she felt her breasts spring free. After successfully freeing herself from the confines of her shirt her attention immediately went to the unfamiliar amount of self which protruded forward from her chest. Her boobs, formerly what she would call “perky” were now what would undoubtedly be dubbed as “big.” While she was a far cry from watermelon huge, and still not quite Alexis-huge (but damn close), what was now mounted on her chest definitely were more than handfuls. They were definitely more than a handful each (she didn’t care for the fruit-size system, but for those who do, probably something like a large orange. For those who prefer the athletic equipment standard, something between a baseball and a softball will suffice).

She was afraid to get up, for the simple fact that she was afraid to prove what she already knew. She knew she felt different, her clothes told her that she wasn’t the same size she was when she went to bed. She just wasn’t ready to actually face it. She slowly pulled herself up from the bed, and reaching a full standing position, she looked around with wonder. She was higher up, but she was unsure of how to gauge by how much. There was a possibility she was overreacting and her body was just blowing the events out of proportion. She hadn’t really moved around much yesterday, maybe the difference was minimal. She went to her closet where she had marked off her height the previous day. She made a new mark and measured herself. Sure enough, she measured a smidgen under 5’9”. Now practically five inches taller than she was two weeks ago, she knew she would have trouble hiding her changes, particularly since her measurements made her a near-carbon copy of Alexis, slightly shorter with slightly smaller boobs. She also knew that Maureen would definitely notice, as she had been wearing heels for the past week to maintain her taller stature than Caitlin.

She knew that she could always dress down her boobs, that wasn’t the problem. The height would be more difficult. While she could still hide her lengthened appearance with some shorts or Capri’s, along with a properly fitted top (which she didn’t have at the moment) the fact that she was physically five inches taller would still pose a problem. Then again, last week no one seemed to notice that she was two inches taller than normal. She just needed a distraction from her three extra inches. She had an idea, but she would need some help. She considered Maureen, and quickly dismissed that idea. Then she sighed and called Alexis.

“I was wondering if you were going to tell me how you made your boobs bigger.” Alexis chimed, unaffected by the improbability of the situation.

“There’s no secret.” Caitlin replied trying to avoid the subject. She was slipping into a pair of Alexis’ jeans, which, given Alexis’ rather prominent curves, should not have been difficult. Unfortunately for Caitlin, most of Alexis’ denims fit like a second skin, and despite the fact that Caitlin still did not compare to Alexis’ more striking curves, the pants were still a bit snug. Luckily, Alexis owned roughly sixty pairs of jeans of various types and fashions, and this particular pair was designed to be a bit roomier. While she was thrilled to be fitting into

something properly, she was still slightly unnerved by the fact that Alexis' clothes actually fit her. Until a couple weeks ago, Alexis always seemed fairly tall to her. Now she looked her in the eyes. "Anyways, did you bring me a shirt?"

"Did I?" Replied Alexis beaming. She immediately dug into the bags which had accompanied her and produced a hefty stack of clothes. "You've got to try this top out, you'll love it!"

Caitlin took the blue stretch top from her which looked like it was meant for a nine-year-old. "What the hell is this?"

"It's a mini-tee. I figured it would look great with your new boobs."

"I'm not trying to show off, I'm trying to dress them down! Don't you have anything conservative?"

Alexis furrowed her brow at the Caitlin's inquiry. "You mean like saving trees?"

Caitlin rolled her eyes. "No, no, no, I mean something that will make my boobs look less big!"

Alexis looked even more confused. "Why would you want that?"

"Because I'm not trying to get attention. I don't even know why this is happening."

"So? What does that have to do with looking good?"

Caitlin sighed again. "It's not about looking good, it's about not having my tits hanging out like a..." she stopped noting the generous amount of skin Alexis happened to be showing off. "...like a girl that has just grown new tits overnight!"

"But isn't that what you are?"

Realizing that she was getting nowhere with this argument, she snatched the blue top from Alexis and slid herself into it. She was immediately shocked at how the material clung to her body more snugly than anything she dared to wear before. Also alarming was the generous neckline which gave her plenty of ventilation to say the least. She was getting ready to protest to Alex about dressing her up like a skank when she noticed herself in the mirror. She had to do a double take because the image looking back at her was definitely nothing she had seen before. While her face was definitely familiar, nothing else seemed to be. It was as if she was in some weird fantasy where someone had hypothetically put her head on someone else's body. While she lacked Alexis' almost cartoonish curves, her figure was lean and well shaped. The stretch denims fit her well and her legs looked better than they had ever looked before. Her boobs, proudly on display.

"Ahem!" Alexis unsightly cleared her throat. "You need your finishing touch!" Caitlin was unsure of what Alexis meant until three inch platform wedge sandals were slid toward her. "It'll be nice to have someone wear these. My mom got 'em for me but you know me. It's like she's

trying to kill me! Anyways, it'll be wild to be looking up at you for a change!" Caitlin was unsure about how that last bit made her feel. While she definitely felt a slight thrill at the idea, she felt a twinge of anxiety in her stomach at the idea of being so different from herself from four weeks ago that she would be able to look down at her tall friend.

"Quit stalling!" Alexis was nearly throwing a hissy-fit at being denied her fashion suggestion. "Come on! Let's see 'em!"

Caitlin took a breath and stepped into the shoes. While she only rose three inches, the knotting in her stomach worsened as she watched Alexis seemingly shrink in front of her. She felt her mouth drop open at the bizarre sight and Alexis' grin widened; her excitement undaunted. Caitlin was struggling to accept that four weeks ago, these heels would have made her shorter than she currently stood. Now, with their help, she stood a smidgen below six feet tall. She put her hand on her friend's shoulder as she began to tremble slightly with uneasiness. Alexis was giddy.

"Look at us in the mirror! You're so tall! I'm shorter than you by almost three inches! Wait til' everyone sees you! They'll be soooooo blown away!"

Caitlin was immediately horrified at the thought of someone seeing her in her current condition. Suddenly, her reflection seemed almost grotesque. A stretched out and swollen version of what she was supposed to be. What was normal. Her shaking, which had increased intensity throughout the whole ordeal, escalated to a trembling. Lightheadedness set in as fear and anxiety chased each other around in her head as her thoughts seemed to be crashing around inside of her head. Alexis, oblivious to her friend's discomfort stepped back to present Caitlin to an imaginary audience.

"Supermodel Caitlin Landry, D-cup, six feet tall!"

Caitlin panicked at Alex stepping out of arm's reach, but was still too stunned to move. Alexis' words echoed in her head and processing the idea of herself at six feet tall was like doing multivariable calculus at this point. Caitlin's body finally took the path of least resistance. The world seemed to dim around her as her body collapsed to the floor, a heap of limbs and hair.

Chapter 6

The problem with fainting in a closet is that there really is neither any easy nor comfortable position to fall into. This was Caitlin's first thought as the world as she knew it drifted into focus. Having crumbled at the knees the way she did, she found herself wedged into a painfully cramped space. For a brief moment, she panicked, thinking she had inexplicably grown so large that she was being constricted by the room itself, but was relieved to find that the walls were actually the narrow walls of her closet. That relief was then followed by further panic that she may have grown even larger while unconscious as had happened following her previous growth episodes. She looked down at herself and tried her best to evaluate her appearance, but she only felt the same bigger-than-normal that she had felt before she passed out.

Then she remembered why she passed out originally. Her body, having grown tired of panic, grew nauseated.

"If you're going to puke," Alexis chimed from behind the pages of a Cosmopolitan, "I'll help you to the bathroom so you don't get it all over my clothes."

Caitlin was a bit perturbed by her friend's casual dismissal of her predicament, and at the same time relieved that only one of them was panicking. "I think I'll be okay, just remind me to stay away from high-heels." She kicked off the shoes as if they were contaminated. She didn't want to stand up again, so she stayed seated on the floor, curling her knees up in her arms. She was soon distracted by the unfamiliar sight of her larger breasts bunching up between her knees and her chest.

Alexis was peering over her magazine at Caitlin and seemed entertained by her friend's new discovery. "Aren't big boobs awesome?"

Caitlin grinned half-heartedly. "I guess. I'd probably like them more if they had shown up over the course of a few years, or even a few months. It's a little weird when they just kind of expand suddenly and without warning."

"I think it's awesome," Alexis maintained. "It's like you've got a brand new fashion accessory overnight. Just wait til Maureen sees them. She's gonna' totally flip. You're, like, way hotter than her now."

Caitlin was speechless. "...what?"

"Oh yeah. You're totally sporting the whole package now. Boobs, butt, legs. We do need to do something about that hair though..." Alexis was clearly enjoying Caitlin's curves much more than Caitlin was. The excitement was not contagious.

"Alex!" Caitlin almost shouted. "I don't...I'm not...I can't do this," She resigned.

"Can't do what?"

"This! Those! These!" She gestured at her clothes, shoes, and breasts respectively punctuating the last bit by grabbing handfuls of her breasts, which she also quickly let go of, watching horrified as they jiggled an uncharacteristically extended amount of time. "This whole thing is too weird. I just need to find some way to not stand out until I either can get back to normal or at least know what's going on."

"Why are you being such a downer about this?" Alexis pouted. "You look awesome and all you're saying is how much you don't want anyone to see you. Everyone is going to think that you look great."

"No they won't! They'll point and say 'What the fuck happened to Caitlin? What is she trying to pull off?' Then someone will call the CDC and have me sent to Area 51 and they'll put me in a glass tube."

"What are you talking about? You don't have a disease, I don't know what Area 51 is, and it's not like anyone pays attention to you anyw..." Alexis' eyes went wide and she slapped her hands over her mouth. "...I mean...uh, no one listens when you t...oh shit."

Caitlin's mouth dropped open, but nothing came out. They both just sat there staring at each other, both wearing similar expressions shock on their faces. Alexis tried to fix her mistake.

"Caitlin...I..."

"Get out. Get out of my house you bitch."

"Caitlin..."

"Now."

The silence hung in the air for a second before a tear appeared on Alex's face. Both of them stood up, Alex to leave, and Caitlin to push her because she wasn't moving fast enough. She had grabbed Alex's arm to forcibly remove her, but upon standing Caitlin realized again how tall she was. She was used to staring at Alex's nose when they stood face to face, but they stood nearly eye to eye. Nearly, eye to eye, but not anymore.

She was at least an inch taller than Alex, putting her somewhere around 5'10".

Shocked and drained, Caitlin looked down slightly at Alex, over at the pile of clothes, down at herself, and then burst into tears.

"I'm a nobody," she said between sobs. "Now I'm an overgrown bimbo nobody!" she wailed.

Alexis immediately embraced her, thrilled that her visit hadn't ended on bad terms, and tried her best to console Caitlin.

"You aren't a nobody. You just need to be more, um, expressed." Words weren't Alex's strong suit.

"But you said it yourself!" Alexis bawled. "No one even knows who I am!"

Alexis frowned for a second, and then brightened. "Maybe they didn't before, but they totally will soon!"

Caitlin sniffled and stepped away. Looking down at Alex was something that she was going to have to get used to. She still felt a bit lightheaded, like at any moment she would drop down half a foot and be...normal? She started to think about how tall she was, and how her body was

shaped before. While she felt bigger all around, when she imagined a height six inches shorter than she was, she had an odd time imagining it. It just seemed...short. She imagined looking down at her old 5'4" self, and the image was unreal. She then thought of Alexis, whom she still had locked in tight embrace. Alexis had always seemed so much bigger than life in every way, but now she felt surprisingly...average.

But if 5'9" 36E Alexis was average, what did that make her? There was no question that she was now taller and bustier than Alex. While a couple more inches here and a few less there were really all that separated them, to most guys that wouldn't make much of a difference. If she wanted to, she could be on par with Alex, and hell, if she really tried, maybe...

Meanwhile, Alexis, who was thrilled that she hadn't been abruptly sent home, was growing impatient and a bit uncomfortable with the long embrace. "Caitlin?" She asked.

"Yeah?"

"Uh, you're not going to want to kiss or anything, are you?"

"No, I'm just thinking."

"I know a few girls on the softball team that, well, you know..."

Caitlin laughed and shoved Alexis to the bed. "Way to ruin a Kodak moment you ditz."

Alexis, albeit a bit surprised from the strength of Caitlin's shove, was glad to see Caitlin laughing. Actually, she was surprised, since she couldn't actually recall the last time she'd heard her friend genuinely laugh, or even smile for that matter. "So, shall we start your makeover?"

Caitlin looked over her shoulder at her closet mirror. Oddly enough, she actually didn't freak out. While she definitely looked much different than she did a mere few weeks ago, it was as if she was honestly seeing herself for the first time in a long time. Perhaps it was time for a change. With both arms, she motioned down at her body.

"Have at it."

Chapter 7

The bell signaled the end of the first final, and a chorus of sighs and groans echoed through the classroom. For Maureen, it couldn't have come a moment too soon. She had completed her in-class essay on Old Man and the Sea twenty minutes prior and she had sat impatiently checking her writing for errors for the remainder of the time. "I hope college is harder than this," she mumbled under her breath.

She strolled out the door, checking her phone for messages. It was strange, she hadn't heard from either Alex or Caitlin since Saturday evening when Caitlin had her psycho outburst and

apparently chose to find solace in the Chinese buffet. She hadn't known Caitlin to be a stress eater in the past, but the way she'd seen her waddle out of the place, she had obviously found some kind of comfort there. Maureen shuddered, unable to even contemplate the idea of gorging herself on food and what that would do to her figure. Caitlin had been looking a bit fuller lately.

Fuller indeed! While she didn't want to think she was going crazy, she could have sworn that Caitlin had some kind of growth spurt. While such things weren't uncommon, she knew for a fact that she had been two inches taller than Caitlin since the eighth grade, when a late growth spurt popped her up a couple inches to 5'6". Ever since the car accident, however, she noticed that Caitlin seemed to be a bit more statuesque than normal. Maureen tried questioning Caitlin about it, but Caitlin either didn't notice, didn't care, or both. Asking of some other girls on the soccer team was even less helpful since, despite Caitlin being on the team, few of the girls could even remember her, and the few that did had no idea how tall the girl was or had been.

Then there was the boobs. She remembered Alexis' constant chirping about the subject ever since they had gone to see Caitlin at her house. While at first, she had ignored the subject, she had to admit that Caitlin was looking a bit fuller as well as taller. Maureen gave her full marks for her ability to hide it, but there was no question that Caitlin was doing her best to hide the fact that she sure as hell wasn't a 34B anymore. She was at least a C cup. A well hidden C, but a C nonetheless. She knew that Caitlin was anything but an exhibitionist, but somebody was bound to notice soon.

But seemingly no one had, and Maureen was pretty sure that she was getting bent out of shape over nothing. *Maybe I just need to relax.* Maureen thought. *I have been working pretty hard lately.* She gave one last passing thought to the matter as she glanced down at her heels, which aided her denial about the matter of Caitlin's sudden lengthening. As if on cue, Jason met her at her locker. *There's what I need, she thought, a little stroking of my ego.* Jason smiled as he saw her approaching, and Maureen played coy.

"Hey gorgeous, English final giving you some trouble?"

"Yeah, it was a real nail biter," Maureen replied, rolling her eyes. "I'm surprised to see you. I figured you'd be studying for the chem final."

Jason smirked, "You kidding me? I got that in the bag. With what I got on the line for that one, you better be ready for a night to remember."

Maureen smiled, pleased with herself that she could act as academic muse to the varsity quarterback. He was still rambling on about his confidence, and she gave him a half smile. "You'd better hope so. I don't do dinner dates with idiot jocks."

Jason seemed undeterred by the comment. "We'll probably hit up that downtown restaurant. You know? The Japanese one. Not the one with the sushi or whatever. Like hell I'm eating raw shit. That one with the barbecue. That place sounds good cause they've got wings and...I...holy...sh..."

In her own world, Maureen suddenly sensed a disturbance in the natural order. Jason had trailed off in mid sentence and he was talking about food. Something certainly wasn't right. The hall seemed to lose its nervous, finals week energy as conversations all around them seemed to similarly trail off at the same time. "What?" Maureen said loudly, though she had not actually meant to audibly speak. Oddly enough, no one seemed to take notice of either her outburst, or even her. All eyes were facing the opposite direction.

A girl she certainly did not recognize had just entered the halls through the side door and was headed away from them toward the opposite end of the hall. She was a bit sore that whoever she was seemed able to tear Jason Kline's attention away from her. She was quite tall, with dark black hair which shone brightly and fell to middle of her back. She wore a simple, undersized black t-shirt which showed a bit of midriff, and form-fitting jeans which she recognized immediately as belonging to Alexis. This girl, despite the fact that she was around Alexis' height and wore her pants, was not Alexis. Rather than emanating Alexis' unbridled energy, she walked with a remarkably familiar cantankerous swagger. Adding insult to injury, the girl also wore two inch clog sandals which accentuated her already substantial height and eliminated any chance that it was Alex. Actually, outside of the height, the body shape more closely resembled...

"No," Maureen muttered to herself. "It can't be. It couldn't possibly be..."

Caitlin?

She wanted to say her name, but she was partly afraid that if it wasn't her, she'd be acknowledging an irrational fear, and if it was her, her life had just become some kind of funhouse. No matter. This girl had the undivided attention of every student in the hallway, and seemed to not care at all. If anything, she seemed slightly uneasy about it, looking slightly back and forth uncomfortably. She quickened her pace and rounded the far end of the hall, with one of her spectators actually peeking around the corner to continue to watch her.

"Who the hell was that?" Voices in the hall seemed to vocalize Maureen's thoughts. Jason, also in a daze a few steps behind her, was stammering and trying to pick up his conversation where he had left off, but having some difficulty. Maureen, letting her curiosity get the better of her, whirled around and headed in the other direction, hoping to meet whoever this girl was at the other end of the hallway, but with the halls crowding that became increasingly difficult. She figured she could at least put her mind at ease and head to Caitlin's locker, which was--a chill went down Maureen's back--at the far end of the other hallway. Exactly where the mystery girl was headed.

Maureen shoved her way down the hall, and felt a bit more at ease when she saw the girl standing at a locker that was not Caitlin's. The girl, however, didn't appear to be at her own locker, but talking to someone at a locker not her own. The girl was still facing away from her, and Maureen craned her neck to try to see who the girl was talking to. Actually, now that she thought about it, that was Steve Rubins' locker. What was she doing at that sleaze ball Steve Rubins' locker?

As she got there, she could see Steve holding a soccer ball under his arm and grinning like an idiot. He was also shamelessly ogling the girl's chest, which, she could now see was the major source of the generous midriff the girl was showing. Maureen noticed that the girl's wedge sandals propped up her already imposing height, allowing her to be looking *down* substantially at Steve. She did some quick math in her head, knowing that when she wore 2" heels, she was about as tall as Steve, putting him at around 5'8". The top of Steve's head came up just past the girl's nose, but he didn't seem to mind being closer to her chest. She couldn't hear the conversation, but it seemed to end abruptly with the girl offering the words "slime ball" and "Go fuck yourself," as he she shoved him, rather roughly, into his locker.

The inflection of those words sounded familiar.

Maureen was nearly on top of the two of them when the girl suddenly whirled around to storm off. Having unconsciously drawn rather close to the conversation, Maureen found herself unable to get out of the way in time, and the two girls collided, sending Maureen crashing, rather ungracefully, to the floor. Dazed, Maureen involuntarily reached around to gather her items which had been strewn about, while the mystery girl seemed relatively unfazed by the collision.

"Sorry about that, I was just dealing with some unfinished..." the tone suddenly changed.

"Maureen?"

Maureen froze. *This isn't happening.* She silently told herself. *I'm not on the floor in the hallway, my stuff is not actually scattered all over the place, and there is no way I am going to recognize the face when I look up, so I may as well not even look.*

"I didn't even see you there," the familiar voice continued. "I must be in my own world." Maureen noticed manicured burgundy nails attached to long fingers that were helping retrieve her belongings, and another arm reaching under her hers to aid, no, lift her to her feet.

"...jeez, you should have made a noise back there or something. You okay?"

Still dazed, Maureen looked up to reply.

"Yeah, I think I'm..." she could barely breathe as she made eye contact, "fine?"

It's not Caitlin.

"Good. I'd hate to sideline the women's soccer team captain."

It's not Caitlin.

Maureen's mouth, at this point, was just hanging open and her eyes looked almost glazed over. The girl shifted uncomfortably and pushed a lock of dark hair out of her face. "Yeah, new look. I had help, obviously." She tugged down at her mini-tee, causing the dark Abercrombie logo on her t-shirt to swell rather prominently in response. Smiling slightly, her rich violet lipstick

contrasted the slight glint of her teeth. She widened her shadowed eyes and peered expectantly at Maureen, restless for some response or even a sign of life from the girl.

"Hey bitch! Throw me a fucking bone here!"

It is Caitlin.

And Caitlin looked stunning.

Her hair, which had formerly been a light brown, was now a rich raven black. Bright blue eyes, formerly Caitlin's only prominent feature, now shone in piercing contrast with her dark hair and subtle makeup, which darkened her facial features as opposed to her usual pale china-doll look. The t-shirt, which Maureen had actually given Caitlin as a gift last year, flattered the prominent curves of her breasts. Caitlin's smaller B's had fit her body well when she was 5'4", and now, six inches later, the her larger D's brought a kind of proportional balance to her height. At the same time, the shirt, being undersized for her frame, emphasized the length of her body and complimented her lean shape. Though Caitlin still didn't have the bombastic curves that Alexis had, the stretch jeans flattered her legs, which lacked the gangly look of most girls she knew following a growth spurt. Finally the sandals, adding at least two inches must have put her around six foot, leaving Maureen, who was wearing flats that day, staring at Caitlin's neck.

A pause hung in the air as Maureen wasn't sure how to react and Caitlin wasn't sure what more she could say. The five-minute bell signaled the next period and Caitlin saw her opportunity to end the encounter before it got more excruciatingly awkward. She did however have a whimsical thought before turning to walk away. She stepped toward Maureen and crouched slightly to embrace her in a one armed hug, pressing her now much larger body against Maureen's comparatively smaller one. Maureen, still frozen in place, had barely the cognizance to return the embrace with anything more than a pat on the side.

"There's the bell. I've got a trig final. I'll see ya' later." Caitlin straightened up and strided away to her next class, tossing her backpack over one shoulder. Maureen couldn't remember whether or not she had another final, and if she did, what or where it was. She didn't even try. A sea of bodies shifted around her, clamoring for classrooms, but Maureen could still make out a bobbing head of black hair, a head above many others, moving away from her before rounding the corner and disappearing out of sight. Maureen stood in the hallway, half-hearing someone say something about a U.S. History final, but she couldn't move if she wanted to. She remained planted in her spot until the bustle cleared, leaving her alone and flabbergasted as the bell echoed deafeningly through the empty corridor.

Chapter 8

Upon rounding the corner, Caitlin broke into a rather frantic run. Her breaths came shallow and quick, so much so that she began to feel light-headed. Fortunately, her first scheduled final exam was her open period, and she had opted to arrive at school late rather than sit through the optional study hall period. She definitely needed it, but with the amount of stress she was

carrying today, she couldn't imagine studying for three hours in a room full of her peers. Actually, she really just wanted to postpone her public unveiling as much as possible.

She had lied to Maureen about the trig final. She had been so flustered and nervous during their encounter that it was a wonder Maureen hadn't seen right through her bravado. *Why the hell didn't she say anything?* Caitlin mused. Maureen seemed distracted during their brief encounter, which Caitlin attributed to her busy schedule. Maureen didn't even seem to notice Caitlin's blabbing about a trig final, when they both knew that she had Advanced Painting. Whatever it was, Caitlin was grateful that the discomfort of the encounter was (to her, at least) one sided.

Though she was arriving about ten minutes late, Caitlin was grateful to be entering her refuge of the day, the art studio. As she attempted to forget the carnival sideshow her life had become, she was met by a number of hiccups in her usual routine. Her locker was noticeably lower than normal, and she found she had to stoop a little to reach the lock comfortably. Where she had grown used to operating the lock with one hand, her longer fingers threw off her muscle memory, and it took her three tries to open the lock. Upon opening her locker, she initially opted for the paint-splattered, oversized t-shirt, hoping to downplay her makeover by slumming it a bit. To her chagrin, she found that where it previously had been "grossly oversized," her lengthwise and outward growth made the shirt simply look "a little big."

"This is getting ridiculous," she muttered to herself as she reached for the apron which she wore on occasion. The apron, still sized for a person nearly half a foot shorter than she currently stood, was uncomfortably short and noticeably snug around her chest and she had to adjust the straps to make it fit appropriately. She also swapped Alexis' heels for a pair of old sneakers, grateful for both the comfort and the slight lowering of altitude. After tying her hair back in a messy ponytail, she found that she had successfully downplayed her makeover by ironically making herself look like yet another person she hardly recognized.

Her entrance into the studio went largely unnoticed by the students, partly because she was a bit late and everyone was already working, and partly because the few students that glanced at her didn't remotely recognize her. Her canvas was in the corner, as she normally liked to stay as far away from the cluster of art students. She mounted her canvas, only to find, unsurprisingly, that it was too low and she grudgingly adjusted it to compensate.

With her canvas finally mounted, she took a moment to remember where she left off. She had changed the color of the sky on her landscape, and despite the rich maroon sky, the painting was pretty much the same thing it was before. She thought of Mr. Knightley's criticism, and Nicole Ryder's rather violent artistic process, and let her subconscious mind do the painting. As it was, she was too wrapped up in reliving the morning's unusual encounter with her mother to do much concentrating on her work.

- - - -earlier that morning - - -

Caitlin had awoken that morning to her mother quietly tapping on the door of her room.

"Honey? Isn't it finals week?" Her mother's muffled voice inquired from behind the door. "We wouldn't want you to miss an important exam."

Caitlin grumbled a reply about her open period being first on Monday, and had rolled over to fall back asleep when two (well, technically three) things popped into her field of vision. The first two were her still unfamiliar new breasts, which Alexis had informed her were a proud 34E, that rested on her arm. The third was the tufts of raven-black hair which nearly blocked her vision entirely. She sat up suddenly and scanned her room for a tape measure, silently praying that she was the same size she was when she had gone to bed.

The sounds of her breathing and frantic movements were not lost her mother. "Caitlin? Dear? Are you okay in there? Is something wrong?"

"Nothing mom, just a dream...or something," Caitlin half-mindfully replied, now on her feet and clumsily wrapping a tape measure around herself. It then occurred to her that she didn't remember the exact measurements Alex had taken, so new ones would be of little use. She tossed the measuring tape to the ground and opted for the tactile measuring method, which also proved fruitless since she hadn't had these breasts long enough to know how big she was supposed to be. She then caught a glimpse in the mirror of an unfamiliar dark haired, frantic, large breasted girl groping herself like and resolved to just try to just get ready for school, and do her best to forget everything that had happened.

Despite the fact that Alexis had convinced her to dye her hair to serve as a distraction from her height, to Caitlin, it wasn't nearly enough. Unfortunately for her, every motion she went through seemed hinted at how much her body—nevermind her hair—had changed in the last couple days. Her bath towel was noticeably smaller, the shower head was lower, and the top of the doorframes were within comfortable reach. These were just a few of the many changes she would simply have to learn to live with. *Just take it as it comes. She told herself. The more you act different, the more you'll feel different.*

She tried a number of outfit possibilities aimed at minimizing her changes. Each one, was about as effective as a neon sign pointing to her breasts. Alexis had absolutely no conservative clothing options, and even the bras pushed her breasts up and out for maximum viewing pleasure. She was sweating, and the clock was ticking. If she wanted to arrive and make it to the studio before class started, she would have to make a decision soon.

"Fuck it all," she said to herself, turning away from the mirror. "I'll wear whatever, and people can say whatever."

She slid into a pair of borrowed jeans, grateful for Alexis' generous curves. The jeans were actually a bit loose on her hips, which allowed them to hang a little to compensate for her now longer inseam. She reached into her drawer and grabbed the first shirt she laid her hands on. It was a dark gray Abercrombie shirt she had not worn yet which was form fitting and a bit undersized. Alexis hadn't left many options for shoes, and Caitlin was forced to settle with the 2" clog sandals. She slipped them on, and was only momentarily distracted by the extra elevation.

She did her best not to acknowledge to herself the fact that she was no longer flirting with *six feet tall* (!) and hurriedly headed out of her room and toward the door.

"Byemomgottagofinals!" She blurted loudly, making a bee line to the door, only to have her mother suddenly emerge from the kitchen and block her path.

"But don't you want breakf...oh my!" Her mother's eyes went wide as she gasped. Caitlin was obviously going to have to face this one head on.

"It's the shoes mom," she started quickly. "Really, I've just got . . ."

Caitlin's mother abruptly shook her head and patted her daughter on the shoulder. "I'm sorry honey. I didn't mean to startle you. I'm still getting used to the hair and seeing you with, well, more tasteful makeup, I just barely recognized you. You have such nice skin; it's definitely a more mature look for you." Caitlin was waiting for the other shoe to drop. Just two weeks ago her mother was two inches taller than her, and now she towered over the woman. Also, with Caitlin standing on the second to last step and her chest nearly at her mother's eye level, her breasts weren't exactly inconspicuous.

"That's it?" Caitlin asked carefully.

"Well, dear. I'm not exactly thrilled about that midriff, but, I know, baby steps. Maybe this weekend we'll go shopping for some more appropriate clothing. That Alex is a nice girl, but I never did approve of her fashion choices. I think it's her mothers' fault. . ."

Caitlin was now the surprised one, as her mother started off on a rant about Alexis' parentage, she stood there on the steps, not sure to be thrilled or insulted at her mother's obliviousness to her drastic physical changes.

"...oh, but I'm making you late!" her mother suddenly wrapped up. "Here are the car keys and a granola bar. You should get going!" Her mother dropped the items into Caitlin's purse, and headed back to the kitchen.

Caitlin blinked a few times, and then decided not to press the issue and headed out the door for the car.

==== Meanwhile, back in the present. . .====

"Caitlin? Oh my. . ."

Caitlin was suddenly snapped out of her reverie by the astonished voice of Mr. Knightley. The man was six feet tall, he was sure to notice that his formerly petite art student was no longer at chin level to him. *Just play dumb, act like its nothing. With any luck he'll just think it's all in his head.*

"I can't believe what I'm seeing."

Caitlin was confused by the reaction, and let her brush hover over where she had just lifted it from.

"I know I made a suggestion for you to explore your environment, but I never would have expected this choice."

She wanted to be surprised at the fact that yet another person had somehow overlooked her substantial recent growth spurt, but she was more surprised at what he was actually reacting to. Caitlin's mind had been wandering, something she normally tried to avoid while painting. Nonetheless, it had happened, and the result was...an igloo. She had painted an igloo on the surface of the grass, in the middle of her landscape, opposite the tree. It just kind of sat there, just as perplexed at its existence as Caitlin was by it. She opened her mouth to reply, though she couldn't fathom what she would possibly say.

"Don't say anything!" Mr. Knightley waved his hands dramatically. "Don't let me sway you. Just let it be. I can see you're really developing as an artist."

Caitlin raised an eyebrow at his last comment, feeling it hit a bit close to home given her present situation, but he had already turned and was wandering away from her toward the other students.

"What the hell is wrong with people?" She mused out loud, letting herself return to her work without distractions. This was short lived, as the rancid odor of cigarettes wafted into her space and a second interruption appeared.

"Whatcha' got there Landry?" Nicole sneered. Nicole Ryder had stepped outside for a smoke break fairly recently, and, upon reentry, had noticed Mr. Knightley admiring Caitlin's work. Nicole, if she made an effort, could be fairly attractive. In addition to her dyed hair and generous piercings, Nicole had large bright amber eyes, which had a subtly, hollowed look from moderate drug use. Only about 5'3, her thin frame and haggard look often remind Caitlin of a gremlin. Caitlin's now higher perspective only aided in inviting the comparison.

"What the hell is that?" Nicole gestured with a paintbrush.

Caitlin was hoping to avoid an encounter and attempted to resolve it quickly the only way she knew how.

"Get lost, freak," she replied, without looking away from her canvas.

Nicole snorted, slightly amused, and persisted with her line of questioning. "No, no. Enlighten me. Did the hair dye seep to your brain? I'm curious what prompted the queen of conservative to become the seductress of the surreal."

Caitlin took a deep breath, and attempted to maintain control, but was growing self-conscious at Nicole's persistence.

"Look, I don't know. It's there. Just, please go away."

"It's a damn igloo! What are you? Cold?"

Their exchange was drawing unwanted attention from the other students, and she scrunched down a bit in an almost humorously futile attempt to hide herself behind her canvas. Nicole was getting to her, and she could feel tears welling up under her eyes. *Oh God, Caitlin*, she told herself. *You aren't going to cry are you?*

Nicole grew impatient with waiting for an explanation. "You know what your project could use, a bit of Ryder magic. . ."

Caitlin saw out of the corner of her eyes Nicole approaching her, no, approaching her canvas. *That bitch is going to ruin my project!*

Caitlin whirled around to grab Nicole. Nicole, not expecting a physical reaction, shoved Caitlin away, inadvertently grabbing a handful of Caitlin's breast in the process. Nicole's eyes went wide and she chuckled. "Wow, someone's been putting on weight. Didn't notice you had so much in there. Didja' get 'em done or something?"

The combination of Nicole's rather unflattering comments about her body and the intentions to deface her work had sent Caitlin from embarrassed to livid in record time. She lunged at Nicole, grabbing for her hair, but instead getting part of her ear and the edge of a piercing.

"OW!" Nicole shouted. "Let go you ox!" She responded by slapping Caitlin across the face.

There was a momentary silence as both Caitlin, Nicole, and a number of spectators were unsure of what would happen next. Caitlin's cheek was hot from the impact and she was embarrassed by the scene being made. Nicole was rubbing her ear, all the while spewing a streak of unbecoming comments about Caitlin under her breath. It wasn't long before Caitlin picked up "bimbo," "slut," "brainless," and a particular c-word that even she herself had never directed at anyone before.

"Excuse me?" Caitlin asked.

Nicole met her stare head on, though about a foot lower. "I called you a talentless, brainless, tits-for-brains, fake, slutty, bimbo, cu..."

Caitlin cut her off abruptly with a punch square in the face.

Everyone, including Caitlin, was surprised this latest development. Nicole was floored, and spouting a whole new level of colorful profanity. The whole scenario was getting a bit out of hand for her taste. There was over an hour left in the class, and she figured this would be a good time to leave. Ignoring the gaping spectators, she abandoned her canvas, grabbed her box of art supplies, and made a beeline for the door. She barely had time to notice the sudden increasing volume of Nicole's voice, and the crescendo of angry footsteps before she was pulled to the ground from behind by her hair and collar.

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In his twenty-plus years teaching art classes, Mr. Knightley had never had to break up a fight, and in his forty-plus years, he had never borne witness to such a scuffle.

He had been tending to another student on the opposite end of the room, when a series of yelps had caught his attention, which were followed by a rather loud crashing and the unmistakable sound of paint supplies being thrown about. By the time he had gathered his bearings and reached the source of the uproar, he found two of his prize pupils on the ground in the midst of an ugly and frighteningly physical brawl.

"Whoa! Whoa! Stop!" He yelled in his best serious-teacher voice. The girls, however, showed no regard for his interference. He wasn't sure how to intervene and looked around at the students who were transfixed by the sight before them.

He set his sights on Dean, an all-area linebacker (who also had a gift for watercolor) and motioned for him to help separate the girls. Dean, a big man himself, took a moment to decide which girl would stand the least chance of making him look bad, the rather feral looking wiry one, or taller girl who nearly matched him in height.

"DEAN!" Knightley yelled in his direction again. "Help me here." Dean, hoping his choice wouldn't affect his grade somehow, wrapped his arms around Nicole to pry her off of Caitlin, whom Nicole had mounted and was ferociously scratching. Nicole reacted to her captor by kicking and writhing wildly and Caitlin took advantage of Nicole's being bound from behind by slapping her again before she was out of reach. Nicole's response was akin to a cat bursting out of a paper bag. The linebacker, caught off guard by a flurry of blows to his shins, loosened his grip and the girls were again tussling.

By this time, more students were attempting to intervene, but were having difficulty due to the girls' refusal to let go of each others' hair. In a last ditch effort, Nicole abandoned the hair strategy and reached for the bottom of Caitlin's shirt, yanking it and her bra up into Caitlin's face. This exposed a good deal of skin, and Caitlin immediately let go of Nicole's hair, only to have each of her arms grabbed by intervening students who were too preoccupied with attempts to restrain the girls to notice this recent development.

From his vantage point, Mr. Knightley could see the girls being separated, and had assumed the situation had been brought under control until he noticed a flurry of gestures from students at Caitlin. Assuming her injured, he rushed forward only to see that Caitlin writhing furiously with her arms restrained, her shirt and bra stuck over her face, and bare torso on display. He instinctively turned away, but then realized that he would have to be the responsible one, and motioned for the students to let go of her as he did his best to maneuver her shirt back down to provide her some degree of modesty.

Two students were dragging an enraged kicking and screaming Nicole out of the room. Another student had volunteered to retrieve ice and band-aids for both girls, while other students returned to their work. Mr. Knightly led a sobbing, bleeding, and humiliated Caitlin into an empty classroom across the hall. He knew he'd eventually have to see that both girls made it to the principal, but for now, he did his best to console her.

"Are you okay?" He asked.

Caitlin shook her head no. There were tears streaming down her face and she was trying her best to compose herself.

"Do you need something? Can I get you anything?"

She looked up at him painfully, and through her broken sobs, managed to choke out a reply that he was completely unprepared for.

"I'm really hungry."

Chapter 9

After being given a half hour to cool off, both girls were escorted to the principal's office. They assured Mr. Knightley that they could peacefully cohabit before he left them alone with the secretary to wait for Principal Gray. Caitlin, in the meantime, worked her way through the remains of a sub sandwich left on the office table from an earlier faculty meeting. Though Mr. Knightley had already offered her most of his own lunch, she could only pretend to be satisfied. She was still starving, and following Mr. Knightley's departure, she asked the secretary if there was any food, claiming she had run late and had no time to eat or pack a lunch.

Nicole alternated icing her ear and the bruise around her eye, but was soon distracted by her co-habitant who had polished off a good foot and a half of a six-foot sub. Caitlin, seemingly in shock from the whole ordeal, stared forward silently, eating relentlessly as if in a trance. Nicole was not particularly afraid of Principal Gray, and, if anything, found their occasional encounters to be a mere inconvenience. She let the silence hang in the air for a bit before she spoke up.

"Hey Landry." Caitlin said nothing. Nicole shut her eyes tightly and settled herself before she continued. "I'm sorry."

Caitlin stopped chewing. "What?" She replied, not wanting to let her still full mouth drop open.

Nicole, still not making eye contact, twisted her mouth into a scowl and grudgingly repeated her apology. "Sorry. I figured I'd say it now before Rusty orders me say it. It probably won't mean much then."

Caitlin assumed Rusty was Nicole's nickname for Principal Gray, whose red hair was his only remotely interesting characteristic. Nicole was quite familiar with the man, and Caitlin had met him a few times when he commented on her "attire not suitable for a responsible young woman in a learning environment."

Caitlin finished her last swallow of the sandwich. "Thanks," she said. "Sorry about the eye."

Nicole chuckled. "Sorry? Don't apologize for that. That was the most bitchin' thing I've ever seen you do. Didn't think you had it in you."

Caitlin, to her surprise, half grinned. "Neither did I." She eyed the sandwich, pondering whether she should grab another segment. She waited a bit, noticing that the awkward silence was returning, so she grabbed another sandwich and dug in. Caitlin's uncharacteristic gluttony was not lost on Nicole, but she decided against commenting. This, however, left her with nothing to say. So they sat in silence while Caitlin worked her way through the sandwich.

"Is it just me or are you, like..."

"I grew six inches in the last three weeks," Caitlin finished, figuring the truth would be stranger than fiction at this point.

"Okay, that explains it," Nicole replied, unfazed by Caitlin's admission.

"You don't think that's weird?" Caitlin asked.

Nicole shrugged. "I used to have green eyes. I had a bad mushroom trip one night and the next morning my eyes were gold."

"That didn't freak you out?"

"I guess I just really wanted bright golden eyes. I saw them on TV when I was younger and I thought they were the coolest thing ever. I guess chemical abuse was the kick my mind needed to get over the hump. Mind over matter you know. I told my mom they were contacts."

"So you're saying I just want to grow taller?"

"Do you?"

"No, not really. I can't honestly say that's a fantasy of mine."

Nicole shrugged. "Anyone cast a spell on you?"

"Not that I know of." Caitlin polished off the last bite of the sandwich. She abruptly stopped chewing and turned to Nicole. "Unless, it was you..."

Nicole was slightly miffed by the accusation. "Even if I could, why the hell would I cast a spell on you?"

"I dunno," Caitlin rolled her eyes. "Maybe because you hate my guts."

"I don't hate your guts."

"Yes you do!" Caitlin replied, stopping short of yelling and dropping to a quick whisper. "You just attacked me, like, half an hour ago!"

"Excuse me? If you recall, I believe you started the little scuffle."

"You were going wreck my project!"

"I was offering to help! I hadn't seen you ever do anything like that before and you looked like you could use some suggesti..." Nicole narrowed her eyes. "Are you sweating?"

"You aren't hot? It's boiling in here." Caitlin wiped beads of sweat away from her forehead.

"Uh...it's probably sixty-five degrees at the most. You running a fever or something? Maybe you're sick. You just ate, like, three feet of a sandwich."

Caitlin froze. She thought of the last two times she ate that quantity of food and the events that immediately followed. *Oh no. Not again.* She thought. *Please God not again.* The last two times she had been unconscious (for one reason or another) and woken up taller. This time, however, she didn't feel tired. If anything, she felt like she'd just drank a quintuple espresso with extra sugar. For all she knew she was about to go into cardiac arrest.

"I need to get out of here," Caitlin said aloud, to no one in particular.

"Uh, I don't think that's gonna' happen. We're kind of in trouble."

"I can't stay here. I need to go."

Nicole was about to protest when she noticed a familiar silhouette outside the office door. She darted over to the faculty room table and grabbed one of the remaining pieces of sub sandwich, ignoring the accusatory glance of the secretary. She got back to her seat just as Principal Gray entered the office, and she shoved the sandwich toward Caitlin.

"Eat this. If he asks you anything, play stupid. Follow my lead. I'll have us, or at least you, out of here in three minutes tops. "

Caitlin wanted to reply, but before she could Mr. Gray entered and she obediently set to work on the sandwich. Mr. Gray examined the cuts, bruises, and scratches on both girls before shaking his head in disbelief and ushering them into his office.

Contrary to the stereotype, Principal Gray was not the prototypical hard-nosed disciplinarian. A young man in his early thirties he had taken the job as high school principal after teaching political science at a state college. While generally a kind, empathetic man, he had little success socially in college, focusing mainly on his academic pursuits. His years of postgraduate experience had done wonders for the school's academic reputation in the past two years, but dealing with discipline problems of this magnitude was completely foreign to him.

Mr. Gray was a bit surprised by the two young women who both, for entirely different reasons, seemed more apt to be found on a college campus than a high school one. The heavily pierced girl, whom he had encountered before, had poise and outspokenness typically found in college campus protests than in high school classrooms. The second girl's demeanor clearly characterized her as a run-of-the-mill indignant teenager with more attitude than self-confidence. However, her long, lithe body was definitely not the norm for most high school students. Her clothes, which appeared to be slightly undersized, exaggerated her alluring curves almost cartoonishly. The scene was made all the more surreal by her wolfing down the remains of a sub sandwich in a rather unladylike manner.

Mr. Gray cleared his throat and did his best to hide his discomfort. "Ladies, I must say I'm shocked by the report I've gotten from Mr. Knightley."

"What was your report Mr. Gray?" Nicole interrupted suddenly. "I'm curious, what exactly transpired in his art class according to your 'report'?"

"Ms. Ryder, I was hoping you could tell me, from your perspective, how this whole ordeal happened."

Nicole seemed unfazed by his supposed position of authority. "No, no, sir. I'm curious what your 'report' of the 'ordeal' says." Nicole punctuated mockingly with air quotes, which slightly annoyed Mr. Gray.

"Nicole," Mr. Gray said sternly. "I am asking you politely to tell me what happened in Mr. Knightley's art class."

"He sat behind his desk while we painted," Nicole explained. "He also occasionally offered his aid to each of us on our final projects. When it was appropriate, he addressed the class as a whole regarding information pertinent to our art education."

Mr. Gray was doing his best to hide his frustration, but was having some difficulty. "Nicole, I would like you to describe the circumstances of your altercation with Ms. Landry."

"Principal Gray, are you implying that if there were some altercation between Caitlin and I that we are incapable of resolving it ourselves?"

"Ms. Landry?" He turned to Caitlin, anxious to stop the escalating showdown with Nicole. "Now that you're done eating perhaps you can shed some light on this whole ordeal."

Caitlin, who seemed equally unwilling to offer her input, had zoned out the entire conversation to this point. She was clearly distracted by something which Mr. Gray was having a hard time putting his finger on. While he wanted to press his questioning of her further, he was becoming slightly distracted by her attempts at folding her arms, as Caitlin was having some difficulty maneuvering her arms adequately around her breasts.

"Ms. Landry!" Principal Gray spoke up.

"What?" Caitlin looked up with an odd mix of shock and annoyance. For a moment they just stared at one another. Mr. Gray was struck by something odd. He could have sworn that only moments ago she had a scratch on her left cheek, but now there appeared to be nothing more than a slightly reddened area below her cheekbone. If it wasn't for the tousled hair, he would have a hard time believing that the fight was nearly as physical as he had initially assessed.

"Could you please provide your side of the story regarding your altercation with Ms. Ryder," he asked, politely, trying to gain some control over the situation.

"Um..." Caitlin began, though as opposed to Nicole, she genuinely seemed to be having difficulty recalling anything. Nicole sighed exasperatedly and made a show of looking as bored as possible. Caitlin shifted in her chair and rubbed her head. "I'm sorry. Just give me a sec." Nicole rolled her eyes as Caitlin wiped a thin layer of perspiration from her forehead.

"Take your time Caitlin. I just want to..."

"Mr. Gray, honestly, why the fuck are we here?" Nicole chimed in. "We've been having this little conversation for a few minutes now and I'm curious why our valuable finals week time is being spent in your office."

Principal Gray intended to reply to Nicole's unbecoming language for an educational environment, but he was still distracted by Caitlin, whose apparent discomfort was growing more and more obvious. She had discarded her sandals and gripped the arms of the chair so tightly that her knuckles were white. She grunted softly, arched her back, and dropped her mouth open in an expression of either shock or pain, though he couldn't quite tell which. He wanted to say something, but his eyes were drawn to her breasts which jutted forward due to her posture and the tightness of her shirt. Nicole, in the meantime, continued her rant.

"...and for some reason, there's this presumption on the part of teachers around here that young women aren't capable of working out own personal matters without the interference of supposed 'authority figures' who, in all honesty, have little to no comprehension of the concerns of today's youth."

Nicole's words droned in the background as Principal Gray remained transfixed on Caitlin, who had yet to make a sound but was clearly having some kind of problem. He tried to recall any uniquely female problems that she could be having at the moment and considered possibly calling the nurse. He had nearly resolved reach for the phone, when something completely unusual happened.

Caitlin's eyes opened wide and she shuddered, still leaning forward, as if a powerful chill were running through her body. The sounds of straining fabric became audible (even over the sound of Nicole's unabated sermon) as Mr. Gray noticed the "Abercrombie" text on her shirt shift subtly, albeit visibly, as if—he couldn't believe what he was thinking—she were outgrowing her clothes right in front of his eyes. He couldn't tell if she was in pain or not since her hair obscured his full view of her face. The small wrinkles disappeared as her thighs seemed to be filling in any remaining space in her jeans, and with every heaving breath her clothes shifted around her tense

body. With one final convulsive exhale, the button of her pants softly sprang loose. Principal Gray's eyes boggled with shock and disbelief.

"Indeed!" Nicole was shouting now, wild eyed and nearly standing. "Yes! I am accusing you of sexism sir! Don't look so surprised. I know your type!"

The feeling having seemingly passed, Caitlin abruptly sat back in her chair, her labored breathing setting her now more substantial chest into motion. Principal Gray felt as if she were visibly bigger, no, taller than she was even a minute ago. He searched for signs that it was all in his head but now that she was sitting up, he could see that her pants, formerly a bit loose around the hips, were now tautly gripping her legs and stressing the button at her waist. The bottom hem of her shirt had crept up slightly, and combined with the apparent enlarging of her breasts, now rose away from her skin with every rapid intake of breath. Her shirt, which had been slightly undersized before, now constricted her torso so tightly that fabric bunched under her arms and the outline of her now too-small bra could be seen through her shirt. Principal Gray was mesmerized and Nicole chose to capitalize on this moment.

"Mr. Gray? With all due respect, I'm over here not on Caitlin's chest."

Shocked back into reality, he looked up at both girls, embarrassed, perplexed, and a bit frightened. His mouth hung open, but he couldn't form a coherent thought, let alone sentence, if he tried. Nicole was growing impatient with his silence, and Caitlin appeared to be momentarily confused, as if still completely oblivious to her recent changes. Mr. Gray's face was pale and he had broken into a cold sweat. His mouth hung open and he rose from his seat to excuse himself.

"Thank you ladies," he said, standing but not making eye contact either of them. "I have need...to...bathroom. Then home. Class...tomorrow." His leg collided with the corner of his desk but he didn't seem to notice.

"What?" both girls replied, confused.

"You're excused," he said, not looking back as he shuffled like a zombie out of his office. They could hear the secretary try to get his attention.

"Mr. Gray. You have a message from...Mr. Gray? Sir?"

"Tomorrow Stacy," he said to her abruptly, as he left the office and headed home uncharacteristically early.

The secretary watched the office door shut, and then looked into Principal Gray's office where both girls still sat opposite his desk. There was a pause, before Nicole spoke up.

"Can we go now?"

Chapter 10

The secretary informed both girls that, at Mr. Knightley's suggestion, both of their remaining final exams that day would be rescheduled to be completed later that week in detention. She gave an odd look at Caitlin, who started to fidget at the attention, before Nicole thanked the secretary and shoved Caitlin out the door, letting it shut before turning to Caitlin head on, which, considering their height disparity, was rather amusing.

"I said 'play stupid and follow my lead' you weirdo," Nicole chided. "Not 'fake an orgasm and give the principal blue balls.' But hey, we're out of there, so I guess I can't complain."

Caitlin was a bit irritated by Nicole's taking the day's events in stride. Caitlin had made a scene in the hallway, turned advanced painting into foxy boxing, and played out some kind of B-movie sci-fi porno scene in the principal's office, all in a span of just under three hours. The two girls made an unusual pair walking alongside each other. Nicole sported her array of piercings and dyed hair. Caitlin, however, noticed that she was getting majority of the stares, mainly an odd combination of lust, curiosity, and wonder. Then again, she knew that if she were in anyone else's shoes looking at herself, she'd be staring too.

Caitlin hobbled along barefoot, carrying her sandals in one hand. She estimated that she was slightly taller than she had been with the two-inch sandals, but couldn't really gauge for sure. Her jeans, the cuffs of which only reached the top of her ankles, gripped her legs so tightly they showed no wrinkles and more closely resembled body paint than denim. She wore her splattered paint shirt, since her Abercrombie shirt would have put the entirety of her midriff on display. She self-consciously hugged her backpack to her chest, hiding the fact that she had discarded her bra which was far beyond undersized at this point.

"So..." Nicole began. "I guess you'll be blaming this on me."

"Why would I blame this on you?" Caitlin stared straight forward, walking briskly and forcing Nicole to nearly run to keep up.

Nicole chuckled. "What? Are you telling me you haven't figured it out yet?"

"Figured what out?"

"Your...um...unique predicament."

"What about it?"

Nicole looked expectantly at her towering companion. "Come on. It's almost poetic."

Caitlin, who had been staring straight forward at the exit she was nearly running toward, looked down at Nicole, but abruptly looked back forward, slightly unnerved by how far below her Nicole currently strode. She tossed her book bag behind her, feeling a bit awkward clutching it to her chest.

“What the hell are you talking about?”

Nicole waited a bit, and then laughed. “Nothing. Nothing at all.” Before adding quietly, “You always did suck at critical analysis.”

Caitlin was not in the mood for guessing games. “Whatever,” she growled, and quickened her pace to the car. She could feel the raucous motion of her unbound breasts underneath her t-shirt, and she consciously attempted to step a little smoother. It changed motion of her bouncing, but didn't minimize it. She was so involved with her body's extraneous movement, that she had all but forgotten her companion who was now at least a few strides behind her.

“Hey Landry,” Nicole shouted, having given up trying to keep up. Caitlin didn't answer.

“Call me sometime.”

The request caught Caitlin off guard, and she was torn between turning and replying or just ignoring. Her indecision, coupled with her unfamiliarity with her height, caused her to stumble slightly, which hurt her bare feet. Nicole snickered loudly, and Caitlin, much to her own surprise, actually smiled.

“Get your shit together first,” Nicole added. “Ain't nothing funnier than a tall girl falling on her ass.” Caitlin did her best to salvage her pride before flipping Nicole the bird and continuing to the student parking lot.

While she had formerly been preoccupied with self-consciousness and the whole morning ordeal, for the first time Caitlin found herself taking in the new view at “five-foot twelve” (as she had heard a teammate on the JV girls basketball team put it). She hadn't realized how much of a difference six inches would make. To her surprise, exiting the building and approaching her car, she hadn't seen a single female student or teacher who matched her height. She had even walked past a number of male and female classmates whom had formerly seemed tall a month ago, that she now looked down at. Equally remarkable was the fact that various male figures that always seemed so towering in the past were now at eye level or only slightly higher. Even J.J. Jackson, the school 6'3" star wide-receiver and seemed only slightly tall, rather than the imposing he had always seem in the past. *Hell*, she thought, *with a good pair of heels...*

In addition to her higher perspective, Caitlin also made note of a number of male students who stopped to ogle her striking height, lithe body, and prominent breasts which visibly swayed and bobbed with her long strides. Caitlin caught the stares out of the corner of her eyes, which, considering her attire, kind of surprised her. With her paint-splattered t-shirt, tousled hair, lack of a bra, and bare feet, she more resembled a derelict hippie than her normal fashion-conscious self. There was that word again. Her normal self. As she approached her mother's car, she caught her reflection in the side glass. The girl that looked back at her was unquestionably still her, though she had little in common with who she had been only three weeks ago.

Her reflection captivated her. Her dark hair was half pulled into a messy ponytail, and half hanging into her eyes. The striking contrast between her blue eyes and dark hair seemed to

highlight the prominent features of her face, with even her relatively soft nose and even lips balancing her more prominent features. Her reflection stopped just under her breasts, which certainly explained the stares she was getting. If her hair initially turned heads, the slightly small shirt which hugged and highlighted the contours of her new curves certainly kept people staring. While not able to see them in the reflection of the car window (or, notably, beyond the prominent forward protrusion of her chest) the recent lengthening of her legs uncomfortable constriction of her pants made the appeal of everything between her waist and ankles pretty obvious.

She was getting sick of thinking. The day's events had left her drained. While she wanted to get off of campus, she didn't want to go home. Uncomfortable compression of her thighs and the uninhibited swaying of her chest suddenly brought her clothing issue to the front of her mind. She ran through her options again, and realized that, once again, if she intended to go somewhere no one would know her, it would mean another trip to the Northshore strip mall. *At least whatever I get there won't be covered in dried paint.* Caitlin unlocked her door, and slid into the driver's seat. She fidgeted in the front seat for a bit before grudgingly letting the seat back a bit to accommodate her extra new inches. As she left campus behind, and headed toward Northshore, she figured that, with the day she had, she was due for a little caffeinated consolation.

As the bell for class ended yet another final exam period, a gaggle of girls congregated to gossip on the day's recent developments. Alexis and Maureen listened intently as word of the art class ordeal spread like wildfire around the campus.

"So apparently Caitlin and Nicole Ryder got in some crazy fight in their art final, and Caitlin totally decked the punker bitch. Then they apparently went crazy and Mr. Knightley and, like, six other guys had to break them up."

"I heard they made out!" A male voice added, in passing, receiving icy glares from half of the gathered girls. He headed on his way, before being joined by a number of other guys hoping to hear his side of the story.

"Anyways," The girl continued. "They both totally got busted, but apparently they did something to Principal Gray too, because he went home early. Kelly Orstead says he looked seriously messed up leaving campus an hour ago."

"Nicole probably bit him!" Another girl chimed in, before being joined by a chorus of agreement.

"Shit," Maureen said aloud. "I can't believe Caitlin would do that."

"I know, right?" Another girl gathered around replied. "Then again, didn't she get in a fight last year during a volleyball game?"

"No, you're thinking of Candice Mitchell."

"Wait, then I don't know who you're talking about. Was Caitlin a cheerleader?"

Another girl shook her head. "No, no, no. You're thinking of Katie. I think Caitlin is the redhead who's dating Richard Towle."

"You're thinking of Dennis Lowry. Richard Towle is gay remember?"

"NO!" Maureen suddenly blurted out, drawing all eyes to her. "What do you mean, 'who is she!?!' Caitlin! Have you seen her lately?"

Alexis chimed in happily. "Yeah, I did her hair over the weekend. Doesn't she have great boobs?" The girls rolled their eyes, except for Maureen of course.

"Yes! And she didn't three weeks ago. The girl grew half a foot in the last month. She's, like, almost six feet tall." Maureen was exasperated; the other girls weren't sure what to make of the conversation.

"I think I'd know if there was another six foot girl around. There's only so many girls on the basketball team," a taller girl from the varsity basketball team huffed.

"She's not on the basketball team! Three weeks ago she was 5'6," A week ago Friday she was 5'9", and this morning she was almost six feet tall in heels. She has blonde hair..."

"Black hair," Alex corrected.

"*Black* hair," Maureen continued, "blue eyes, takes art classes, and has huge boobs!" Maureen was nearly shouting, and Alexis nodded gleefully at the mention of boobs. "Do none of you know who Caitlin Landry is?"

"*Almost* six feet tall in heels?" A new voice suddenly interrupted Maureen from behind her. "My ass."

Maureen whirled around to face a bruised, paint-splattered, but smiling Nicole Ryder. "Yes," Maureen maintained. "I saw her this morning."

"Bullshit," Nicole chuckled. "I saw her two minutes ago. Ain't nothing *almost* about her. And she sure as hell doesn't need the heels." Nicole then waltzed off, leaving behind a confused group of girls and a gaping Maureen. A silence hung in the air before Alexis chimed in.

"I wonder if her b..."

"Oh, shut up." Maureen cut her off, grabbing her arm and tugging her toward the student parking lot.

Chapter 11

“Hey Cait, it’s Tegan. Mom told me about your accident. I just wanted to see if you were okay and how things have been going. I’m not sure when I’ll be home next, since the internship’s got me in Chicago for most of the summer, but I’d really like to get home if I can. I guess you’re busy, or shopping, or something. Anyways, give me a call sometime, and be sure to let me know if anything big happens. Later!”

As the message ended, Caitlin opted to delete it. Her sister and her, having so little in common, had never been particularly close, though they had gotten closer in the last couple years and she typically enjoyed their catching up time. Tegan Landry, like her father was even tempered and studious. Plain, stout, and barely over five feet tall Tegan and Caitlin shared minimal physical characteristics. Caitlin had been taller than her sister for a while now, but could only imagine the look on her sister’s face when she sees her again for the first time in months, with Caitlin towering over her by more than a foot. Caitlin, like she had gotten so used to doing lately, glanced down at her enlarged breasts and lengthened legs in the car. *I guess this would qualify as “something big.”*

She continued heading toward Northshore, figuring recent developments would warrant another shopping excursion. Over the course of the long drive, her thoughts began to drift back toward her recent growth. On one hand, there was no doubt in her mind that something highly unusual was happening to her. At the same time, the mild reactions to her changes from the people around her, particularly Alexis, her mother, and even Nicole put her a bit at ease. *At what point do I start worrying?* Caitlin thought to herself. *How tall could I possibly get?*

Sunday night she had spent some time online doing a bit of research into her problem. It turned out to be of little use. She turned up a few articles on hormonal problems or pituitary gland malfunctions, but most cases showed evidence of obvious physical deformities and a number of ailments which she didn’t have. Those without physical deformities, while abnormally tall, grew, in the most extreme cases, a quarter of an inch per month. Following her Chinese buffet ordeal, Caitlin had grown over three inches overnight.

Aside from medical journals, she also pulled up a disturbingly high amount of fetish sites, chat rooms, and message boards based on everything from tall women and large breasts, to impossibly gigantic women, big feet, growing breasts, and even swallowing fantasies. While she was largely turned off by most of these sites, she had to admit that, if she had a lot less shame, she could probably be making bank with her own website as some of these guys’ wildest fantasy come true. *Crazy what some people are into.* She thought.

As Caitlin pulled into the Northshore Wal Mart parking lot, her phone chimed with a text message from Maureen, with only the words: “Call me.” If that morning’s encounter in the hallway had been any indication, Caitlin had no doubt that things were getting a bit weird between them. Caitlin had been avoiding Maureen (and everyone else, save Alexis) for a few days, and she couldn’t recall the last time the two had gone longer than a couple days without speaking. She pulled the parking lot, and texted her back “I will. gtg.” And prayed that would

postpone the inevitable a few more hours. In the meantime, she opted to stop by the adjacent coffee shop, Bean Town, for a late afternoon perk.

The café was empty save for a couple community college students absorbed in their laptops. One of them gave Caitlin a quick once-over before returning to his work. Caitlin was thankful because she had spent a great deal of time fielding stares all day. She silently prayed for a female barista. If she felt the heat of any more eyes on her, she was certain she would burst into flames.

She approached the counter where a bright-eyed blonde girl with a messy ponytail and a myriad of bracelets seemingly popped out of nowhere. Caitlin initially hadn't seen her from behind the espresso machine. Caitlin tried to discern her age, but the girl could have been anywhere between a mature-looking 16 to a well-aged 28. The girl moved at a frighteningly quick pace and couldn't have been more than 90 pounds soaking wet. She offered an espresso infused hello, and informed Caitlin she would be with her momentarily. Caitlin felt obscenely oversized in the presence of the tiny girl, whose head barely reached past her chest level.

"Sorry about that," the girl chimed, again popping form nowhere. "What can I get for you?"

Caitlin had been so engrossed with the girl's relative height, she had momentarily forgotten where she was. She gathered herself and spouted together an order involving the words "chai," "espresso," and some Italian word indicating size.

"Sure thing sweetie." The barista smiled at her genuinely, and Caitlin, feeling oddly self-conscious, avoided eye contact and looked down to the name "IVEY" splayed in all caps on her nametag. "Sorry if I'm running a little behind. I'm running back and forth to the bathrooms. We just lost somebody and are totally short-handed."

"Did he skip out on work or something?"

"No. He died. Hit by a delivery truck." She replied matter-of-factly between measuring espresso shots. Caitlin's eyes went wide, and she recalled the off-beat kid she had ordered from only two weeks prior.

"He didn't have black hair and plugs in his ears did he?"

"No, it wasn't Tristan. Though he has been nice enough to work OT the past couple days to cover for the dead kid. Caleb was his name." Ivey stopped momentarily. "I'm sorry, I just realized you know Tristan, you didn't know Caleb did you?"

"No, just Tristan."

Ivey looked relieved. "Okay, good. Not to speak ill of the departed," she continued, "But the kid a total burnout. He fell asleep drunk on the loading dock a few nights ago and he got run over. It's sad, but he kinda' had it coming. Weird world we live in."

“Tell me about it.” Caitlin said. She decided to change the subject. “So don’t you have any other employees to call in?”

“Sure, but one of the girls is on vacation and out-of-state, the boss is up to her neck in paperwork, and Tristan’s past his OT limit.” Ivey paused. “Why, you lookin’ for a job?”

Caitlin was taken aback. “Oh, no way. I don’t know the first thing about coffee.”

Ivey slid Caitlin’s drink to her, and narrowed her eyes. “No, I could see you working here. Not to be too forward, but this place gets pretty busy and you’ve got the goods to get good tips.” At that, Ivey gave Caitlin a once over.

“Excuse me?” Caitlin’s expression twisted into a combination of surprise and offense. “I’m not some kind of floozy bartender.”

“Of course not. You aren’t old enough.”

“What are you implying then?” Caitlin persisted. “What do I look like?”

Ivey tilted her head thoughtfully. “Someone who’s ready for a change.” There was a moment, then the door opened and two older women entered. Caitlin stepped back and Ivey extended an application toward her, which Caitlin took before she had a chance to argue. “I’ve got customers. Come back tomorrow sweetie. We could probably get you working by the end of the week.”

Caitlin opened her mouth to protest, but, to her surprise, said “Ok.”

“By the way, if you’re shopping for clothes. There’s an outlet store on the east side of this plaza.”

“How did you...?” Caitlin began, before looking down at her partially buttoned jeans and undersized shirt and sandals.

“Thanks. I’ll check it out.”

As opposed to Wal-Mart, Caitlin quickly found herself slightly overwhelmed by the expansive display of marginally-fashionable and modestly-priced merchandise the clothing outlet store offered. At her previous shopping spree, she had a much stronger grip on what she was looking for. That, however, was six inches ago. At around 6’0” even she wasn’t even sure she could find anything to fit her. She figured she had a few long skirts that would keep her covered, though her old short skirts would be ludicrously risqué. Pants would be near impossible to find. She figured it would be best to search around for a few shirts that she could wear, as well as some foundation garments, namely a bra. At her current size, walking around without a bra was basically an open invitation to gawkers.

Caitlin was relieved to find a 38DD 40D bra that fit adequately, though only as a substitute for a 36E that she probably needed, but the store didn't carry. She also was able to pick up some underwear and shorts that she badly needed, since her hips, while not as dramatically expanded as the rest of her, had grown out a bit. While the sizes, in comparison to her old size, were a bit mind boggling, Caitlin also found herself picking out garments atypical of her normal fashion sense, including non-designer t-shirts with striking designs, a few more floor-length skirts (which only reached her calves), and a pair of baggy cargo pants which were long enough for her, albeit a bit wide in the waist.

After a couple hours, Caitlin felt she had all she needed to keep herself decent, provided she had seen the last of her unexpected growth spurts. She hadn't considered the possibility that she could grow again, but the more she thought about it, the more she realized that there was really no way of knowing when or if she would grow again. She then thought of her earlier exchange with Nicole.

"So, I guess you'll be blaming this on me."

"Why would I blame this on you?"

"What? Are you telling me you haven't figured it out yet?"

"Figured what out?"

"Your...um...unique predicament."

"What about it?"

"Come on. It's almost poetic."

"What the hell was she talking about?" Caitlin wondered aloud to herself as she dumped her purchases into the back of her car. She checked her phone again, and she had missed three calls. One from her mother, likely wondering where the hell she was, and two from Maureen. Her phone indicated one message and she debated whether or not she wanted to check it. She felt another pang of guilt at having avoided her best friend for so long, but at the same time she felt an odd sense of embarrassment at having to present herself to Maureen. *Maureen, the girl with everything. Great grades, great personality, great looks, great body...*

"Great God, what are you still doing here?"

Caitlin was snapped out of her zone, and she glanced over her shoulder, slightly confused when she didn't see anyone.

"Down here sweetie."

Caitlin turned completely around to see Ivey sipping a large iced tea which looked ridiculously large in her small hands. Ivey glanced between Caitlin's still undersized ensemble and the piles of bags loaded in the trunk.

"So did someone steal your clothes or something?"

"Unexpected late growth spurt."

Ivey cracked a half-grin. "Quite a doozy apparently. How old are you?"

"I turn eighteen in three weeks."

"Yeah? You go to high school around here?"

"St. John's Academy."

Ivey whistled, and Caitlin expected a snide comment about her prep school. Ivey seemed to consider it, but decided against it. Instead, she extended her hand. "I don't think I've asked your name."

Caitlin gave her name and accepted the girl's hand. For the first time since the conversation started, Caitlin realized again how small the girl was. Ivey's assertive and confident demeanor had nearly made Caitlin forget their relative size difference. The assortment of bracelets Ivey wore rattled as they shook hands, and Caitlin found herself a bit on the defensive. Ivey smiled and introduced herself as Ivelene DeMonterey.

"It's a mouthful, I know." She admitted. "My middle name is Chanelle. I feel like you could split my name into three different perfume fragrance brands, or gourmet cheeses."

Caitlin said nothing, and smiled slightly.

"Anyways Caitlin," Ivey continued, "I imagine you've got places to go and people to see. I hope to hear from you soon about the job, or otherwise."

"Yeah..." Caitlin nodded again.

"Later!" Ivey shouted, heading off toward her yellow VW bug parked at the far end of the parking lot. Caitlin still stood there with her trunk open and her phone screaming Maureen's all-too-familiar ring tone. She looked in her hand at the piece of paper slipped to her during their handshake. On the paper was Ivey's phone number written elegantly on a ripped off piece of newspaper with only a brief message.

"Call me, sweetie."

The voice mail chime broke the silence, and Caitlin shut her trunk, got into her car, and headed home.

Chapter 12

“...just call me. Okay Cait? I feel like I’m going crazy. I just want to talk.”

Maureen waited a few moments before pressing the ‘end’ button on her phone. She stared at the screen as the saved cell phone picture of Caitlin looking her characteristically bitter self at her own birthday party changed back to her cell phone wallpaper, a picture of the herself, Alexis, and Caitlin posing together at homecoming game: Maureen wearing her royalty sash, Alexis still in a cheer uniform, and Caitlin rolling her eyes and cracking a smile barely perceptible on the tiny, lo-res cell phone screen.

“Alex, am I going crazy?”

“Huh?” As per her normal routine, Alexis was immersing herself in the most recent issue of Cosmo.

“Am I losing it? Seriously, I feel like I am.”

“Caitlin was the one who got in a fight in art class. Not you.”

Maureen sighed frustratedly. “Alex. Did Caitlin grow half a foot in the last few weeks?”

“I dunno, but her boobs look...”

“Alex!” Maureen blurted, snapping Alexis to attention. “Did she get taller or not?”

“Yes!” Alexis finally resigned. “She got taller! What’s your problem?”

“That’s just it Alex!” Maureen began pacing about her room. “*She*’s the medical phenomenon and *I*’m the one going nuts. Doesn’t anyone else find the fact that she’s done practically three years of adolescent growth in three weeks in her late teens at all unusual?” Alexis furrowed, alerting Maureen that she had used a word Alexis wasn’t familiar with. “Alex. People don’t grow six inches taller and three cup sizes bigger in three weeks.”

“Caitlin did.”

“I know! But nobody is saying anything!”

“Should they be?”

“Alex, I called Caitlin’s mom to ask how Caitlin was doing. She said she was completely fine! Better than ever!”

“Isn’t she?”

“No! She’s not! She’s...well...”

“Really tall?” Alexis finished.

“Yes!” Maureen exclaimed, before suddenly deflating. “And she hasn’t talked to me about it. She talked to you and she even probably confided in that crazy Nicole Ryder.”

“Now you’ve really gone crazy.” Alexis scoffed at the idea. “Why would Caitlin ever go to Nicole Ryder for advice?”

“Okay, let me get this straight. You want to rub carpet with some chick from the coffee shop and you come to me for advice? Yeah, I’m hanging up on you.”

“Nicole! Wait!” Caitlin pleaded. “I don’t want to rub... whatever you said with her. I’ve just never....”

“Felt this way before?”

“No! I just ...”

“Burn to feel the warm, sensual touch of a woman?”

“Stop it! I’ve never been hit on by a girl before.”

“And I have? FYI, I’m not into girls. I made out with one while tripping my proverbial balls off at a rave party, but that’s not quite the same thing. And before you ask, no, I won’t let you practice playing the field with me.”

“Nicole, I just need someone to talk to.” Caitlin was more accustomed to Maureen’s near-involuntary spouting of solutions at almost no prompting. Nicole, on the other hand, seemed otherwise preoccupied and entirely unwilling to offer any insight whatsoever. *Lord knows what this girl is doing as we speak*, Caitlin thought to herself. “Can’t you just hear me out?”

“You want advice? Call one of your loser friends. I’ve got artistic ground to break and a shoebox full of psychedelics to help me break it. Take your girl problems elsewhere.”

Caitlin was surprised to have her unasked question answered so directly, but was preoccupied with Nicole’s insinuation. “I don’t have fucking girl problems! And anyways, I can’t talk to anyone else.”

“I’m sure you’re quite physically capable of speaking to another human being.”

“No, I mean. Alexis would never understand.”

“Then call the homecoming princess. I’m sure she’d be receptive to your lesbian issues.”

“I can’t call Maureen, and I don’t have lesbian issues.”

Nicole paused and took a breath, before asking slowly and clearly. “Why can’t you call your *best friend* about your *personal* crisis?”

“I...she...I just can’t talk to her right now.”

“What, did you two sleep together and now it’s awkward?”

“You are the worst listener ever.”

“You’re the worst explainer ever. You’ve wasted five valuable minutes of my art-making time telling me, essentially, how you can’t do anything or tell anyone anything. Yet you want to tell me all about your problems?”

“Shut up.” Caitlin seethed. “You’re no help at all.”

“Caitlin, I’m going hang up this phone and eat some hallucinogenic mushrooms, and perhaps, subsequently and inadvertently, poison myself with acrylic paint. You, however, are going to call your loser homecoming princess friend and explain to her, in small, carefully chosen words, each and every one of your woman-on-woman problems. You will then kiss, make up, and invite your friends over for a raucous muff-diving party.”

Nicole’s graphic imagery was making Caitlin queasy. “Can you cool it with the lesbian thing? And as for Maureen, I can’t talk to her like...like this.”

Nicole sifted through a few bottles of pills. “Like what? Do you need to gussy up or something?”

Caitlin was silently seething. *Is this girl always this difficult?* “You know...” She had no idea how to articulate what she was very obviously referring to. “All, growth spurted and shit.”

Nicole shifted her phone from one shoulder to the other. *Is this girl always this pathetic?* “Oh no, no, no. I’m not going to dissect the subplot of your sci-fi B-movie of a life.” She debated between her Ziploc bag of mushrooms and a tab of LSD Tristan scored her at community college cast party a few weeks back.

Caitlin was running out of patience and cut to the chase. “You know why this is happening! You said so yourself! So tell me! Why is this happening to me? Why do I keep getting bigger? Is it a disease? A disorder? A curse? What?”

Nicole was already behind schedule for her weekly artistic routine and not in the mood to spell things out, so she opted for the more indirect ‘show-me’ method. “You’re an idiot.” Nicole stated evenly. “You’re a brainless, useless, talentless, moron incapable of figuring out even the simplest of your stupid life issues. You and all of your thick-headed friends can kiss my inordinately

decorated white ass. Do yourself a favor and tattoo sorority letters on your head and start exercising your gag reflex to prepare for your glorious college years most of which will be spent on your knees with your mouth hanging open, begging for the intramural lacrosse team to feed you your nightly dose of protein.”

Caitlin could barely fathom rational thought following Nicole’s impeccably worded, yet unsettlingly graphic declaration. “You stupid fucking cunt! What’s wrong with you?”

“Am I wrong?”

“You’re a psychotic bitch. I never should have called you.”

“Thanks, I’m here all week.” Nicole chimed, opting to start her night with a tab of grade-A LSD which she placed onto her tongue. “Call me when your head hits the ceiling. Literally, not figuratively.”

“I hope you die of lead poisoning and choke on your own...!”

“Mmmhmm. Good night. Tristan says hi.” With that she snapped her phone closed, lay back on her bed, cranked her music, and waited for “inspiration” to kick in. Any thoughts or concerns for Caitlin quickly dissipated as she stared at the stucco in the ceiling. “That girl is a bad trip waiting to happen.”

“SHIT!!!” Caitlin shrieked aloud in her room. “Shit! Shit! Shit!” She threw her phone across the room and it shattered on the opposite wall, knocking over a myriad of picture frames and candles and chipping a chunk of plaster from the wall. She screamed again, this time at no one in particular. If anything, she screamed at herself and her inability to help herself and fear of going to her friends. She flopped onto her bed and cried, because she couldn’t do anything else. Her body convulsed with sobs until she could barely catch her breath.

Then it started again. It began with numbness in her extremities, which shot through her body like lightning. Right to the pit of her stomach. As the numbness subsided, it seemed to morph into a painful hunger. It came so powerfully, she could no longer cry, and she shot up to a seated position and scanned her room for something, anything to eat. Her survey of the room only reiterated what she already knew. There was nothing there and she would have to go downstairs. Caitlin knew that her parents would be downstairs, and going down there and eating like a ravenous beast would probably not be wise if she were trying not to arouse any suspicion about her condition. Another hunger pang bit at her and she found herself out the door halfway down the stairs before she even realized what she was doing.

She made a beeline for the kitchen, searching for items that she could take to her room. Immediately she grabbed a few unopened large bags of chips, since she could hold those in one hand. She looked about wildly and discovered a substantial portion of leftover casserole that her parents must have left out for her. She grabbed the entire dish under her arm, nearly dropping the

serving spoon, and used her remaining thumb and index finger to snatch the remnants of a bottle of cranberry juice from the fridge.

“Honey?”

Caitlin whirled around, food in hands, to see her parents seated at the counter in the kitchen. Her mother was completing a Sudoku puzzle and doing her best to maintain an even expression. Her father, in contrast, absorbed in magazine article drafts, paid her no mind. Caitlin froze briefly, painting a surreal picture for her mother, before bounding out of the kitchen and up the stairs and shutting her door with a slam.

Caitlin’s mother turned to her husband, whose body language indicated he’d rather not get involved. Compared to Caitlin’s vehicular destruction habits, some manic stress eating didn’t set off any alarm bells in his head. “I’ll check on her in a few minutes.” Caitlin’s mother sighed.

Back in her room, Caitlin greedily dug into a cold casserole with a serving spoon. She finished in record time and tore open a bag of chips, which sent them flying about her bed. She solved this problem by opting to eat the whole chips on her bed before the remaining ones in the bag. She tossed back a swig of cranberry juice, spilling a decent amount on herself, before returning to her chips.

She was relieved to feel somewhat satisfied on her way through the second bag of chips, when she heard her mother’s footsteps coming up the stairs. Caitlin looked at the food wreckage around her and at her juice-stained shirt. Knowing full well how pathetic she looked, she attempted to minimize the damage by haphazardly pulling up a folded quilt over herself and the wreckage that was her meal. It was then she was met by a familiar numbness in her limbs, coupled with a full-body tingling that she knew all too well. *I guess I should have seen this coming*, she thought.

“Honey?” Her mother knocked on the door. “I realize it may seem silly to ask this, but, is everything okay?” Caitlin ignored her mother, but kept eating her chips which she held in her lap underneath the blanket. She could also feel the fabric of her t-shirt shift about her torso. She clutched the blanket tightly to herself and tried to curl herself into a crouched sitting position. She was thankful that she had changed into a long skirt and was spared the painful constriction of her pants around her thighs.

“Dear. Maureen called today.”

“I know.” Caitlin said, her mouth full of chips. She fidgeted with her shirt between bites. *I just bought this damn thing...*

“She called three times, honey. That poor girl sounds awful. When’s the last time you two talked?”

Caitlin’s mother paused to crack open the door and survey the wreckage of her daughter’s most recent emotional crisis. Caitlin looked up at her mother with an expression akin to a raccoon

caught sifting through the garbage cans. Food scraps, broken glass, chipped plaster on the walls, destroyed cell phone. *At least the windows are still intact this time*, her mother thought with a relieved sigh. She then looked to her daughter sitting on the bed, awkwardly wrapped underneath a blanket and hypnotically devouring a bag of tortilla chips.

“Caitlin, I know you’ve been changing recently.”

“What?” Caitlin stopped eating, and did her best to minimize the space her slowly lengthening legs were taking up on the bed. *Come on, stop. Please stop.*

“I’m not blind Caitlin.” Caitlin wasn’t sure what to say, so she just waited and let her mother continue. “Obviously, everyone goes through this, it just seems overwhelming because it’s happening to you all at once in a really short time. I didn’t notice at first, but your father clued me in. Honestly, I don’t know how I missed it.”

Caitlin slouched a bit in an attempt to hide her rising perspective. Her mother, however, was not looking directly at her, but around the room in general as if she were talking to someone else.

“...I guess I just didn’t know how to deal with it. I couldn’t believe I didn’t notice. It’s obvious now that I look at it. The new clothes, the hair, now the eating...”

Caitlin was wincing on the inside, anxious to figure out whether her parents were going to donate her to science, alert the local news, call the exorcist, or all of the above. The bunched shirt under her arms was starting to pinch and she tried her best to fold her legs into a more compact sitting position. *Maybe, she’s already called the CDC and is just stalling until they get here.*

“...the makeup, the fight at school, the problems with your friends.”

“...?” Caitlin was no longer sure where her mother was going with this, and was partly distracted with the feeling of the underside of her breasts rubbing against her lower rib cage as they expanded.

“...you’re finally growing into yourself dear.”

Caitlin’s ears perked up at this statement. For the first time she began listening to her mother.

“You’re becoming who you really are meant to be.” Her mother continued. “Sure, your friends may not recognize you while you’re changing, you may not either. I hope you know that your father and I are always here for you, and I’m sure your friends are too.”

Caitlin was surprised to find herself actually listening to her mother’s words, taking them to heart. She also was thankful to feel the tingling in her body begin to wane.

“...just don’t let anyone make you feel small, including yourself.” Her mother took another moment before tossing the cordless phone onto the bed. “If I know that sound I heard a few

minutes ago, you probably need this. Please call Maureen.” She paused to look at the wreckage in the room. “This isn’t good for either of you, especially you.”

Caitlin’s mother smiled and left, closing the door behind her. Caitlin waited a moment, realizing that her latest growth spurt had passed. She eyed the phone on the bed next to her.

“And hon?” came her mother’s voice from behind the door.

“Yeah mom?” Caitlin replied.

“You may want to comb the potato chip shrapnel out of your hair before your friends come over.”

“Thanks mom,” Caitlin responded earnestly, before looking down at herself underneath the blanket. *I think the potato chips are the least of my worries though.* Grabbing the phone, she dialed Maureen’s number, the phone feeling oddly misshapen in her lengthened hands.

“Hey Maureen,” Caitlin began. “You think you could come over?” She straightened up and grimaced at the cool breeze ever-so-slightly exposed midriff. “I think we need to get caught up on some things.” She patted her hand at her newly expanded breasts which pushed emphatically against the fabric of her new t-shirt. “You think you could convince Alex to sit out this visit though?”

Chapter 13

As expected, Maureen didn’t let the conversation idle, and quickly hung up the phone, assuring Caitlin she would arrive as soon as possible. Caitlin listened to the click of the line as it settled into a dial tone, before switching to an anxious beeping. Caitlin gazed about the room, taking in the setting that would be greeting her friend. Outside of the broken picture frames and phone, and some clothes strewn about everything seemed fairly normal.

Then again, since her most recent growth spurt halted, she hadn’t moved a muscle, not wanting to feel any indication of physical changes. This took a certain amount of denial on her part, since she couldn’t fit all of her body under the blanket and she could feel her expanded breasts cradled in her arms as she held the blanket tightly around herself.

How bad could it be?

Throwing caution to the wind, Caitlin shut her eyes, tossed her blanket aside and shoved herself off of the bed and onto her feet. Immediately obvious was the sooner-than-expected impact of her feet to the floor. Her weight distribution was ridiculously out of whack and she opened her eyes halfway through her maneuver to keep from plowing forward into her dresser. She ungracefully caught herself by grasping onto an open drawer, but didn’t dare look up into the mirror atop the dresser. Her head hanging forward, the first thing that greeted her eyes was the

text on the front of her bargain bin t-shirt, which, due to the protrusion of her breasts, now looked straight back at her. She read the upside down text to herself.

“Take a picture. It’ll last longer.”

She was still leaning forward onto the dresser, and her hair hung into her face, obscuring her view of the mirror. Did her hair seem...longer? The feeling of being so out of place in her own body made her chest feel hollow. Pushing herself upward, she worked her way to her feet, still averting her eyes from her reflection. *If I look even half as different as I feel...*

She allowed herself to straighten up, but kept her eyes closed. Pushing as few strands of hair out of her eyes, she took a deep breath, exhaled, and opened her eyes. She looked straight forward, then down.

Where’s my head?

She gaped into the mirror, but all that looked back at her was the bottom half of her gaping jaw and a distended t-shirt design. The image of herself in the mirror stopped just above her shoulders, everything above was cut off due to her towering height which extended above the mirror. She opened her mouth to scream, but was overcome suddenly with a crippling weakness in her body. The world, already a funhouse mirror, started spinning as she could feel the impending grand return of her impromptu dinner.

A gruesome, muffled, retching was heard by Caitlin’s parents, gathered downstairs in the family room quietly reading. Her mother looked concerned, while her father only raised an eyebrow.

“I imagine we’ll be seeing Maureen soon.”

Maureen’s mother asked her where she was going at 8:45 on a school night during finals week. “Caitlin’s having a crisis” was a pretty stock answer by this point. She considered a variation, but “Caitlin is turning into a giant” seemed too, well, honest. This was her mother, and she was seventeen. No more honesty would be necessary.

Caitlin’s mother greeted Maureen with the same cordial greeting that always seemed to say, “Thanks for putting up with our basket-case of a daughter.” Maureen embraced her back with a hug that replied, “No problem.” Given the nature of her visit and Caitlin’s supposed condition, Maureen watched closely for any unusual body language from Caitlin’s mother, though it seemed to be the run-of-the-mill monthly Caitlin meltdown. Maureen was convinced Caitlin could walk down the stairs headless with three extra limbs and Caitlin’s mother would probably just make her a cup of tea and suggest she stay home from school for a couple days.

Maureen made her way up the stairs toward Caitlin’s room, pondering over how nothing really prepares one for the sight of a semi-grown person in a hyper-grown state. Maureen, who had always been fascinated by biology, felt she should be picking up the shattered pieces of her

perception of reality by now. Then again, Caitlin's problems had always seemed psychological, and, strangely, this case didn't seem any different. As per her usual routine, Maureen knocked twice, identified herself, and opened the door.

Caitlin sat motionless on the bed, uncomfortably hunched over with a blanket wrapped about her in an inadequate attempt to hide her predicament. Knees and long feet poked out from underneath the blanket and she bent her lengthened torso at an extreme arch. Caitlin's face wore a mixture of nausea, despair, and embarrassment. Maureen stood in the doorway staring at her friend for a few moments before bursting out laughing and Caitlin simultaneously vomited over the side of her bed into a trashcan. The sound of retching cut short Maureen's fit of laughter, but she was still wiping away tears as she approached the bed. Caitlin frowned, swapping despair with anger.

"You've got a lot of nerve," Caitlin choked out. "What kind of fucking friend are you?"

"You look ridiculous."

"You're a bitch."

"Nice to see you too," Maureen said, and leaned in to hug her friend. Caitlin tightened up at the embrace, not returning it, but rather gripping her blanket tighter. Maureen hugged her tight, suppressing her discomfort with the noticeably wider circumference of Caitlin's shoulders. Caitlin finally let her head fall on her friend's shoulder and Maureen patted her on the back before ending the embrace and stepping back. "Now, will you drop that stupid blanket, please?"

"No," Caitlin snorted, her dyed hair was in messy strands in her face and her blonde roots were showing, indicating that her hair had recently grown at an unnaturally accelerated pace. Maureen waited, letting the silence settle uncomfortably while Caitlin, who had yet to look up at Maureen, fidgeted with her blanket.

"In case you forgot, you invited me over." Caitlin didn't reply, but swallowed loudly. Maureen narrowed her eyes cautiously. "And try not to vomit again, please." Caitlin made a face, though her hair still obscured a full view of her expression. Her hands gripped tightly at her blanket, which now seemed more an idle preoccupation than an attempt to cover herself. "Caitlin," Maureen began again. "Either you take off the blanket, or I take it off of you."

Caitlin frowned, sighed, and abruptly dropped her blanket. Maureen, unprepared, barely concealed a gasp at the sight.

At first, Caitlin appeared to be all limbs, legs, and digits, each twitching and fidgeting as Caitlin fought the urge to stretch. Caitlin's body hadn't simply increased in size, but had changed shape, lengthened, to the point that, if not for the head perched atop the body, Maureen would never have remotely recognized her. In attempting to minimize the space taken up on the bed, Caitlin wrapped her limbs around her body, obscuring a full view. Caitlin had detected Maureen's reaction and had begun tearing up again. "I didn't ask you here to gawk at me like a freak."

"Then act like a normal person," Maureen shot back, rolling her eyes. "Relax and quit acting like a caged animal."

Slowly, Caitlin unfolded herself, first allowing her legs to extend from underneath her expansive skirt. She moved slowly and carefully, as if she were seated on a layer of broken glass. Maureen monitored her own breathing, using all her strength to appear unfazed at the sight before her. As Caitlin extended her legs over the edge of the bed, she felt with her toes for the floor, though despite her efforts, her feet met the floor with another audible thump. Hesitating only briefly, she relaxed her arms, revealing an oversized t-shirt which visibly clung to her chest, exposing the outline of her breasts overflowing the confines of her bra.

"Stand up, Caitlin," Maureen requested, as Caitlin seemed content with a seated position.

Caitlin shut her eyes again, took a breath, opened her eyes, and lifted herself to her feet. Caitlin winced at a slight creaking in the floorboards, which probably had always been there, but never really affected her until now. Maureen seemed to shrink in front of her as she rose, higher and higher, feeling like she were on the ascending end of a ferris wheel. As she reached her full, standing height, Caitlin noticed that her view of Maureen, now slightly over a foot shorter than her, was partially obscured by her expansive chest which jutted prominently before her. Again, the two girls let the silence hang between them. Caitlin still avoided making eye contact with Maureen, while Maureen remained captivated by the sight of her friend before her. She did some quick mental calculations, noting that while Caitlin wasn't in danger of crashing through the ceiling, she might have to look out for doorframes. "How tall are you now?" Maureen asked, her wonder clearly evident.

"I was about 5'9" this morning, before my fight with Nicole," Caitlin stated, emotionless. She could barely comprehend what she was saying. "I was around six foot when I left school. Now..." She made an exacerbad gesture at her body with her hands. "Your guess is as good as mine."

Recalling rumors of Caitlin's altercation with Nicole, Maureen chuckled softly. "You're just full of surprises today. Any idea what's causing it?"

"Literary metaphor, apparently."

Maureen mulled this one over briefly, before letting her eyes fall upon Caitlin's chest. "You certainly personify character *development*."

"Har har."

"Life making you feel small?"

"Shut up."

"So why didn't you tell me?"

Caitlin didn't answer.

"Did you think I wouldn't understand? Well, I don't, but I can't imagine anyone else does either. Did you think I would report you the X-Files? Why, all of a sudden, could you not tell me anything?"

Uncomfortable with their orientation, Caitlin sat down on the bed to speak to Maureen on the same level. "I'm sorry Maureen," She said softly before continuing. "You've been the best at everything as long as I've known you. You've always had better grades, you always dressed better than me, you've always been a better athlete, and you've always been better looking than me."

"Caitlin..."

"No," Caitlin cut her off. "Don't try to cheer me up, because I don't need it. I don't have a problem hanging in your shadow. I never have. I've also, for obvious reasons, never compared myself to Alex. Shit, the girl's like a cartoon character. Anyways, as long as I remember, I've always had you there to see what I'll never be, and I've always liked it that way. I didn't want to be taller than you, I didn't want to have bigger boobs than you, and I don't want to draw attention away from you. I need you to...well...be the bigger person I guess. In all ways."

Maureen waited a bit before asking, "Who are you?"

"What?"

"Who are you?"

"What is this? Some kind of Alice and Wonderland caterpillar thing?"

"Who are you?"

"What do you mean?"

"I want you to tell me who you are."

"I'm your best friend."

Maureen shook her head. "Uh uh. Try again. Leave me out of this. Who are *you*?"

Caitlin looked up to reply, but nothing came.

"Caitlin. I'm not going to flatter you by giving you the 'you're special in your own unique and beautiful way' talk. We're too good of friends to for that kind of shallow bullshit. You're a disaster. You are neurotic, bitchy, and, on some days, just plain bat shit crazy. And you know what? I love you for it. You've got more bitch in you than the cheer team and the tennis team combined. You've got personality, and yet you go to such incredible lengths to squelch that.

Don't compare my grades to yours because we both know you hate academics. Don't compare our fashion, because I know you hate how I dress. Don't compare us athletically, because you're only half-assing it to put it on your college application. Finally, don't compare our looks, because you were prettier than me before and you're definitely hotter now. Your problem is you just put so much effort into making yourself invisible that your body is fighting back."

Caitlin rubbed her fingers at her temples. "So you buy that symbolism thing too?"

"Seems like the obvious answer. Unless you've been bombarded with radiation, volunteered for crazy medical testing, or eaten magic mushrooms that's the best solution I can come up with."

"So how long will I grow?"

"Honestly, I have no idea," Maureen shrugged. "I figure, you'll grow until you become who you're supposed to be."

"So why doesn't anyone seem to notice?"

"To put it bluntly, because there was nothing to notice. You've spent the last few years stunting your own individuality. As long as you did that, it wouldn't matter if you were bright green, you were still going to be the same, shallow, bitchy person you've always been. Anyways, who, besides Alex and I, hangs out with you enough to really notice anyways?"

As always, Maureen's fearless honesty put Caitlin at ease. She looked, yet again, at the wreckage of her room and the expanse of her body. "I guess I really am growing into myself."

"Indeed," Maureen affirmed. "So, that aside. Who is it?"

"Who is who?"

"Don't play stupid with me. We're done with that. Yeah, yeah, growth spurts, blah blah blah, whatever. You've been having those for weeks now and, all in all, it really hasn't fazed you much. Vomiting, breaking things, violent sobbing, I know you Caitlin Rachel Landry. You've got a crush."

Caitlin bit her lip in anticipation of the impending grief she was about to get from her friend.

"Seriously Landry. Spit it out. Who is he?"

Caitlin took a breath before muttering almost inaudibly. "She."

Maureen's eyes went wide as saucers before re-composing herself. "She? My my Caitlin. You *are* full of surprises."

Chapter 14

For the first time in weeks, Caitlin peacefully drifted back into waking life, which was odd, considering she'd slept for four hours at the most. For various reasons, she had been having trouble sleeping, and waking up without a sudden start felt wonderful. Feeling fresh and rested, she rolled over to see Maureen still sawing logs next to her. They had been up until nearly 2:00 am and had fallen asleep still talking to each other. There was a photo album on the floor, as well as a mess of textbooks and notebooks from some tutoring Maureen had offered. After a couple hours of heart-to-heart gushing and recollecting old times, Maureen had offered a few tips for the finals that Caitlin would be making up later today in detention.

"Thanks, nerdlet." Caitlin smiled, gazing at Maureen. She put her hand on her shoulder, receiving a gentle reminder of their height discrepancy. Her hand seemed massive against her friend's comparatively small shoulder, but Caitlin didn't draw back immediately. She was so grateful for Maureen's support, she was able to, at least for the moment, put aside her current situation and take in the fact that she had the greatest best friend anyone could ever hope for. As expected, Maureen offered some much-needed emotional support addition to a little academic tutoring. To Caitlin's surprise, outside of their initial greeting, Maureen had gone the remainder of the evening neither mentioning Caitlin's unusual growth nor alluding to it. It was almost as if she'd forgotten about it completely. Caitlin, however, knew her friend and had a sneaky suspicion that Maureen had been holding out on fully expressing her thoughts and feelings regarding Caitlin's predicament.

It was still a bit early to get up, so Caitlin decided to let her friend sleep. Learning from her past mistakes, she slowly lowered her feet to the floor, letting her toes, then heels, gently touch to the carpet. Next to her feet on the ground were her old bunny slippers. Caitlin smiled, and whimsically slipped her toes of one of her feet into the slipper as far as they would go. While she was able to cover her toes, the heel of the slipper barely reached the ball of her foot. She stepped on the heel with her other foot and gave a bit of a push, but the sounds of protesting fabric stopped her suddenly. Was she that strong, or were her shoes that old? She shoved the question aside, along with her slippers and scanned her floor for something she could wear. She had picked up a pair of larger sandals at the outlet store the previous day, and they would probably still fit adequately, but if she wanted to ever dress with any semblance of style again, she'd need more than bargain-bin sandals.

Caitlin lifted herself off of the bed, taking her time both to avoid waking her friend, and to avoid vertigo or any other shock to the system. When she reached her feet she did a quick mental diagnosis and determined that she was the same height as she was when she went to bed, as far as she could tell at least. Her t-shirt still clung to her chest in the same manner as it had last night. Looking down, she smirked at her boobs as they jiggled and shifted beneath her as she padded softly toward bathroom. The floorboards creaked loudly in the hall, but she knew that her father had left early and her mother wouldn't be up for another hour. She slipped into the bathroom and hesitated. In the low light, her large silhouette combined with her unkempt bed-head seemed frighteningly imposing in the full-length bathroom mirror. After a moment she clicked on the light. Caitlin blinked. Rubbed her eyes, and blinked a few more times.

"Hello, me," She said aloud to the mirror.

Standing far enough back in the bathroom, she could see her whole self. Taking up so much more space in the bathroom than she was accustomed to only seemed to exaggerate her size. Her body was not simply a bigger version of what it had been. She had become someone else entirely. She nearly fell into a trance staring at the hypnotic contours of her legs, flowing from her ankles upward in a series of dips and curves that nearly left her breathless. She pulled her fingers gently across her thigh, around her hip and abdomen where her fingers dipped at the cinch of her waist. There, she met the hem of her t-shirt, which hung loosely under fullness of her jutting bosom.

The roundness and fullness of each intrigued her. From hanging around Alexis all these years, she had grown accustomed to hearing the word "jugs." The word always seemed fitting enough, since Alexis' breasts, particularly in relative proportion to the rest of her (or anyone else for that matter), were almost comically large. Now, however, Caitlin looked at the defined creases in her t-shirt, framed by the outer bulges of her breasts and knew that no one, not even Alex, could compare to her now. With a stoic reverence, Caitlin slowly pulled her t-shirt up and over her head, and simply took in the sight. Even on her 6'5" body, her breasts poured out from her torso into two round, full—there really was no other appropriate word—jugs.

As Caitlin reached up for a more tactile exploration of herself, her thoughts drifted away to images of Ivey. *Ivelene*. The small, spry girl who, despite being over a foot shorter than Caitlin, managed to be taking up a world of space in Caitlin's head. Caitlin ran her long fingers across her breast, pressing her fingers into the soft, pliant, new flesh, and thought of how Ivey seemed to just disarm her. Caitlin always prided herself on being in control, but Ivey always seemed to cut through to her core. The way Ivey seemed to just know how to weave past all the bullshit Caitlin was used to hiding behind ironically made Caitlin feel safe. She was vigorously massaging her breast now, running the flesh through her fingers and letting her knuckles pinch the nipple at the end. A soft and sudden moan escaped her lips as Caitlin had simultaneously and unconsciously let her other hand slide up the inside of her thigh, and then further. In the mirror, Caitlin envisioned Ivey gazing back at her, watching, controlling Caitlin's body. It was as if she were surrendering her body to her thoughts, to her desires, to *her*.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Caitlin took in a huge gulp of air, and a piercing yelp escaped her lips. She was sweating.

And topless.

And a little wet.

"I hope you're done with whatever adventure you're having with yourself in there, because I've got to shower." Maureen shouted through the door. The handle jiggled, and Caitlin was still gathering herself when the door suddenly opened behind her. "I've known you for twelve years; it's not like your packing anything I haven't..." Caitlin turned around just as Maureen pulled open the door to come face to face with a well toned arm cradling an explosion of cleavage that

could seemingly swallow her head whole. Maureen trailed off as her breathing went shallow and her eyes shot wide, not knowing what to look at or not look at first.

“Jesus,” Maureen breathlessly stammered. “I didn’t...you...you’re...big. Really big.” Her eyes darted about Caitlin’s frame as if someone had presented her with a five-course meal for lunch. Caitlin waited patiently, both concerned and entertained at her friend’s uncharacteristic speechlessness. “I...I...wow,” Maureen stammered, disarmed and castrated (metaphorically, of course). Abandoning her initial intention, Maureen tossed her towel and toiletries to the ground and turned for the stairs. She spoke slowly and carefully. “I’m going to go make coffee. You take a shower, if you can fit in it, put some clothes on, if you can fit in any, and give me about a half hour to regain my shit.”

Caitlin waited a few moments, listening to her friend make her way down the stairs, stumbling over a few on the way down. She stretched her hands in the air, pressing her palms against the ceiling, and tapping her fingernail against the overhead light which chimed with a resonant tone. Rising up onto her toes, she craned her head up, and peeked over the shower curtain at the faucet that would likely spray her at chest level.

“I think I’ll take my time.”

Chapter 15

The only sounds audible in the kitchen were the percolating coffee pot and the faint sounds of the shower upstairs. Maureen found herself sitting quietly, taking in the sounds around her as she used every ounce of strength and resolve she had to keep from cracking under the ludicrous improbability of what was going on. Caitlin Landry, her best friend since the second grade, had grown from a slight 5'4" to an imposing 6'5" in less than a month. What was happening defied all logic, physiology, and reason, and Maureen felt as if she alone were carrying this burden of this acceptance. Keeping a cool demeanor during the previous night's therapy session and the morning's shock of seeing a nearly-nude oversized version of her friend had pushed her to the brink of crumbling.

The gurgling of the coffee maker settled into a halt, and Maureen, with a slightly trembling hand, poured herself a small mug of coffee. Replacing the coffee pot, she set the table and took a moment to center herself. *Don't think about it too hard. Sure, none of it makes sense. Sure, I could turn my best friend in for government testing. Sure, I could commit myself to an institution. But none of that matters. What matters is that you are always there for your best friend. No matter how crazy...*

A sudden dull crashing resonated through the house, causing Maureen to spill her coffee. She cursed softly before stomping up the stairs toward Caitlin's room. Caitlin's mother, disheveled but curious about the racket, peeked out of her door.

"Don't worry Ms. Landry," Maureen urged, striding quickly past. "I'm sure Caitlin's fine. Go back to bed." Ms. Landry responded by nodding softly through squinted eyes and retreating back

to bed. Maureen stopped before entering the room, pressing her hands to her face, taking another breath, and entering to the sight of the two sliding closet doors dislodged from their hinges and laying about the room. Such a display of strength, while hardly inhuman, certainly exceeded the normal bounds of a typical, run-of-the-mill, Caitlin Landry tantrum.

"This is insane!" Caitlin fumed, strewing clothes about. "I just bought half a wardrobe just two days ago and I've pretty much outgrown all of it!"

"Cool it," the always rational and cool-headed Maureen commanded, approaching the piles of clothing. "My mom asked me a while back why today's fashion makes guys look like they just shrunk six inches and girls look like they just grew six inches. You were around six foot when you bought all this, right? We'll simply put that fashion theory to the test." Maureen sifted through some clothes and started making stacks on the bed. "I've already got a couple of ideas."

With Maureen's help, Caitlin managed to assemble an ensemble that made her look reasonably normal, albeit obviously quite tall. A pair of long jeans that stopped a few inches above her ankles resembled a pair of Capri's, and a dark stretch tee underneath a semi-sheer white blouse looked reasonably fashionable, complete with the distraction of some modest cleavage and three buttons fastened underneath a formidable expanse of bosom that she had no hope of being able to hide. She showed a bit more midriff than she preferred, but given her undersized wardrobe, something would have to give (and she hoped it wouldn't be a seam).

The true dilemma came in the form of footwear. Caitlin's size 11½'s proved to be an insurmountable obstacle for a collection of shoes sized 10 at the largest. After sorting through the large pile of shoeboxes from her weekend shopping trip with Alexis, she was left with only two options: a pair of \$1 bin shower sandals an inch too short, or a pair of size 12 shiny 3" heeled black boots Alexis had drummed up at a novelty store, clearly intended for a transvestite. She looked at Maureen who reflected indecision right back at her. "Take your pick: tacky or towering."

Caitlin smirked "No contest." Just as she reached for the sandals, however, a crash of lightning exploded outside, and a heavy storm unleashed its fury on the suburban landscape. There was a brief pause before Caitlin kicked the sandals aside and snatched up the boots. "Someone out there is testing me today," she said, making her way toward the staircase.

Tell me about it, Maureen mused, following her friend out the door and into the downpour that ushered in the second day of finals week.

The two girls said little to each other on their drive to campus, opting to settle for the ambient sound of windshield wipers working overtime in a torrential downpour. Maureen offered a ride, and Caitlin had gladly taken her up on it, only to find herself uncomfortably cramped into Maureen's small Dodge Neon. Even after letting the seat back, her knees pressed into the underside of the dash. Maureen wasn't sure what to say to ease Caitlin's obvious discomfort, so she kept quiet, opting to not inadvertently make things worse.

Caitlin's confidence and vigor that she had awakened with seemed to be slowly deflating out of her like an old bicycle tire. Despite Maureen's urging, she couldn't help but feel grossly oversized in her clothes, and despite efforts to conceal it, Maureen had visibly cringed at the sight of Caitlin's stature, the heels nudging her up to a staggering 6'8". Compounding things, in the couple minutes it took her to negotiate her way into the passenger seat, the rain had nearly soaked her to the skin. The sunny Spring weather of the previous week caused her to underestimate her need for outerwear, and the only rainy-day articles she owned were pitifully undersized.

Maureen dropped Caitlin off at the front door of the main classroom building. Still unsure of what to say, Maureen managed to muster a "good luck" before speeding away toward the parking lot. Standing under the awning outside the hallways, Caitlin couldn't help but notice how different everything around her seemed. She knew that the longer she waited, the more likely she would be to psych herself into some kind of panic attack. In full fight-or-flight mode, Caitlin yanked open the double doors, and bounded into the hallway, head held high.

BANG!

A sharp and sudden pain to her forehead left her gasping for breath and seeing stars. The pain was followed by a metallic crashing sound immediately in front of her. She reached out for the door frame, her eyes squinted shut in pain as she desperately tried to gather her bearings. Her head throbbed and she hunched over, soft curses seeping out through clenched teeth. She had only been waiting for a few moments when the sound of murmurs and whispers saturated the air around her.

Caitlin snapped out of her reverie to see the shocked look of a small group of students standing just inside of the door. There were two girls and a boy, all looking up at Caitlin boggle-eyed. Hunching over, Caitlin was still significantly taller than any of them, the tallest of them being 5'6" at the most. As she looked up and made eye contact with the boy, whom she recognized as a freshman, he gasped and backed up, as if she were some kind of mutant. One of the girls gave him an accusatory look and approached Caitlin, though with a slight hint of caution in her body language.

"You okay? You really smashed into that thing."

Caitlin was still dazed and clenching her forehead. "What thing?"

"The exit sign. They really should be more considerate of people your height."

The exit sign? Caitlin looked down at the wreckage of metal at her feet. Sure enough, there was the remains of what had obviously once been an exit sign scattered about in front of her. She turned up to see some hanging wires serving as the sole evidence that there had been anything there at all. The girl asked to see Caitlin's head to check for injury. Sure enough there was a substantial cut at her hairline.

"You may want to get that checked out. You got nailed pretty hard."

Caitlin was only half listening, the whole ordeal was drawing a small audience and their loud whispers were burning at her ears. She tried to zone out the voices and remember where she was headed. She knew she had a final exam soon, but all she could focus on were the voices around her, crystal clear in her ears.

"Jeez. That's a big girl. Who is she?"

"I'm glad I wasn't in her way. I could have been killed!"

"I bet she could have burst through the door if she wanted to."

"What is she? Like, seven feet tall?"

"You sure that's a girl? Looks more like a dude in drag."

"Looks like a transfer student from the circus."

Still clutching her head, Caitlin rose up, doing her best to ignore the resounding gasp around her as she straightened to her full height, and headed toward the main hallway which would take her to her first final. After seeing what had befallen the exit sign, students parted like the Red Sea around her, giving her more than enough room to pass by. It was little consolation to Caitlin, as she felt a small knot forming just above her hairline and tears welling behind her eyes. She silently prayed that this wasn't a harbinger for the rest of the day.

She was wrong.

Her German final was a disaster. She both struggled with the answers as well as with the discomfort of the undersized chair-desk which left inadequate room for her lengthened legs. Making matters worse were the stares she endured from her peers, male and female, who seemingly couldn't pry their eyes away from her. Whether in envy, wonder, lust, or just plain curiosity, students seemed so entranced by her that even when she made eye contact, many would continue gaping at her, as if they were hypnotized. Caitlin's wandering eyes caught the attention of the instructor, who promptly approached Caitlin and snatched up her exam, accusing her of both causing a disruption and cheating. Her attempts to explain herself were in vain, and she was asked to leave the classroom. Caitlin tried to get up promptly, but her larger body complicated the maneuver and sent the desk noisily crashing to the ground.

Following a lunch period spent huddled alone behind the library, the stares continued to plague her in her American History final. Growing frustrated by the days' events, Caitlin caught a particularly slimy guy unabashedly ogling the profile view of her substantial bust. Following a futile attempt to fasten her blouse that only seemed to excite and encourage him, she cleared her throat, hoping to inform him that she was aware of his visual trespassing. After multiple attempts at the same tactic, Caitlin opted to abandon subtlety.

"Quit staring at my tits," she said aloud, breaking the silence of the room.

"Excuse me." Mrs. Gold spoke up. "Is there a reason we need to hear your voice during the final exam?"

Caitlin held her ground. "Yes, there is. This scumbag is groping me with his eyes."

"I find your language inappropriate, and if you will not be quiet, young lady, I will have to ask you to leave this classroom."

Caitlin was flabbergasted. "Excuse me!" she yelled. "I have had a really shitty day already and I would just like to do my final without this sick fucker staring while I'm trying to work."

"Ma'am, consider yourself dismissed from this class."

Caitlin stood up, inadvertently tipping over yet another desk, and drawing the attention of the entire class. Mrs. Gold, an elderly woman on the verge of retirement, attempted to maintain control, despite being slightly intimidated by the furious, extraordinarily tall girl disrupting her class. This time, Caitlin seasoned her exit with an emphatic middle-finger to both her ogler and her instructor. "Consider that," she replied, storming out. The ogler, embarrassed, did his best to return to the exam while the Mrs. Gold reached for her stack of discipline report slips. She got no further than writing the date before she looked up at the class. For the life of her, she couldn't recall having seen that girl, or any girl that tall, ever before in her life.

"Class, can anyone give me the name of that girl?"

To everyone's equal surprise, no one could.

Chapter 16

The moment Caitlin emerged from the classroom, she knew what she needed. It was sick that this was becoming such a routine, but there was no use crying about it now. After tipping her second desk for the day, she had actually contemplated making an even bigger scene and screaming some more, possibly even throwing the desk. Regardless, the deed was done. She had let them get to her, and now she'd suffer the consequences.

She needed food now. Critically.

It was surreal for Caitlin. She had walked these halls for three years, thinking all the silly, superficial thoughts of any girl her age. Now, she imagined how she looked, a hulking, ravenous monster, only thinking of her hunger and how she could satisfy it. Sure, she relented, she was being a bit melodramatic, but when you've grown over a foot in less than a month and were craving food like you never have before in your life, it was easy to let the drama of the moment get away from you.

Her mind raced with possibilities. She considered a vending machine, but she knew she didn't have enough cash for the amount of food she was craving. She would likely end up attacking it

and tipping the damn thing onto herself. *I'm stronger than I was, but not strong enough to avoid being crushed by a vending machine.* A few unlocked lockers seemed appealing targets, but the few she checked were either empty or contained merely a few books or school supplies. Caitlin winced slightly as the moaning of her stomach indicated that within minutes her hunger pangs would likely reach a painful level.

Suddenly, an idea hit her like a divine ray of light. A girl on work-study (bless these private schools) had informed her that many of the student workers save food to take home in the cafeteria fridges and ovens. In a swift, hunger-driven raid, she burst into a mad dash toward the lunchroom. In the back of her head, she knew she was taking a chance running in the hallway, but she figured that her chances of being stopped by faculty while class was in session were slim.

As if on cue, Mr. Dallas, the most anal math teacher in his particular school district (he'd actually won the title at a regional education seminar), stepped out of his classroom to investigate the disruptive sound of running footsteps. A solid, relatively tall man of 6'1", he stepped into the hallway, in front of the offender, whom, judging purely from the volume of the sound, he'd initially assessed as belonging to a male athlete. When the sight of an altitudinous young girl appeared, he flashed a brief look of wonder, before firmly resolving to hold his ground. Freak of nature or not, running, let alone sprinting, through the halls was highly inappropriate.

The sight of Mr. Dallas had been on her short list of worst-case scenario possibilities, and after whimsically entertaining the option of barreling over him, she relented and screeched to a halt right in front of him. Mr. Dallas was an upper-division math instructor, whom she seen only in passing. Like many other faculty, Mr. Dallas had always given her grief over her attitude and wardrobe, which annoyed her more since she was not a student of his. This particular showdown had an entirely different flavor, as Caitlin glared down at him. A man who had always seemed intimidating, Mr. Dallas seemed slightly less imposing when, in their close quarters, his eyes were about level with her mouth. Unflinching, Mr. Dallas sized up the student in front of him.

"I must ask what could be so important for you to justify your sprinting through school the hallways."

Caitlin didn't have time for an extended ordeal. "I'm really not feeling well," she opted, since wasn't exactly lying. She was starving and she becoming a bit afraid of what would happen to her if she didn't get food soon.

"Well you're feeling well enough to run apparently."

"Sir, I'm sorry. But I really need to go now."

"You are not excused. What is your name, I don't think I've seen you before."

"Sir. I *need* to go now." The cafeteria was just around the corner, and she wasn't sure if she could actually smell the food or if she was just hallucinating out of desperation.

"What is your name?"

“Sir, I...”

“Answer my question!”

An unexpected pang of hunger hit Caitlin like a ton of bricks, and something entirely unexpected happened. In her close quarters, a searing heat seemed to shoot through her limbs, causing her such pain that she gasped softly and clenched her teeth and fists. A massive dizzy spell washed over her, and she clutched her stomach with her arms. The episode lasted only a few seconds, and when she opened her eyes, she expected to see the angry, condescending eyes of Mr. Dallas. Instead, she saw the eyebrows of Mr. Dallas riding at near-hairline level. It didn't take her long to realize why. Where Mr. Dallas had previously been eye-level with her mouth, his eyes were now about level with her chin. Not only that, but her momentary vertigo had caused her to lurch forward slightly, bringing her substantial chest just under his chin, brushing slightly against it.

There was a brief pause before a pale and sweaty Caitlin staggered past him, unintentionally nudging him aside with her breast. Mr. Dallas said nothing, but silently logged the episode away, wondering if, or when, he would run into that particular student again. He did know that he couldn't wait to get home.

Have I got a story for the GTSworld message board, or what?

Caitlin was on the verge of passing out when she crashed through the doors into the cafeteria. Initially, she had been concerned that there would be staff still there, but those concerns had melted away as her need for food reached a critical level. Fortunately, the lunch periods were over and the staff was long gone. Caitlin headed for a large economy oven, overjoyed to find a few pizza boxes. Grabbing the first box she saw, she tore open the box and began stuffing slices of pizza into her mouth without resolve. It almost hurt to get the first bites down, and in under two minutes flat she had finished an entire large pizza. It meant nothing to her, however, as she reached for the next box and heartily dug in.

Hours seemed to go by, though in reality it had taken Caitlin under fifteen minutes to finish three and a half pizzas. She had slowed to a nibble when she finally became cognizant of her surroundings and reality began to set in. Empty boxes were all around her and she had pizza stains all over her clothes. Before she could fuss about those, the sound of a door opening caught her attention and lurched to her feet and headed for the back door, pizza box in tow.

Adjacent to the cafeteria, the art building was her best bet for avoiding anyone. It was nothing short of a miracle that she had been able to avoid anyone outside of Mr. Dallas, but she could hardly even remember the encounter. *Knowing me*, she thought, *I probably did something stupid*. The art finals had already passed, so Caitlin figured the art room would be a reasonable place to crash. The side door was propped open, and, after a quick scan of the room, Caitlin staggered in and collapsed onto one of the couches in the back of the room, tossing the pizza box onto the ground. Caitlin was still munching on another slice of pizza as she did her best to piece together her day.

Okay, I demolished an exit sign, freaked out half of my school, made two scenes in two different classes, flipped off my teacher, and now I've stolen a substantial amount of pizza from the cafeteria kitchen.

The events of the day seemed minor, however, in comparison to the physical discomfort of her current situation. The couch, a two-seater, clearly was not designed for a person of her stature and her legs hung over the edge up to mid-calf. Not only that, but her clothes, already ill-fitting, now noticeably clung to her body more so than merely an hour ago. Caitlin rubbed her distended belly, which clearly bore evidence of the nearly four pizzas she had put away.

“Jeez,” she muttered aloud, unbuttoning her pants and allowing herself some breathing room. After a moment, she decided to unbutton her blouse, which looked silly with now both her midsection stressing the remaining buttons already at high tension due to her overflowing breasts. While she could justify the tension of her shirt, she could feel that her pants were tighter than they had been all morning. Caitlin was puzzled, before she recalled her brief encounter with Mr. Dallas. She did some quick estimates in her head, figuring she had sprouted a couple inches then, and that was before...

Oh shit.

In response to her realization, her body launched into overdrive, and she could almost feel her metabolism kicking into high gear. Her first growth spurts had made her extremely tired, but the last few had, if anything, almost energized her. She could feel her body preparing for its metamorphosis, and for the first time it had Caitlin's full attention. All of her senses seemed to be operating at an extremely high level, and she could almost feel every inch of cloth on her body slowly begin to shift and slide across her skin. As she took in breaths, her substantial chest would rise and fall, though it seemed with each breath her chest would fall less and rise more. All about her torso, and particularly around her exposed breasts and nipples, she could feel the fabric of her top stretching to accommodate the expansion of her body. She cooed softly, as she groped one of her breasts with her hand, her long fingers sinking into the soft mound, which even felt massive in her lengthened hands.

While preoccupied with the expansion of her upper half, Caitlin's legs had taken on an impressive growth of their own, gracefully stretching further out of the former cuff of her pants, which now nearly reached her knees. A seam along the side gave way slightly, and the tearing sound accompanied a slight feeling of relief around her thigh from the constricting pants. In near-ecstasy, Caitlin moaned aloud and turned about on the couch, relishing the feeling of the old, rough fabric against her body. The furniture seemed less like a couch and more like a large armchair, as she found herself almost unable to lie comfortably on the couch.

In spite of her posture, however, Caitlin felt oddly at peace as she relished the euphoria of her current state. She arched her back and extended her arms out in a full body stretch, to which seams all over her undersized wardrobe protested in response. Additionally, her stretch tee crept up to just under her bosom, exposing all of her midriff. Allowing one leg and arm to hang off the side of the couch, she let her long, dark locks drape into her face. and she gave a passing thought to the absence of her blonde roots, before settling into a soft doze.

Chapter 17

Caitlin wasn't positive exactly where the euphoria she fell asleep with had come from, and most importantly, where it had gone. All that she knew now was that she felt like utter shit. Her clothes constricted her at more places than she could count, her back ached from falling asleep in an awkward position, and her feet had gone completely numb from being cramped into a pair of uncomfortable boots for far too long. She felt ill from what she recalled must have been six or seven pounds of cafeteria pizza, which was not sitting well. To top it all off, she was damned big.

Huge.

Gigantic.

The couch she was currently wearing felt like some kind of child's furniture, which groaned and creaked as she shifted about. She had no idea how tall she was at this point, but whatever size she was, this couch was not designed for it. She tried to do some math in her head, but the only figures she had to work with were "taller than six foot six," "not big enough to destroy my clothes," "too big for this couch," and "I can't feel my damned feet." She grunted, fighting with her undersized wardrobe, and tried to both sit up and stretch at the same time. Underestimating the size of the couch in relation to her body and caught off guard by the unmistakable sound of tearing fabric from seams around her shoulders, she tilted forward, pushing the couch back, bashing her elbow on a table, and making a general ruckus.

"Hey She-Hulk, keep it down, we're making art over here."

Had the voice belonged to anyone else, Caitlin would have panicked. Instead, she sighed. *Why does it have to be her?*

"Give the girl a break," a familiar male voice broke in. "Hey! You okay?"

And him? Caitlin didn't move, and only managed to mutter her response. "Uh...yeah."

From her seated position, Caitlin peeked over the couch. She did her best to ignore her dread of actually being tall enough to see over the couch while seated on the floor. Sure enough, Nicole Ryder and her boyfriend Tristan were busying themselves at a large canvas spread out on the ground. Tristan had paint on his hair, face, knees and feet, and Nicole was generally covered in paint and naked from the waist down with her foot in a bucket of paint. Neither seemed particularly distraught at their appearance or at Caitlin's hyper-grown state. Nicole rolled her eyes at Caitlin's misfortune and returned to her canvas.

"...so anyways, I'm thinking I can call this corner 'persuasion' and the opposite corner 'shallowness.'"

"I thought that corner was 'elephant.'"

"No! That corner is 'shallowness' and that blob right there is 'elephant.'"

“I’m confused.”

“I’ll make it more clear. Pass me the yellow paint.”

“I’m going to check on Caitlin.”

“Pass the yellow paint!”

“Your foot is in it.”

Nicole giggled uncharacteristically before dropping to her knees and pressing her face to the canvas. Tristan shook his head and, smiling headed over to Caitlin. Caitlin was not sure what to make of this development and could not figure out what to do with herself as he approached. She imagined she would officially be “villagers-chasing-with-torches” sized if she could look him in the eyes while seated. That seemed reasonable, but as he closed the distance, she couldn’t help but fight the fact that Tristan was around six feet tall and he looked so short. *Then again, she thought, he’s probably closer to six foot than I am. I’m probably closer to...*

“Nicole told me you’d been growing. I thought it was a metaphor or something.”

“It is, just not hers.”

“Hm. Do you need help?”

Caitlin paused to turn over the question in her head. She was seated on the floor in undersized, skintight and/or shredded clothing, tall enough to break her nose on doorframes, and had probably failed at least three of her finals. “Sure. What would you like to tackle first?”

Tristan scanned her up and down, clearly pausing at the outline of an undersized bra clearly visible through her t-shirt and bursting through the blouse. The girl in front of him was truly a disaster, and that said a lot considering the drug-induced mania his own girlfriend was in. He eventually set his sights on a pair of black boots so tight that the pleather had taken on the shape of her toes. “You might need a knife to get out of those boots.”

“Oh yeah. I forgot about that. My feet are numb.”

“Yeah.”

Tristan produced a craft knife and set to carefully slicing through the boots. The dull knife slowed his progress, so he would have to take his time. He made small talk. “So, I know someone who’s been asking about you.”

Caitlin played stupid. “I can’t imagine who you’d be talking about.”

“I’ll give you a hint; she has a lot of tattoos and is barely as tall as your bellybutton.”

“Nicole?”

Tristan laughed softly. “No, no. That one’s mine.”

Caitlin peered over at Nicole again, who was rolling about in ecstasy on her canvas. “She’s quite a catch.”

“In her defense, she’s high as a kite right now.”

“Quite a catch indeed.”

Tristan smiled again, and shook his dark hair out of his face as he cautiously separated the soles of Caitlin’s boot. After a short while, the pressure Caitlin’s foot had been putting on the material aided the process and her toes blossomed out of the tip of the boot. The rush of blood circulating properly through her feet made them tingle and she smiled softly. Caitlin offered to finish job herself and, gripping the tip, tore away the rest of the sole until her foot comfortably extended nearly three inches longer than the shoe itself. Tristan paused briefly, speechless, before setting to work on the left foot.

“I may need to special order from now on.” Caitlin remarked to break the awkward silence.

“That won’t do you much good now.” He said. “I’ve got some size 13 sneakers you can use.”

Caitlin grimaced at the idea, but a quick glance at her lengthy feet suggested that she should probably take him up on the offer. Tristan finished up the job on Caitlin’s other boot and with both feet free and the boots utterly destroyed, Tristan got up to return to his girlfriend who was laying motionless face-down on her canvas. He ran his fingers through Nicole’s paint-stained hair. Nicole cooed and rolled over. Caitlin had never seen Nicole so genuinely happy, and watching the moment made Caitlin feel suddenly lonely.

“Call Ivey.” Tristan spoke up.

Caitlin was caught off guard. “I don’t have her number.”

“Then go see her.”

“I don’t kn...”

“Today. Until 7:00. I can’t imagine you’ve got much going on.”

Desperate for an escape, Caitlin gestured at her feet. “I’m not really dressed for success right now.”

In response, Tristan kicked off his shoes at Caitlin and tossed an oversized art smock at her.

“What about pants?”

“For fuck’s sake!” Nicole’s voice chimed in. “Tristan, give that whiny bitch your pants and belt. Caitlin, you have a really annoying habit of ruining my buzz.”

“I thought you were incoherent.”

“I thought you were resourceful. Hey look! We’re both wrong!”

“You want me to change in front of your boyfriend?”

“We’re going to have sex in here when you leave, or sooner if you don’t get to stripping.”

Caitlin pondered briefly how exactly that was an answer to her question before shrugging and removing her undersized clothing. She realized that the t-shirt wouldn’t be coming off unless she cut herself out of it as it gripped her body with gusto and left little to the imagination. While her t-shirt was elastic enough to wear like a mini-tee (which it wasn’t...originally), the bra would have to go. She unclasped the bra and maneuvered it with some difficulty out from underneath her second-skin t-shirt. Her breasts seemed to be held in place well enough, though the shirt was stretched to the point of transparency. Caitlin caught a glimpse of Tristan giving her a brief once over while removing his pants, and he nodded in playful approval at her as he handed them over. She rolled her eyes and peeled the remnants of her jeans off. She shimmied into Tristan’s cargo pants, which barely reached her calves and hugged her hips snugly. She grudgingly slipped on the art smock, groaning when the sleeves ended at her elbows and the top two buttons puckered around her generous bust.

“Well, here goes nothing.” Caitlin said, fastening the belt around her waist. She was facing away from Tristan and Nicole as she made the final adjustments to her wardrobe. She stood to her feet, and felt almost light-headed instantly. Her earlier growth spurts had left her feeling a bit off-kilter at most. Her height at present was absolutely dizzying. The room, the easels, the desks, everything was so...*small*. Even the high ceiling in the art room looked almost reachable. She couldn’t bring herself to even say the numbers to herself, but she had a feeling she had reached an elite numerical group as far as her height was concerned.

“This is insane.” Caitlin mused aloud. She was about to turn around when audible moaning from behind her stopped her short of that. She could make out sounds of paint splattering as Nicole and Tristan went to town on their most recent art collaboration—apparently still in progress.

“Never mind. *That* is insane.”

• * * * *

The doorway to Bean Town was smaller than Caitlin remembered. Then again, the last time she’d been there, she was a foot shorter. She had taken the bus downtown, realizing that she hadn’t yet grasped the novelty of being an exceptionally tall girl. The bus driver, a stout man in his fifties, had looked at her as if she had nine heads when she boarded the bus. Of course, barely fitting through the door certainly didn’t help that. The rest of the passengers were fairly civil, though a few couldn’t help but gawk at her. While the attention wasn’t exactly welcome, Caitlin

couldn't really blame them. Girls in their teens are rarely taller than six feet tall, let alone close to seven. She glanced about, hoping to see at least one person near her height, but found no one remotely close. Fortunately, the ride was uneventful and the bus dropped her at a transit station near Bean Town.

Caitlin ducked to avoid both the doorframe and the eye-level bell, which announced her arrival in the mostly empty café. She had only had to do it a few times, but the ducking already had begun to feel routine. Ivey darted about behind the espresso machine, just as she had when Caitlin had first seen her. Again, the shop was fairly deserted at 2:00 in the afternoon. A few patrons looked up at Caitlin, although this time they made little effort to hide their wonder at her towering height. When she made eye contact with them, they looked down, though she could feel the glances at her when she looked away. "What are they feeding these kids?" an older woman muttered, reading a book in the far corner. Caitlin glared, but the woman didn't meet her eyes. Not realizing that she'd paused in the middle of the room, Ivey acknowledged her.

"Long time no see sweetie. What's new?" Ivy propped her small frame onto the counter, cocking her head slightly as she studied Caitlin expectantly. "You're different." She said with half a smile. Caitlin blushed and hid behind her bangs which fell into her face. She was realizing that bashful gestures, or anything "cute" really didn't work when you're nearly as tall as the ceiling. She straightened up.

"I don't know what you mean."

"Tristan and Nicole told me you've been having a rough time lately."

"To put it lightly."

"Nicole said you were having some formative experiences."

"It's been crazy."

"Tristan said you've been growing..."

"...?"

"...into yourself."

Caitlin choked on her words, as Ivey's words resonated in her head. "I've...changed some in the past few weeks."

"I told you you were ready for a change." Caitlin felt flush, as if the eyes of the world were on her. The two patrons near the front had risen to leave and Ivey waved a cheerful goodbye at them. The elderly woman in the back had set her book down and headed to the bathroom. Caitlin hadn't realized how empty the shop was, and she was unsure of how exactly that made her feel.

“Come over here” Ivey grinned. Rich green eye shadow framed her eyes and Caitlin gravitated closer to the counter, standing a few steps away. “Closer.” Caitlin’s waist touched the counter, which seemed unreasonably low to her. With the woman in the bathroom, they were alone in the expansive café. Avant-garde jazz played in the stereo system, which seemed to only amplify Caitlin’s unease. Ivey still smiled, gazing up at Caitlin.

“I want to tell you something sweetie, but you’ll have to come closer.” Caitlin felt her body lower itself down, far down, to the counter where Ivey seemed to wait for her. It was as if she were watching everything happen, but not participating. Ivey smoothly and nimbly reached over the counter and slid her small fingers up the back of Caitlin’s neck and pulled her in, firmly planting their lips together. Caitlin whimpered slightly, caught off guard both by Ivey’s surprising strength and the feel of Ivey’s hand against the back of her neck, which sent chills down her back. Ivey shifted, inhaling deeply and exhaling a soft moan as Caitlin began to relax. Caitlin touched Ivey’s hand as they lingered for another moment and Ivey parted their lips.

“My, my, you are indeed something special, Caitlin Landry,” she said between them. Ivey kissed Caitlin a second time before casually but concisely breaking the moment. Ivey turned to answer the phone that Caitlin hadn’t even realized was ringing until then. She was hunched over the counter and moist with perspiration. Ivey chatted on the phone, but Caitlin didn’t hear a word that she was saying. She stared, dazed, before being snapped out of it by the loud squeaking of the bathroom door.

“Thanks Tristan, I’ll see you in ten.”

Caitlin looked at Ivey, who winked back at her. Ivey silenced the phone with a beep. “Nicole got off early, and it looks like I will too.”

Too much information, Caitlin thought. “What’s going on?”

“Tristan’s picking up some pants and filling in for me today. I’m taking the rest of the day off.”

“For what?”

Ivey grinned again. “You.”

Chapter 18

Tristan returned after about ten minutes, covered in paint and wearing a shit-eating grin from ear to ear. Ivey hooted playfully and Tristan broke into a full smile. Caitlin couldn’t help but laugh as well. Tristan looked her way and nodded in Ivey’s direction, making Caitlin blush again. Having had people gazing at her all day like Lilliputians at Guillivera, it was comforting to have someone not look at her with lust, shock, wonder, or some combination of the three. Sure, part of it had to do with Tristan and Nicole having just fucked with reckless abandon, but Caitlin was grateful nonetheless.

With a quick yank Ivey pulled Caitlin to her feet and toward the door, waving her farewells to Tristan. Caitlin barely managed to duck in time to miss the doorjamb. "Hey!" she yelped. "What's the hurry?"

"We've got to get you some clothes," Ivey replied unabated, dragging Caitlin across the road. A car stopped for them and she could make out the fascinated eyes of its driver. Caitlin imagined she and Ivey they look like a scaled up version of a child pulling a full grown adult.

"Why are you rushing?" Caitlin protested. "It's barely 4:00 pm, nothing's closed yet."

"Name me one place in town we can find clothes that can fit you." Ivey replied. Caitlin didn't have to ponder that one very long. "Exactly." Ivey continued, "Now, if you hurry up I'll have you dressed for success in no time."

"You know of some super-secret WNBA big-tall-and-freakish superstore?"

"No, but I know where I can get you clothes." Ivey said, beeping her car unlocked. "Hurry up and get in."

Caitlin took one look at Ivey's yellow VW bug, and snorted. "Are you kidding me?"

"Shush. You aren't that humongous."

...but humongous nonetheless. Caitlin thought, crouching low and assessing the vehicle's interior. It was one of the newer VW models, and much roomier than she would have expected. Regardless, she had a hard time picturing herself wedging into it. "I am not going to fit in there," she said, waving her arm around the small interior.

Ivey rolled her eyes dramatically, in an expression that Caitlin felt made her look like as strange combination of Nicole and Maureen. "Get in," Ivey continued impatiently, "or I yank your giant self in here."

"Will you lay off the size comm..." Ivey abruptly grabbed Caitlin's arm and did exactly as she had warned, pulling Caitlin clumsily into the vehicle. With Ivey drawing in Caitlin's arm like a thick rope, Caitlin clumsily fell into the vehicle, landing face-first in Ivey's lap.

"We've got to keep meeting like this," Ivey smiled. Caitlin replied with muffled profanity. Ivey, undaunted, grabbed the waist band of Caitlin's jeans, tugging her both further into the vehicle and out the open driver's side door. Caitlin fussed, kicking her legs wildly, but her movements were restricted in the confined space, and her shoulder hit the horn drawing unwanted attention to their ordeal. Ivey calmly reached across Caitlin's back to the glove box to retrieve her sunglasses, but was unable to completely open it with Caitlin's hips in the way.

"Hey, could you move your ass? I can't open my glove box."

“Damn it!” Caitlin yelled, still writhing about from below. “What the hell is wrong with you?” Ignoring Caitlin’s protests, Ivey retrieved her sunglasses and started the car, with both doors open and Caitlin hanging out of each side. Caitlin finally relented and Ivey waited patiently as Caitlin grunted, groaned, and compacted herself into the passenger seat. Putting the seat all the way back, Her knees still reached the dash, but fortunately her head only grazed ceiling. All the while Ivey scanned radio stations, settling on a jazz station and humming along softly as she pulled into traffic.

“You ever listen to Miles Davis?”

“Are you going to apologize for assaulting me?” Caitlin huffed.

“This one’s ‘Blue in Green.’ I could listen to this song for hours.”

“My clothes fit bad enough as it is. Now I’ve got a wedgie from hell to go with it.” Caitlin fidgeted, trying her best to renegotiate space inside Tristan’s borrowed pants, which fit snugly around her hips. Fortunately, some borrowed undergarments from her older, stockier sister had alleviated her need for underwear. If things kept up at this pace, however, she soon be one of the more unusual cases to walk into a Lane Bryant. Ivey still hummed along to the instrumental solo. Caitlin was perplexed by Ivey's perpetually even temperament. "You aren't like normal people are you?"

Ivey laughed softly. “You’re a fine one to talk.”

"Touché." Caitlin changed the subject. “So, where are we going?”

“The Northshore Community College Theater Company.”

“Why there?”

“Clothing hun. We may go out tonight after dinner and, no offense, but I won’t be seen with you looking like you do.”

Caitlin twisted her mouth into a scowl before reassessing her wardrobe and resigning, “None taken.”

● * * * *

Only a few miles down the main road from the shopping center, Ivey pulled into the parking lot of the performance hall and escorted Caitlin inside. An old building that the NCC performing arts department had been built around, Caitlin groaned at the low lobby ceilings, which lied a few inches below her current height. Ivey squeezed Caitlin’s hand in consolation, but did not look back as she led Caitlin briskly to the backstage area at the rear of the building. The theater was mostly deserted, and while Caitlin could hear a few voices, she was thrilled not to encounter anyone as she crouched through the corridor backstage. After a few turns in the backstage labyrinth, Caitlin could make out light peeking under a pair of doors. She also clearly heard late-

90s teen pop blaring from inside, and an effeminate male voice singing at full volume. Caitlin felt an uneasy feeling in her gut as Ivey rapped on the metal double-door loudly. The singing only grew louder, and after a few moments Ivey knocked again. The voice behind the door continued its crescendo, and Caitlin, impatient from being cramped in yet another hallway, slammed on the door with her open palm, making a racket which thundered backstage.

“WHAAA-AAAAT?” the voice whined as the door shot open revealing a tanned, thin young man dressed in bright red form-fitting jeans and a white tank top. “Ivelene you know I don’t like to be interrupted mid-chor...” He gasped in shock upon noticing the single largest person he had ever seen. Blinking rapidly, he looked back and forth between the two girls, before finally pointing at Caitlin and asking, “Is this for me?” Ivey smiled and nodded. The flamboyant young man’s demeanor abruptly changed to one of uninhibited animation. He grabbed Caitlin by the arm and led her into a cavernous dressing room with clothes of all styles and sizes hanging from racks, draped over chairs, and piled in corners.

“I have to apologize, we’ve just wrapped our one-act festival and this place is an absolute sty.” He positioned Caitlin in the middle of the room and whipped out a measuring tape, stopping for a swift introduction. “Where are my manners?” he said suddenly, taking her hand. “I’m Frederick, and I’ll be your wardrobe, hair, and makeup this evening.” Frederick kissed her hand, and Caitlin recoiled as if she’d just been licked by a toad.

“Nice to, uh, meet you,” Caitlin said, searching for Ivey. Ivey had seated herself at the edge of the room and had extracted a magazine from underneath a pile of clothes. Caitlin frowned, and turned her attention back to Frederick. “You think you’re going to have my size?”

“We do a monthly Rocky Horror and a few drag shows. I get every size and shape you could imagine,” Frederick responded as he darted the measuring tape all about her frame faster than Caitlin could brush him away. He took a look at the tape pinched in his fingers and his eyes widened “And might I say you are certainly broadening my imagination. I’ve got what you need, but you’ll have to give me a minute to pull the stuffing out of it. Some of our gentlemen dressers like their curves, shall we say, generously pneumatic?”

Caitlin tried to imagine a man wearing the clothes, let alone the brassiere she knew she would need would need. “Geez, how big are the guys that come in here?”

“Well that’s a bit of a personal question, wouldn’t you say dear?” Frederick shrieked with laughter. “I’m just awful!!!” Caitlin was impatient and repeated her question.

“Oh, you’d be surprised. Let’s just say that a few of our basketball stars really enjoy playing in the men’s league,” he winked. “Of course, I’ve never had any men or women in here quite as big as you,” he said, following it up with a nudge on the side of her breast. “Definitely not.” Caitlin firmly swatted his hand away, and Frederick smiled.

“Mmmm. Don’t get snappy hon. I’ve got some XL foundation garments for those extraordinary leading ladies of yours.”

Caitlin groaned, and looked to Ivey again, who remained occupied by the magazine. Ivey was smiling, clearly following the conversation, but opting not to participate.

Frederick disappeared and reappeared in moments with an armful of bras that seemed absurdly large to Caitlin, until he handed a few to her. She chose the most fashionable one she could find and gaped at the tag, which read "38G." She held the expansive construct of lace and steel up to herself. It seemed appropriately scaled to her size, which both relieved and horrified her. Frederick interpreted Caitlin's response as excitement. "I've got a few more items in the back. What say you slip into your intimates while I'm gone?" Caitlin's eyes narrowed and Frederick put his hands gently over his face as he shuffled to the back. "Oh, I know. No peeking!"

Caitlin kicked the costume door shut behind Frederick, and Ivey stepped into the hallway, providing Caitlin some privacy. Finally alone, Caitlin immediately switched out of Tristan's pants for some daisy-duke sweat shorts, which stopped at her upper thigh. They were hardly fashionable, but Caitlin couldn't bear to look at Tristan's paint-splattered pants anymore. Next, Caitlin set to work peeling off the t-shirt. It took a great deal of effort, with straining and popping of seams heard all around her as she maneuvered the garment, with great difficulty, around her shoulders and over her head. After finally extracting her head, she closed her eyes and breathed deeply with relief, tossing her hair and arching her now unbound torso. When she opened her eyes, she could hardly believe them.

The sight of her herself in the mirror brought Caitlin to breathlessness. She had honestly never seen a sight like herself before, and had a hard time imagining where she could. The proportions of her body, at her old height of 5'4" would have been eye-catching. Now standing—as Frederick had reported to her—at 7'1½" and wearing only a cutoff pair of shorts, she stared awestruck. She had to stand substantially far back in the room to see herself in the three floor-length mirrors, and she seemed to dwarf everything around her. Her body, while undeniably huge, was at the same time alluring in its size. Everything, from her rich, black hair to her lengthy, lithe limbs, and magnificent breasts seemed to command attention. She had convinced herself she had grown into a freak, but the mirrors reflected a startlingly different assessment. At every angle, she was perfect.

"I get the feeling that you see what I saw all along." Ivey's voice broke Caitlin's enchantment and she instinctively covered herself, though she had some difficulty covering all of herself.

"Ivey, Jeez!" she stammered. Caitlin wanted to be angry, but upon whirling around she saw Ivey simply gazing at her with the same large, bright eyes that always seemed to leave Caitlin searching for words. Caitlin smiled softly, but did not blush.

"Thanks. You know...for everything."

"My pleasure, sweetie."

The moment was soon broken by a banging from the inside of the closet. "I told you I wouldn't peek!" came Frederick's muffled protest. Caitlin slipped into the bra provided for her and

unlocked the door. Frederick burst out of the doors seemingly unaffected by his brief entrapment, and carrying a stack of outfits.

“Oh honey, do you know how long I’ve waited to try these out on someone who doesn’t need a wig, a waist cincher, and a waxing?” He produced a shiny leather corset with buckles and a zipper up the back. “Oooh, this will be fantastic, and just your size. You’re lucky that goddess of a torso of yours isn’t as lengthy as those gams. Speaking of which, you could crush a regiment in those things.” Caitlin was not amused, but Frederick continued. “And my word, this bum of yours warrants a round of applause, if not a merely pat on the back.” He swatted Caitlin’s rear, making an audible pop. Caitlin’s eyes went wide.

Faster than he could respond, Frederick found himself gripped firmly at the collar and he his face inches from Caitlin’s menacing glare. “Listen to me you creep,” Caitlin seethed, “If you touch me like that again, or in any manner that I find remotely inappropriate, I will make you sorely wish you hadn’t.” Frederick whimpered slightly as he felt his trembling feet lift off of the ground. “Are we clear?” Caitlin said through her teeth. Frederick only nodded, and Caitlin lowered him to the floor, giving him a final shove that sent him roughly into the dresser behind him. Visibly shaken, Frederick took a moment to clear his throat and straighten his collar before grinning naughtily at Caitlin.

“Honey, you can come back any time you like.” With that he returned to the costume closet.

Chapter 19

“So she never knew?”

“Nope. You’d think she’d have figured it out. We’ve got three classes together.”

“I know you guys are friends an all, but she’s a damned moron.”

“Aw, come on. Give her some credit.”

Nicole snorted. “I’ll give her credit for finally working up the nerve give to her little lesbian fantasy a ring.”

Maureen stifled a laugh. “I still can’t believe you called that one. Just when you think you know someone.”

“Yeah, yeah. Whatever. You owe me twenty bucks.”

Maureen mulled this one over for a moment. “How about we do coffee, my treat?”

Nicole needed little convincing. “Sure. Let’s do Cozmic Café, you buy the cigs this time, and Tristan gets to go.”

“Deal. Can Alexis come?”

“Fuck no.”

“I’m kidding, jeez,” Maureen laughed. “If you want to roll a few and bring those along, I’d be all for that as well. Dealing with Caitlin’s left me on my last nerve.”

“Hell yeah.” Nicole replied, rifling through her desk drawer for her closest stash. “I must say I underestimated you, Jacobs. You’re still princess prissy of the tools though.”

“And you’re still a poster girl for Prozac.”

Nicole smiled. “Bite me. I’ll see you in fifteen.”

Maureen shut her phone and tossed it in her purse, before reaching behind the headboard of her bed and fishing out a pack of unfiltered cigarettes. After the month of Caitlin drama, this was just what she needed.

Sorry Cait, but you don’t get to be the only one with surprises.

* * * * *

Frederick offered to let Caitlin hang onto the wardrobe as long as she needed it, and even let her pick out a few outfits to keep. Caitlin settled on a few of the less flashy outfits, including the black skirt and corset blouse that she currently wore. Sized for someone broader and shorter, the skirt hugged her hips nicely, showing off her endless legs and accentuating her lower curves. The corset top absolutely celebrated her cleavage. She still would have opted to show less skin, but Frederick refused to lose that battle. Caitlin was also a bit miffed that Frederick was unable to turn up shoes with any less than a three-inch heel. “Find me a queen who wears flats to a drag show,” he replied, “and I’ll be happy to give them to you.”

In the car, Ivey handed Caitlin a bright blue brooch to wear around her neck. Though unsure if the brooch was purchased for her or simply on hand, and slightly uncomfortable with where such a bright piece of jewelry would draw the eyes, Caitlin accepted it. “It’s a special night for you,” Ivey said. “We also want to look our best for dinner.” Ivey had changed into some simple black slacks and a sleeveless turtleneck top. She had a tribal tattoo on her upper arm that Caitlin hadn’t seen before, and kept her assortment of bracelets that chimed together as Ivey drove them downtown.

Ivey treated to dinner at The Eastside Grill, a five-star restaurant known for their fantastic portions and outrageous prices. With Ivey footing the bill and with Caitlin’s increased appetite, neither seemed to be a problem, though Caitlin wasn’t sure which she was more suspicious of. Regardless of how big she was, the entire 20 oz. steak with the salad, appetizer, and dessert

seemed a bit much. Ivey also polished off her meal in a rather impressive fashion for someone her size, but Ivey shrugged off Caitlin's inquiry ("I'm a big eater.") just as she shrugged off the bill ("It's a special night."). Caitlin also was curious how Ivey had managed to include a bottle of wine with the meal without the waitress even seeming to consider checking either of their IDs. Even with Caitlin's height, neither one of them looked unquestionably of legal drinking age.

In spite of her unanswered questions, Caitlin enjoyed dinner and found herself spilling everything to Ivey, while Ivey simply sipped her wine and nodded. She prodded Ivey with a few questions, and only managed to discern that Ivey was not in high school, had lived in the area for less than a few years, had no siblings, liked avant garde jazz, and seemed to possess an encyclopedic knowledge of damn near everything. Ivey seemed comfortable talking about art history, pop culture, geography, and everything in between. After nearly three hours at the restaurant, a full, tipsy, and tired Caitlin declined the offer to go clubbing. Ivey obliged, and invited Caitlin to her apartment since it was still early.

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After a couple hours of reviewing their geometry homework, Ben had joined Alexis on her bed as she talked up a storm, hopping frequently from subject to subject. The studying had made his head hurt, and he was more than happy to let the conversation remain one-sided, as was the norm with the two of them.

"...I mean, her boobs look seriously awesome and I dig her hair, but she's way too tall to model."

"Yeah," was Ben's simple reply. He didn't really have a thing for super-tall girls, and he was certainly happy with the girl he had (Caitlin, at any height, had always kind of scared him). He couldn't help but imagine, however, what it would be like if his girlfriend had handfuls that could overflow his ultra-large hands.

"I mean, I don't *need* bigger boobs, but I'd take 'em if someone were offering."

"Yeah," Ben said again, eyeing his girlfriend's abundant cleavage thoughtfully.

Alexis suddenly sat up on her bed. "I wish my boobs would grow bigger!" she shouted aloud.

"Yeah..." Ben grinned.

Alex smiled giddily at her big teddy bear of a boyfriend. "I wish they were too big for you Benji!"

Ben's eyes widened as he stared upwards, still lying back on the bed. "Yeah!"

Alex scrunched her nose and closed her eyes tightly. "I wish my boobs would grow bigger...right now!"

...

...

...

Both Alexis and Ben sat in eager anticipation, before Alex started giggling and Ben, not sure what was happening or what he expected to happen, chuckled softly as well. Alex cocked an eyebrow down at her unchanged bosom, which still jutted prominently out in front of her.

“I guess 34E is enough,” she sighed, laying back on the bed and cuddling next to him.

Having been engrossed in his girlfriend’s cleavage for the duration of the conversation, (and the evening), Ben shrugged. “Yeah.”

“I love you, Benji.”

Ben blushed and pulled Alex closer to him, smiling. “Yeah.”

Alexis smiled big and wrapped herself around her boyfriend’s solid torso, pressing her acceptably substantial assets between them. “Wanna’ fool around?”

A slightly confused, but more than satisfied Ben returned the embrace with a goofy, ear-to-ear grin.

Hell yeah!

Ivey’s place was a modest-sized studio apartment, decorated in an eclectic, but modern style. From the photos and décor, Caitlin deduced Ivey had done some globetrotting. At the same time, as detailed as some of the photos were, she had a hard time discerning any more than the little she already knew of Ivey’s background. She wanted to think more about it, but the buzz of the wine, as well as the small arms around her torso were distracting her. Ivey seemed to anticipate Caitlin’s wanting to speak up, and responded by leaping upward and latching onto Caitlin who involuntarily caught her. Ivey laughed and pulled herself in to meet her face to face.

“We’ve got to keep meeting like this,” Ivey whispered between them, before planting her lips firmly onto Caitlin’s. Caitlin held Ivey in the air as they reverently kissed in the silence of the room. The buzz of the alcohol, the euphoria of the moment, and the girl in her arms began to overcome Caitlin’s center of gravity, and she found herself staggering a bit. Ivey laughed. “Aim for the bed...” Caitlin didn’t have to be told twice. They crashed onto the bed, with Ivey landing mostly on top with an arm pinned behind Caitlin’s back. The bed creaked, and at least two wooden crossbeams snapped. Caitlin grimaced and after a brief silence both girls erupted in laughter.

“Geez, I’m sorry.”

“Comes with the territory, hon.”

“I can’t believe I’m big enough to break beds.” Caitlin turned beet red and covered her face.
“What’s happened to my life?”

“All good things, from my perspective,” Ivey replied, pushing the hair out of Caitlin’s face, and stroked her cheek. Caitlin lifted up to free Ivey’s arm from underneath her. Ivey extracted it, and sat up, straddling Caitlin’s torso. She playfully craned her neck up in an attempt to see over the mountain of cleavage that spilled into Caitlin’s face.

“You can’t imagine the view from up here.”

Caitlin’s cleavage had flowed upward and cradled her chin. “I’m surprised I can still see you.”

“I’m surprised you can still breathe.”

“The corset isn’t helping.”

“Roll over, I’ll help you out of it.”

Caitlin rolled over and allowed Ivey to unlace the bodice. With each lace, Caitlin felt increased relief, until finally the bodice sprung open and relaxed to either side. “Oh God, that’s amazing,” Caitlin said, breathing deep and letting her ribcage fully expand for the first time in hours. She took a quick breath in as she felt Ivey’s hands under her shirt. Though relaxed by the wine, she couldn’t shake the small pinches of nervousness at the direction the night was headed. At the same time, the small, strong hands massaging her back eased her nerves.

“Did you have fun tonight?”

“Mmmhmmm.”

Ivey worked her hands up the sides of Caitlin’s torso, and scratched at the side of her ribcage. The crook of Ivey’s elbows met the bottom hem of Caitlin’s shirt, slowly working it upward. Caitlin wanted to make a bigger deal of this, but Ivey’s fingers continued to knead at her flesh, effectively disarming her.

“Relax hon. You’ve had a rough week.”

“ ”
””

Ivey’s hands worked their way up the expanse of Caitlin’s back to just below her neck. Her shirt slipped further upward, exposing most of the bare flesh of her back. Again, she started to tense, but Ivey continued massaging her and Caitlin relaxed.

“I’ve had a wonderful night as well,” Ivey said. “So far.”

After a moment, Caitlin replied, “Me too. I…”

“One sec’ sweetie.”

For a moment, Caitlin felt Ivey’s hands leave her back. She was about to call attention to that when she could feel Ivey shift and maneuver on top of her. Out of the corner of her eyes she caught a piece of fabric fall drop to the ground. Before she had a chance to react, she felt the Ivey’s entire bare front against her back, and soft lips along the base of her neck that worked up toward the back of her ears. A small, warm tongue against her earlobe shot a chill down the length of her body. Caitlin moaned softly, and for the first time she noticed the lower pitch of the voice emitting from her larger body. Again, she heard Ivey’s voice in her ear.

“One more time, sweetie. Give me one more.”

“Hm?”

Caitlin relished the feeling of the cool silk sheets against her long body, and rolled slightly to the side as Ivey moved downward. Ivey ran her nose and lips against Caitlin’s belly, and goosebumps popped up on her arms and back in response. Caitlin’s large hand ran through Ivey’s hair, while the other lay on her upper back. Oriented as they were, their feet cradled each others’.

“I want…one more.”

“I don’t think I know what you…”

“Shhh…just relax.”

Caitlin rolled onto her side again, letting Ivey slide her blouse over her head. Ivey again embraced Caitlin’s large body, savoring the ever-so-slight difference in their body temperatures, and began to work her way down, letting her hands lead the way. Stopping at the waistline, Ivey ran her nose and lips along Caitlin’s lower back.

“You are, indeed, something special.”

Ivey had worked her way along the curve of Caitlin’s hips, stopping just before her knees, and exploring back up the inside of Caitlin’s leg. Fully in the moment, Caitlin began to lose herself, letting Ivey take things from here.

“One last time.”

Ivey had worked up the inside of Caitlin’s leg, and paused briefly. Caitlin could hear Ivey breathing from underneath her skirt, but couldn’t see her. Her shallow breathing was the only

sound in the room before a wave of pleasure rocked through her as Ivey entered her and Caitlin moaned again, deep and long.

Grow...for me.

Feeling first fingers, and now a tongue inside her, Caitlin was aroused nearly to the point of incomprehension, but managed to reply, "I...can't."

Grow.

Ivey continued, unabated as Caitlin's large body bucked and the bed creaked in response. "I..."

Grow for me. One...more...time.

"Yes."

Electricity seemed to jolt through her body as she writhed in ecstasy, feeling the sheets shift against her skin. After a minute or so, Ivey emerged from underneath Caitlin's skirt grinning and dripping with perspiration. She then nestled into Caitlin's torso, burying her face into the underside of the breasts that swelled around her. Just as Caitlin thought the feeling would subside, she felt lips and teeth around her nipple and the pins and needles in her body returned twice as strong. *It's happening...now!*

Ivey locked her legs around the expanse of Caitlin's thigh, moaning at the feeling of it swelling larger in her grip. Caitlin shuddered, and tensed as a powerful climax rocked her body, prying Ivey's fingers apart as her body expanded. Ivey clung to Caitlin's body tightly, relishing the friction of her bare skin against Caitlin's expanding body. A primal, guttural groan erupted from Caitlin, and Ivey, overcome with pleasure, shrieked in response. Both girls climaxed loudly and the bed popped, creaked, and snapped underneath them.

In the final moments before she fell asleep, Caitlin felt her long silky black hair around her, her head touching the headboard, her body extending the length of the bed, her feet resting firmly on the floor, and a small, but amazing woman wrapped about her immense body. Still awake, but exhausted Ivey lightly ran her fingernails against Caitlin's ribcage. Caitlin smiled, rubbing Ivey's small back as they both fell asleep.

Chapter 20

(One month later)

It was 4:30 in the afternoon on a warm Summer afternoon when Craig wandered into Bean Town, the local café that had been so highly recommended by his cousin Steve. He hadn't exactly explained why, but Steve had told him that it was unquestionably "your kind of place." After a few months of prodding from his cousin, he took the bait and made the half-hour drive

out to Northshore to scope the place out. At worst, he could hit up the mall while he was in the area, or even hit up the swimming pool at the community college.

The place was surprisingly crowded, with a customer seated at nearly every table. Not only was nearly every table taken, but most of the tables had only a single customer—one *male* customer—seated at them. There were a few other tables with couples or small groups, and some others sipping coffee as they admired the abundance of art pieces which adorned the walls. The pieces ranged from a surreal depiction of an igloo sitting next to a tree under a dark red two-mooned sky, to a highly abstract splattering of body-shaped blotches that took up most of the rear wall. While the paintings were fascinating, he had a hard time believing that they were the sole draw of the place. In fact, he was already starting to lament the fact that he'd spent a perfectly nice summer afternoon driving out to Northshore, of all places, to...

"Did you want something?"

"On top of it all, the baristas are surly too? Give me a break," Craig thought, turning toward the counter, though there was no one there. At second glance, he noticed a punk-ish, well-decorated girl sorting through a pile of paintings in the corner. She wasn't wearing an apron, so he couldn't tell if she was asking for his order or even if she worked there. "Yeah sure," he said aloud. "I'll take a Frappuccino."

"Then go to Starbucks," a second, smaller but cuter, girl snapped. She was seated at a table reading, but she was wearing an apron and appeared to work there.

"Well get me something cold then, that tastes like coffee."

"Read the menu. I'm not going to do it for you, smartass."

Craig briefly scanned the menu, but was soon drawn to a second art piece that seemed far too grotesque to be displayed in public. It resembled some combination of a giraffe and an elderly woman, decorated with scars and boils. "I can believe you display this stuff. This is sick."

"Well, look at something else then," the punk girl spoke up. She was using a step-ladder to hang another surreal piece up near the entrance. From the look of her, he safely assumed most of the more abstract pieces were hers. "Not everyone comes here for the art," she remarked, leveling a framed canvas.

"Well they sure as hell don't come here for the service," he replied, now standing at the counter. He gave the menu another look, before turning to the seated barista at the table. "I'll take an iced vanilla latte."

"I'm on my break."

The young man shook his head in disbelief. "Well who's going to take my order?"

"Iced latte," a voice suddenly said from behind and above him. "Did you want flavor with that?"

He jolted around, and was immediately presented with the largest woman, or girl, he had ever seen. She was fashionably wearing an undersized secondhand store blouse which stopped at her elbows. A black lycra spaghetti strap top underneath prominently displayed the “Bean Town” logo at his eye level, adorning the largest and most magnificent breasts he had ever laid eyes on. They were framed by the blouse, buttoned as far up as it would go, the third button from the bottom straining for dear life.

Stepping back, startled, he looked up into her eyes, which impatiently rolled upwards. Their crystal blue dramatically contrasted her dark hair tied back in a ponytail. “Iced latte?” she offered. The young man only gaped in response at the girl, whose nametag read “Caitlin.” She was leaning back on the counter and her hips, which would meet him at chest level, flared outward in cargo pants that hugged her legs like a second skin and stopped at the tops of her calves, which he could see even from behind the counter.

“Latte?” he managed to squeak out.

The towering girl put a hand to her head, before closing the distance and leaning onto the counter, which was a quite a ways down from her. While she was now at eye level with him, his eyes were drawn to the immense jugs which hung down from her chest as she leaned on to the counter. In fact, most eyes within viewing distance were drawn to the same place, as various conversations between male patrons suddenly trailed off.

“Hey!” she said. “Vanilla iced latte?”

“Uh...vanilla iced latte.”

“Large vanilla iced latte?”

“L...l...large. Vanilla iced latte.”

“Okay! Thank you!” she said, exasperatedly straightening back to her full, towering height. The top still prominently displayed a good five inches of cleavage. “That’ll be three sixty-five.”

The young man, not tearing his eyes away from Caitlin, fumbled for his wallet before dropping a five dollar bill and a handful of change onto the counter. She leaned back over to count the change and the young man stared unabashedly at the cleavage hanging in front of him that could likely swallow his head whole .

“This is five forty-seven. Did you want to give me more change or what?”

“Y...y...youcankeepitthanks.”

Caitlin made an odd sideways glance at him and completed the transaction, dropping a handful of change into the overflowing tip jar. She sighed loudly as she set to work making the drink. Craig could only stare at her profile as she bent down again to retrieve the milk. He felt himself get light-headed as she bent down to retrieve the milk from the small fridge, as hips wider than

his body framed her succulent posterior. To top it off, as she prepared the espresso shot he realized that she appeared more than big enough to lift the entire espresso machine and drop it on him, if she so pleased.

“I don’t think I’ve seen you here before,” she said flatly, forcing small talk.

“Uh...I’ve never been here before.”

“Huh. What brings you out here?”

“It was recommended.”

She eyed him suspiciously, giving him a slight smile. “Recommended, huh?” she replied. The subtle grin surprised him and he found himself losing his bearings.

“Sure. I was, yeah.”

“What?”

“Um. Yeah.”

“You sure you can handle an espresso?” Craig didn’t reply and Ivey grinned from behind the magazine across the room.

“I’ll...take it. Uh huh.”

“Well I hope so. You paid for it.” With that, Caitlin easily reached over the espresso machine and handed over the drink. “Here ya’ go.” Craig reached forward with a shaky hand and took the drink from her. Caitlin held on to it for a couple moments longer, making sure that he’d actually grasped it.

“Come back in sometime.”

“I...okay...yeah.” The young man awkwardly shuffled out of the coffee shop, his eyes remained glued to the girl behind the counter. The door shut and Caitlin shook her head and rolled her eyes. Ivey set down her magazine and headed over to the counter.

“Hey, sweetie.” Ivey chirped.

“Yeah?”

“Not bad for your first week on the job.”

Caitlin eyed the tip jar, and glanced quickly down at the obscene amount of cleavage she had on display. She still was getting used to her own body, and today was the first day she hadn’t

knocked something over in the first hour of her workday. The place simply wasn't designed for 7'7" baristas, but she was making do. "Yeah, I'm getting used to it."

"You know," Ivey said. "I'd like to see more of your work up here. I'm not sure how much more of Nicole's work everyone can stomach."

Nicole hit her thumb with the hammer and cursed none-too-subtly, which momentarily took the focus of the room off of Caitlin. Caitlin laughed quietly and checked out the smattering of her own works, including the appropriately titled "Unexpected Surprises," which earned her an "A" in advanced painting and a first runner-up in regional contest (Nicole won first prize with "Cannabis Coitus"). "Maybe," she said. "I've been on a creative streak lately."

Ivey grinned slightly. "So have you grown into yourself?"

Caitlin blew an errant strand of long black hair out of her eyes. "I certainly hope so."

"Do you, really?"

Caitlin paused, looking around at the gathering of customers pretending not to be absolutely infatuated with her and then at Ivey who did absolutely nothing to hide the fact. She then looked down at her chest and up at the ceiling, grinning naughtily.

"I dunno," she shrugged. "I am, after all, full of surprises..."